

4.27.2007

WTOD and WUPW/FOX 36 partner

Chuck Matthews, program director at WTOD-AM, 1560, reports that his station and WUPW-TV, Channel 36, have entered into an agreement where the Fox affiliate will provide hourly news updates, after noon, as well as all-day weather reports for the Cumulus Media outlet, beginning in early to mid-May. Matthews adds that WTOD will incorporate WUPW's anchors into Toledo Today with Tom Watkins. Channel 36 will cross promote WTOD during its 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. newscasts.

2.16.2007

Michael Savage snagged by WTOD

By [RON MUSSELMAN](#)
BLADE MEDIA COLUMNIST

Michael Savage, the controversial, right-wing syndicated talk-show host, has found a new home on the Toledo radio dial.

Savage, sacked recently by WSPD-AM, 1370, will be heard at 6 p.m. weekdays on WTOD-AM, 1560, beginning March 1.

WTOD program director Chuck Matthews believes it was "a blunder on WSPD's part letting the show go," as Savage's show ranks third nationally in total listeners, trailing only Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity.

For that very reason, WPSD program director Brian Wilson is not surprised that Cumulus-owned WTOD picked up Savage's program.

Although he used to work with Savage in San Francisco, Wilson called Savage "a miserable human being. It's OK to be objective in your criticism and to search for solutions, but it isn't OK to just (gripe) for two hours."

3.06.2006

Director has big plans for WTOD

Chuck Matthews jokes that WTOD-AM (1560) is "the best station no one can hear."

The Cumulus-owned talk station operates at about 360 watts - well below the 5,000 watts for which it is licensed. That will change in about a year, however, when construction of a tower is completed.

Until then, Matthews hopes to build upon the momentum from the final ratings period of 2005, Arbitron's fall survey. WTOD's average weekly audience in the fall was 13,400 -- an increase of 3,600 from the first ratings period of '05.

Matthews has been the station's program director for a little more than a year. He started about three months after WTOD made the switch from country music -- it carried the programming of No. 1-rated WKKO-FM (99.9) for 10 years -- to talk.

"We're surviving on our own," Matthews said.

In the fall, WTOD finished No. 17 overall with an audience share of 1.2 percent. Matthews said his goal for Arbitron's spring survey, which runs from March 30 to June 21, is for the station to crack the Top 15 and have a 2.0 share. "Baby steps," he said.

Among the Top 20 radio stations in the Toledo market, WTOD is unique in that it operates only from sun up to sun down. That means roughly 7:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. in December and 6 a.m. to 9:15 p.m. in July. This month, the station is on the air from about 6:15 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.

WTOD's weekday lineup comprises nationally syndicated shows -- Doug Stephan, Laura Ingraham, Bill O'Reilly, Clark Howard, and Dave Ramsey. Beginning in April, one hour of Neal Boortz will be added to the mix.

Other changes are coming in April as well. The Black Diamond Garden Show, hosted by Mike O'Rourke, is moving from WSPD-AM (1370) to WTOD, where it will air from 8 to 10 a.m. Saturdays. On Sundays, WTOD will be adding two syndicated music shows -- *Sounds of Sinatra* and *American Standards by the Sea* -- to follow *Polka Party* (8:30 a.m. to noon), a locally produced show that made its debut in 1947.

"It feels like the station has a direction now," Matthews said. "I think WTOD has a chance to be a player in this market."

Matthews does want the station to have a local weekday talk show, but he estimated it will be "24 to 36 months" before that happens.

3.16.2007

WTOD's Tom Watkins seeks 'fresh air' for morning radio

By Bill Stewart
Special to Toledo Free Press

When Cumulus Broadcasting-owned radio station WTOD started broadcasting in Toledo in June 1946, the station's call letters stood for "Top of the Dial." Its formats have spanned from Top 40 to country.

Sixty years later, WTOD bills itself as SuperTalk 1560 and features veteran newsman Tom Watkins hosting a morning show, "Toledo Today," from 8 to 9 a.m., with a lineup of some of the nation's top conservative radio hosts.

What is Watkins, a proud Democrat, doing in a setting like this?

WTOD Program Director, Chuck Matthews said Watkins offers listeners "a breath of fresh air." **Matthews said talk radio is "the true last bastion of personality radio that exists,"** pointing out that in the talk format, the host can't rely on playing records or receiving phone calls from listeners. He has to rely on talent.

Watkins has 40-plus years of broadcast experience. The former news director and reporter at WSPD-AM 1370 started hosting his WTOD morning show on Jan. 8 after being released from the Clear Channel station in May.

Watkins said he "does talk radio the opposite way that radio consultants say to do it." He said even when he disagrees with someone, he does it in a positive, upbeat way.

Watkins spent 27 years at WIMA in Lima, where he served as a radio pool person for American presidents, interviewed a prisoner on death row and conducted what was to become his favorite interview, talking with Dale Evans when she visited Lima.

Watkins, 65, grew up in Mansfield, where he used to sit in the attic in his home, practicing broadcasting on an intercom. His first radio job was with WCLW in Mansfield. Then came news stints in Norwalk, Elyria and Lima.

Watkins, former local campaign director for Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, freely talks on the air about his politics. He said, “political affiliation doesn't matter. I'm just another guy.” Watkins is contrasted on WTOD by conservative syndicated hosts Laura Ingraham, Michael Savage and Libertarian Neal Boortz.

Watkins will playfully warn his listeners at the end of his show to “lean to the right now” as Laura Ingraham's show is about to begin.

Watkins and Matthews said they are excited about the recent addition of the highly controversial Savage to the WTOD lineup. Savage is the third-most popular syndicated talk host behind Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity. They said phone response to the show has been “amazing.”

WTOD also runs agribusiness reports three times a day from the Buckeye Ag Radio Network.

Because the station has a daytime FCC license, it is required to go on and off the air at various times throughout the year. Regarding that decided disadvantage, Watkins said, “with a daytime station you only have so much time, so you gotta have quality all the time.”

The quality and power of the signal is also expected to improve soon with the addition of a new transmitter and site off Route 795 in Perrysburg.