

New sounds at KANM

Better equipment means better student radio

By Juliette Rizzo
STAFF WRITER

Students who tune in to KANM, Texas A&M's student-operated radio station, will be turning up the volume to hear the new sounds and improved specialized programming offered by the station this spring. At least that's what KANM programmers hope.

In anticipation of switching from a cable broadcast station to an FCC (Federal Communications Commission) licensed station in the fall, Alex Luke, KANM program director, said the station is in the process of acquiring new equipment to enhance the quality of its broadcast.

"We are working to acquire new equipment with plans to install it sometime within the next month," he said. "We are planning to be on the air in the fall or, by the latest, next spring. And one thing required to go over the air is good equipment."

Last year, after working with Student Government and the Fiscal Department, the station received a substantial amount of money from the University for further development of the station.

"We set aside some of the money for new equipment," Luke said, "and an allotment to go over the air."

Essentially, as far as equipment goes, Luke said they are "getting a new station." Since the station has been broadcasting for the last 15 years, a lot of the equipment is old and in need of replacement, he said.

Pending final delivery are a new 10-channel mixing board for disc jockey's use in mixing cassette tapes to records and compact discs, CD players, cassette tape decks, and an on-the-air sign. KANM also is waiting for approval to have a transmitter site on campus.

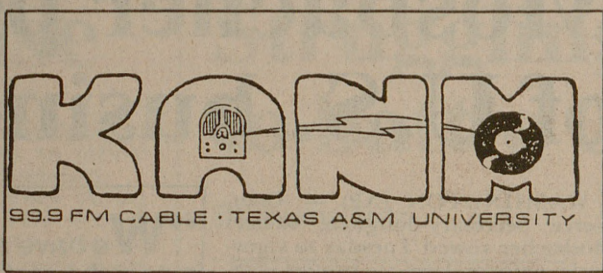
Steve Krebs, KANM's engineer, said the station's outlook for the future looks promising.

"Since we broadcast on cable, we're not getting enough publicity," he said. "After all, not everyone can afford cable. We should attract a bigger audience."

Luke said it is hard to believe the station has been around for so many years and so few students know about it.

He also feels that no one really knows it is a student organization or that the station broadcasts, merely because it is a cable station.

"We are a student organization just like the sailing



club," he said. "We have a small but loyal audience, and it has been steadily increasing."

He said this semester looks to be one of the best yet as far as specialty programming.

"We program according to the response we get," he said. "We offer a wide variety of music from hard core punk and new wave/progressive to classical, Christian rock, country, reggae, and classic rock. We even have a Broadway show, and this semester, we will have a female vocalist's show and a classical music broadcast from OPAS (Opera and Performing Arts Society)."

He said their best response is from the new wave shows because more DJs are willing to do them. The shows make up as much as 60 percent of the format.

"We offer almost anything as long as there is a DJ," he said. "This is our best semester yet for specialty shows."

In the future, if the station begins operating as an FCC licensed station and assumes a full FM broadcast, it will have to operate under FCC regulations and have its DJs licensed. But the station will remain programming as a free-format station.

Krebs said the station's constitution currently states that the station refrain from playing the same Top-40 songs that are played on local stations. This will continue when the station is licensed to assure the uniqueness of the station. Music selection may have to change slightly to meet with regulations in terms of profanity, he said.

The station will broadcast this semester 24 hours a day, seven days a week on FM channel 99.9.

Texas oil drillers stay cautious despite jump in crude prices

HOUSTON (AP) — Texas oil producers who might otherwise be celebrating the jump in crude prices at the start of the new year are instead taking a cautious approach and citing their history.

Only a year ago, the industry had kicked off 1988 with renewed optimism; prices were up, OPEC generally was behaving, predictions were improving and increased activity in the oilpatch suggested that most others felt the same way.

It was beginning to look more and more as if 1987 had been the bottom and 1988 would be the year for the gradual rebirth of Texas oilfields.

It didn't turn out that way. Widespread predictions that crude prices could average in the \$18-per-barrel range and gradually keep rising were replaced within months by fears that prices could dip below \$10 per barrel.

Industry watcher Baker Hughes Inc. projected an average 1,070 rigs would be searching for oil and gas during 1988, but by year-end the number proved to be 936 — some 14 percent below the predicted level.

The number of drilling permits issued in Texas during January 1988 was nearly 18 percent higher than in the same month of 1987. But by year-end the number was down 11.5 percent and there were 5 percent fewer producing wells.

In fact, as the shining New Year's predictions began to tarnish, drilling and production declined so quickly that many companies underspent their budgets.

"We didn't have all that bad of a price last year on oil, but what we also didn't have was stability," said Earl Swift, president and chief executive officer of Houston-based Swift Energy Co. "If you're going to try and make 20-year projections, you like to see the price stay the same for at least a day or two."

"Even if the average turns out to be \$16 or \$17 (per barrel), if it's \$12 now it's hard to forecast that it's going to be \$17 tomorrow."

Although Swift and others believe a new OPEC accord reached last November could add stability this year, last year's results brought further retrenchment and caution among Texas producers.

Houston company bucks trend, plans 197-foot European rig

GALENA PARK (AP) — In a rarity these days for the economically depressed oilfield equipment industry, a Houston-area manufacturer Tuesday dedicated a new oil rig that officials said would be the largest and deepest land rig to drill in Europe.

The 197-foot-tall rig was assembled by Houston-based National Oilwell for INA-Naftaplin of Yugoslavia and will be used to drill in the Dinarides area of that country near the coast of the Adriatic Sea.

The \$10.5 million so-called "super-deep" rig is capable of drilling three wells simultaneously to depths of up to 25,000 feet and is touted as having a unique brake system that controls the speed of the pipe going into the holes in the earth.

"All of our new business is for overseas," said Donald W. Vogel-sang, general manager of drilling equipment for National Oilwell. "There was an abundance of rigs ordered during the boom days, and there are a lot available rigs (for domestic use)."

Bozidar Omrcen, vice president for INA-Naftaplin, saw the rig for the first time Tuesday at a Texas barbecue that marked the completion of the 10-month project.

Despite crude prices that have topped \$19 per barrel in the futures market this month, many industry experts are predicting a flat year and projecting an average \$15-per-barrel oil.

"I think most companies felt that oil prices would stay in the \$16-to \$18-a-barrel range for most of 1988, and they planned their budgets based on that belief," said Victor Burk, a partner in the Houston office of the accounting firm Arthur Andersen & Co.

"As they got into late summer and the prices started softening, the companies started reassessing some of the projects they had planned,"

"We are very satisfied," he said. "This is a big day. A lot of people are here to celebrate."

His company pumped 22 million barrels of oil in 1986 and is the leading marketer of oil and gas in Yugoslavia. Tuesday's delivery is the largest of three rigs made for INA-Naftaplin.

The celebration in a warehouse adjacent to the rig was a dim reminder of the heady days of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when oil prices approached \$40 per barrel, construction of oil rigs was non-stop and rig dedication parties were the norm.

Pat Smith, spokesman for National Oilwell, recalled times when at least seven rigs were being assembled at one time in the industrial area east of Houston.

For some companies now, seven rigs would be a good year, industry officials acknowledge.

For example, this week's latest Baker Hughes Inc. count of rigs looking for oil in the United States was 789. The lowest the count reached last year was 880. In December 1981, the tally peaked at 4,500.

The rig sent off Tuesday is the first to be completed in months by National Oilwell, company chairman Bob Smith said.

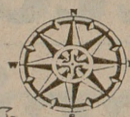
Burk said, "And then as prices dropped even more in October, a lot of projects were put on the shelf."

Hardest hit were the state's independent oil companies that focus on the "upstream" exploration and production business.

"It was a disappointing year for the industry as a whole, especially the exploration phase of it," Houston independent oilman Michel T. Halbouty said.

"There are very few wells being built onshore," he said. "What little exploration there is onshore was being done by the surviving independents, and there are very few of us left."

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