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Abstract:

Entercom will have to divest two of the stations to meet federal guidelines, said Michael Doyle, vice president and market manager at Entercom Rochester, noting that the company will have to review the portfolios of the combined stations to make a decision on which ones to sell.

Full text:

Mary Chao

Staff writer

Brother Wease, Scott Spezzano as well as Tony and Dee will soon be working for a new boss.

Pennsylvania-based Entercom Communications Corp. announced Monday that it's buying 15 radio stations in four markets from CBS Corp. for \$262 million in cash.

The deal includes four CBS radio stations in the Rochester market: WRMM-FM (101.3), WCMF-FM (96.5), WPXY-FM (97.9) and WZNE-FM (94.1). Entercom already owns four local radio stations: WBEE-FM (92.5), WBZA-FM (98.9), WFKL-FM (93.3) and WROC-AM (950).

Entercom will have to divest two of the stations to meet federal guidelines, said Michael Doyle, vice president and market manager at Entercom Rochester, noting that the company will have to review the portfolios of the combined stations to make a decision on which ones to sell.

The consolidation of the stations will give Entercom an edge in the market, Doyle said. "It gives us an opportunity to extend a number of brands to people in town," he said.

The brands that Entercom will be acquiring are household names in Rochester, such as Brother Wease on WCMF-FM, Scott Spezzano on WPXY-FM, and Tony Infantino and Dee Alexander on WRMM-FM.

With CBS exiting the Rochester radio market, Entercom's largest competitor is now Clear Channel, which owns and operates seven area radio stations, including news radio WHAM-AM (1180).

CBS had been shopping for a buyer for its mid-sized market stations to concentrate on larger markets, said Scott Fybush, editor of industry newsletter North East Radio Watch and a Brighton resident.

"CBS is a large-market player," Fybush said. "Entercom is very much a medium-market player. This is what they do best."

CBS is known for its concentration on top 10 markets, such as New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston, Fybush said. Money made in mid-sized markets pales in comparison to larger cities, he said.

The Rochester market has always been important to Entercom, said Bill Cloutier, former vice president and general manager of Entercom Rochester who is now executive vice president of RegionalHelpWanted.com in Jacksonville, Fla.

"Entercom clearly believes in the Rochester market and radio," Cloutier said. "The company has invested heavily to acquire the stations they already have in Rochester and is now, once again, demonstrating its faith in Rochester with the acquisition."

Entercom is picking up marquee names in this acquisition, said Terry Owen, former vice president and general manager of CBS Radio Rochester, now president of Internet marketing firm LogicalSolutions.net in Brighton.

"Those CBS properties are great stations, heritage stations, with huge fan bases," Owen said. "Entercom has proven here in this market as well as to the industry that they are focused on their listeners and their community and advertisers. As a company, they are a proven entity. I see it as very good for the market and for both the former CBS stations and Entercom as their new parent company."

CBS Radio is located at HSBC Plaza and Entercom is situated in the High Falls District. There are no

decisions yet on whether the offices or staff would be consolidated, Doyle said.

Along with the four Rochester stations, Entercom will be acquiring four stations in Austin, Texas, four stations in Cincinnati and three stations in Memphis as part of the \$262 million cash deal.

It would not be possible to acquire one single radio station in the New York City market for that amount, Fybush noted.

Entercom will also be acquiring WILD-FM in Boston from Radio One for \$30 million in cash.

Shares of Entercom fell 3 cents to close at \$24.45 on the New York Stock Exchange.

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Top radio stations

Here is the spring 2006 Arbitron ranking for Rochester-area radio stations in terms of AQH person share, which is the average number of people listening to a station for at least five minutes during a 15-minute period Monday to Sunday between 6 a.m. and midnight.

Station Format AQH Share

WBEE-FM (92.5) Country 10.1

WDKX-FM (103.9) Urban contemporary 9.2

WHAM-AM (1180) News talk 8.5

WRMM-FM (101.3) Soft adult contemporary 6.5

WCMF-FM (96.5) Classic rock 5.5

WBZA-FM (98.9) Classic hits 5.1

WFXF-FM (95.1) Classic hits 4.8

WPXY-FM (97.9) Pop contemporary hits 4.2

WKGS-FM (106.7) Pop contemporary hits 4.1

WVOR-FM (100.5) Modern adult contemporary 3.1

WLGZ-AM (990) Adult standards 3.0

WFKL-FM (93.3) Adult contemporary 2.8

WHTK-AM (1280) Talk radio 1.6

WZNE-FM (94.1) Alternative 1.6

WNVE-FM (107.3) Active rock 1.3

WLKK-FM (107.7) Classic rock 1.2

WROC-AM (950) News talk 1.1

WJZR-FM (105.9) Variety 0.9

WYRK-FM (106.5) Country 0.9

WKUV-FM (104.9) Contemporary Christian 0.5

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