



Standing (left to right): Wally Desjarlais, Dianne Meili, Alan Standerwick, Angela Pearson, Colin Graves and Brant Janvier; Seated: Bert Crowfoot.

CFWE

The Native Perspective

With over 20 years broadcasting through Alberta airwaves, CFWE-FM has worked hard to establish itself as the unofficial leader in Aboriginal radio for the prairie province. However, despite its growth over the years, CFWE still has plenty of goals planned for the near future.

With their September 2009 launch in the Edmonton region, CFWE is now heard in more than 75 communities in northern and central Alberta. With 41 transmitters, the station estimates their potential listeners at around 160,000.

Their recipe for success may be that the station is run by people-pleasers.

"We try and focus on the interests of Aboriginal listeners, regardless of where they reside," said Alan Standerwick, director of radio operations. However, he admitted that it is impossible to satisfy everyone.

As an integral part of CFWE since 1988, Standerwick is the authority on how far the radio station has come from its first year on-air in 1986.

"The radio you hear now has changed a lot from when we first started," said Standerwick who recalled originally broadcasting on CBC airwaves for only few hours each weekday morning.

It wasn't until the following year that CFWE made its initial broadcast as a community radio station in Lac La Biche, which is located approximately 220-kilometers northeast of Edmonton.

Owned and operated by the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA), the CFWE studios are now located at AMMSA's administrative offices on Edmonton's northside.

With a variety of radio personalities that put a unique twist to each program, CFWE has an eclectic program schedule.

The lineup includes a morning show that incorporates local news and country music classics, a National Top 30 program that features Aboriginal artists, a weekend hip-hop show and a program that focuses on maintaining the culture by sharing the stories of Aboriginal community members that have passed away.

Staying true to the rich Aboriginal heritage, CFWE has plans to incorporate more languages into its programs. The station is aware of how the mother tongue of many Aboriginal Elders is an

integral part of the Aboriginal culture.

CFWE also has plans to garner even more listeners across Alberta by eventually moving southwards. Having already acquired a license for a site in the lower region, CFWE is waiting for the right moment to expand its broadcast in new areas such as the province's biggest city – Calgary.

Consistent revenue from the station's most popular program – Radio Bingo – may help CFWE to attain their goals in the not too distant future.

Thousands of listeners from around Alberta tune in each week with the hopes of having the lucky bingo cards that gives them the chance of winning big prize payouts, while having fun playing.

"I would say the biggest reason CFWE has grown is because of Radio Bingo," said AMMSA founder and CEO Bert Crowfoot. "With the revenue we have generated from Radio Bingo, we have re-invested into our own growth."

Crowfoot added that including bingo into the programming has enabled the non-profit society to never have to apply for loans and has put the company on a path to becoming completely self-sufficient.

"In 1990 we used to have 86 percent of our revenue from the government. Now, about 10 percent is from government funding, the rest is from advertising and Radio Bingo," said Crowfoot.

Even though revenue from Radio Bingo has helped contribute to the growth of CFWE, they pride themselves on not overdoing a good thing.

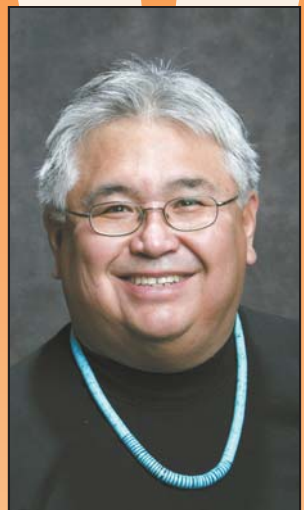
"It's only two days a week for a couple of hours, it is not something we exploit," said Standerwick.

Giving back to the community is also very important to CFWE and the other departments of AMMSA.

The society recently created the Joe P. Cardinal Bursary and Internship that will be awarded to one multi-media post-secondary student in Alberta each year.

AMMSA has used a portion of the revenue from its biggest program to help nurture the goals of Aboriginal youths who pursue a multi-media discipline.

CFWE's commitment to their listeners and steady growth throughout the past two decades, will keep them on track to continually evolve and stay true to the Native perspective.



*Bert Crowfoot,
AMMSA CEO*

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