

Radio: 'The Station Will Evolve'

THU JUL 29 2004

From Page A-1

"The Sheldon Foundation was a key component to that," Drew said. "Community Bank stepped forward and gave us some good money. Most of it really was individuals. That's how we got to this point. We're thrilled. We hope to be on the air Sept. 1 and we certainly want to be on the air when school starts. The technology now, it's basically a microphone and a computer now. It's pretty straightforward."

Fund-raising began earlier this year once the Federal Communications Commission granted the Arts Council a permit for a low-power radio station. By law, all low-power stations have to be non-profit. Donations have helped pay for a radio tower, antenna, transmitter and other necessary equipment.

The station is designed to provide access to the arts, cultural and educational programming and a forum for public affairs discussions. There are also plans for an Internet site, according to Drew. Jamestown High School will have a radio broadcasting course when school opens this fall taught by

Drew, Chris Teahan and Ed Tomassini while Jamestown Community College and BOCES are also expected to take part.

"The kids will have an opportunity to not only learn the verbal skills necessary for radio, which I think is really important, but analytical skills and basic verbal skills," Drew said. "To be able to take information that you've read and condense it into a one-minute explanation is important. You can use it in any job you have."

WRFA must have at least eight hours of locally originated programming each day, Drew said, according to FCC guidelines. The station is expected to have 18 hours of programming each day from 6 a.m. to midnight with a mixed format.

"It's a community format," Drew said. "We're going to do cultural and educational programming, which means a lot of lectures, hopefully, from Chautauqua Institution and the Jackson Center plus music. Music would happen later on in the day and on weekends. We'd also have a lot of kids programming."

With the station's kickoff scheduled for Sept. 1, Drew said he wants to have as many community agencies as possible contact him at the Arts Council to discuss possible programming avenues for the station. Just because something isn't on the program list early in the station's life doesn't mean it can't be a part of future programming, Drew said.

"We'll have forever to get it together," Drew said. "I don't have to start Sept. 1 with the final product. The station will evolve as people get aware of it and as we all learn how to use the media."

Send comments to jwhittaker@post-journal.com