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# New spirit for WCOJ

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By DANIELLE LYNCH, Staff Writers

WEST CHESTER — Chester County lost a major local broadcast voice Tuesday with the apparent sale of WCOJ 1420 to Holy Spirit Radio Foundation Inc., a Philadelphia-based Catholic radio group.

Holy Spirit Radio Foundation has entered into an agreement with WS2K Media to begin airing Catholic radio on WCOJ 1420 AM.

Sources said Tuesday that WCOJ employees were notified of the change in ownership at a 3 p.m. meeting and that the workers were then let go. The station, sources said, was scheduled to "go dark" at midnight Tuesday.

If all goes well with finalizing the purchase agreement, the air date for the new Catholic programming will be Oct. 7, the feast of Our Lady of Rosary, said WISP Program Director Patrick McCabe. WCOJ will be added to a mini-network with WISP, he said.

The Catholic radio group, known as Holy Spirit Radio Foundation, operates and owns WISP 1570 AM in Doylestown, serves Bucks County, Upper Montgomery County, northeast Philadelphia and parts of New Jersey, according to McCabe.

WCOJ will operate as a radio affiliate to EWTN Global Catholic Network, he said.

"We have been operating quite successfully based in Doylestown for the past nine years, and we're very pleased to expand our coverage and introduce Catholic radio into the Chester County area though WCOJ," said McCabe.

Under Holy Sprit Radio, 80 percent of WCOJ's air time will include ETWN radio programs, said McCabe. The remaining 20 percent of air time will be divided between shows of Catholic interest and local announcements for parishes and parochial schools, he said.

Local shows will include guests from area prayer groups and a vocation hour. During vocation hour, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's vocation director will talk about becoming a priest, McCabe said.

McCabe said the EWTN program lineup includes many listener call-in shows as well as teaching programs, the Mass and special coverage of national and international Catholic events, such as papal trips. Holy Spirit Radio also produces six local programs.

"We have been completely listener-supported since going on the air in 1999 and have gotten very positive feedback from the community," said McCabe.

A show called "King's Men" will discuss men's spirituality, and there will also be a show with an anti-abortion focus entitled "Voices for the Unborn."

EWTN began as a cable television network in 1981, according to McCabe. Holy Spirit Radio, which has been on the air since 1999, was one of the first EWTN radio affiliates, he said.

McCabe said in a news release that in a time of increasing competition for media attention, commercial radio is experiencing a rocky time in terms of advertising dollars and ratings. But Catholic radio has become a true success story in recent years.

"When Holy Spirit Radio went on the air in 1999, there were fewer than 20 Catholic stations nationally and now there are more than 150," said McCabe. "We are seeing people come back to the church after many years away and becoming more involved in their local parishes and communities."

A local marketing agreement between WS2K Media and Holy Spirit Radio will be in effect as the two groups work toward a final purchase agreement.

"One thing that I want to stress to our new WCOJ listeners is that we're going to be featuring local guests and programs and that we're very anxious to provide the community — Catholics and non-Catholics alike — a station that will offer them enlightening and inspiring programming," said McCabe in the release.

EWTN began as a cable TV network in 1981 and is now available in more than 148 million television households in more than 140 countries and territories. With its direct broadcast satellite television and radio services, AM and FM radio networks, and its Web site [www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com), EWTN is the largest religious media network in the world. Holy Spirit Radio is a lay-run listener-supported 501c3 non-profit, non-commercial station. The station's motto is "Inspired by the Holy Spirit—Communicating Hope."

According to several Web sites, WCOJ began operating on Nov. 29, 1949. It originally broadcast as a daytime-only station. The station increased its power to 5,000 watts and began full-time operation in 1952.

Originally WCOJ's studios were in a theater in downtown Coatesville.

Over the years the station has also had studios at the transmitter site in West Brandywine; at 3721 E. Lincoln Highway, Thorndale; and at 17 W. Gay St., West Chester.

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