

Working to Ride the Radio Waves

Goldendale group is dedicated to getting low-watt station KVG D on the air

By Jeanie Senior

Goldendale's new community radio station, KVG D-LP, is a low-watt FM station that is not yet broadcasting, yet it offers an extensive selection of podcasts of music, event coverage, crop reports, radio theater and more through links posted at its website, www.kvgd.info.

The studio and equipment to put KVG D on the air are in the works.

"The push is really on to get going," says Cory Eberhart, one of the community radio project's organizers. "We have a list of equipment that we need, and we need a studio to broadcast from."

Going live will cost an estimated \$5,000 to \$8,000, which means the next step is more fundraising as well as applying for grants.

Cory learned in August 2013 that the Federal Communications Commission had, for the first time since 2000, opened a two-week window in October when communities could apply for a low-power FM station.

It was an opportunity not to be missed, she says, because "there was no indication when they would open it again."

Cory enlisted the help of Kathy O'Brennan and Louise Brown, and the trio held a community meeting at the Goldendale library to gauge public interest. Quite a few people showed up.

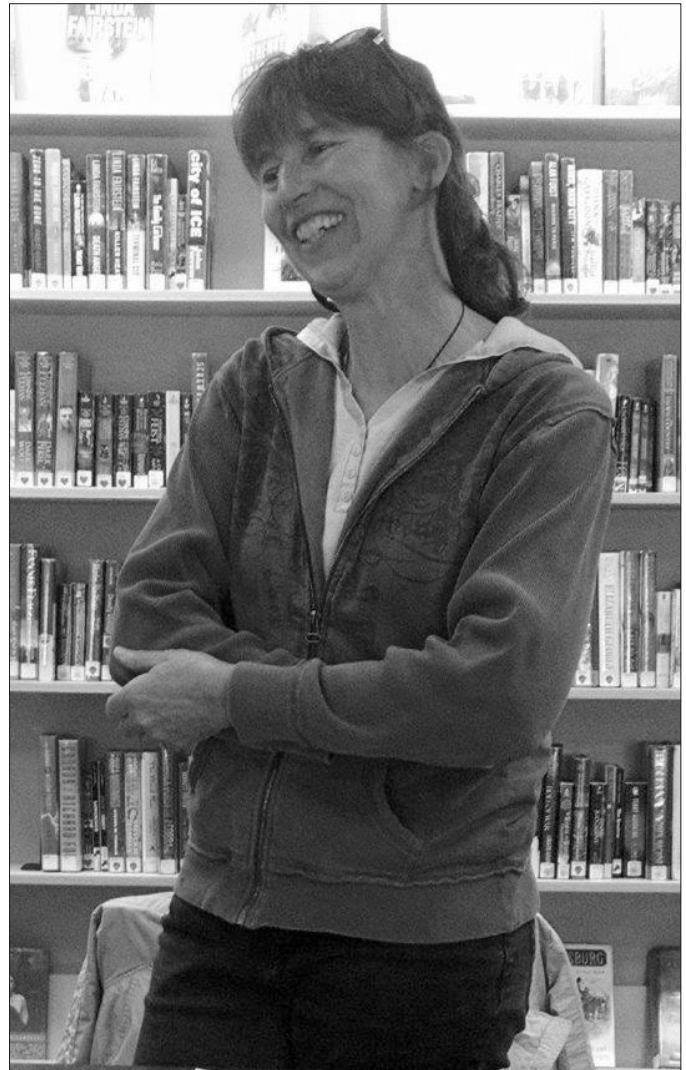
"We decided we wanted to try this," Kathy says.

"We had weeks for organizing, other communities had years," Cory says. "But we had a pretty good turnout, and the ball just kind of started rolling then."

When organizers looked for a sponsoring nonprofit, Community Enrichment for Klickitat County, a 501(c)(3) corporation, stepped forward.

The FCC issued an 18-month construction permit to KVG D in February 2014. The station must be broadcasting by August 2015 or the permit will expire.

A paragraph on the website sums up the station's goals for KVG B, "an independent, non-commercial, community radio station serving the Goldendale area, broadcasting news, information of local relevance, community and civic events, and an eclectic range of music, as well as educational, cultural and children's programming, with special concern for those in our community who are underserved and underrepresented by other



Cory Eberhart, one of the driving forces behind KVG D-LP.

media sources."

Community members offered a wide range of suggestions of what they would like to hear on the new station, Louise says, from classic country music to kids' programming to old-time radio shows. They would like to focus on local American Indians and Mexican-Americans.

KVG D supporters also went to the Goldendale Farmers Market to talk about the station and hear more program ideas.

The idea of a "small, amateurish volunteer-run radio station" may seem unusual, Cory says, unless you've lived in a place that had one. Growing up in Ellensburg, she recalls a hometown



Three women are working diligently to build a new community radio station. From left, Kathy O'Brennan, Louise Brown and Cory Eberhart.

radio station that was part of daily life, reporting school lunch menus and other locally focused news items.

The community radio meetings continue—they are announced on the website—and The Friends of the Library group has funded several workshops with an eye to radio programming, writing, interviewing, producing and video blogging. Two more workshops will be scheduled in the spring.

Goldendale resident Ric Frye helped with the website and provides technical support for recording Final Fridays at the Golden Art Gallery.

Cory has recorded a number of podcasts. She relies on the website Creative Commons for music because the group hasn't raised the money to pay for the license that would allow them to use copyrighted materials.

KVGD posts podcasts of weather forecasts as well as public service announcements on the website, from red-flag fire warnings to crop progress and conditions reports for Central and Eastern Washington and Northern Oregon counties.

Recently, the Goldendale Community Radio Players recorded Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark," complete with sound effects. Other recent recordings include "Halloween Night Delights, Parts One and Two."

Low power/low watt means the station's signal will cover the city of Goldendale. Broadcasts could reach as far as 10 miles with an unobstructed signal. In Cory's case, she and her husband, Bruce, live slightly beyond the best possible broadcast range.

"So this is really a labor of love," she says, laughing. ■



Radio station supporters hosted a table with information about the radio station at the Goldendale Farmers Market last summer.

Photo by Cory Eberhart