

For immediate release

NEW COMMUNITY RADIO STATION COMING TO GREENE AND COLUMBIA COUNTIES

The Federal Communications Commission awarded non-profit arts group free103point9 a license for a 3,300-watt non-commercial FM radio station on 90.7-FM last week.

The new station, with studios envisioned in Cairo, Catskill, and Hudson, will broadcast local musicians and artists, as well as community news, and programs about local schools, history, agriculture, the environment, and more. An online version of the station will launch early next year and provide community members an opportunity to get involved while the FM station is in progress. The online radio broadcast will also feature local town meetings, high school sports championships, as well as local performances, lectures, workshops, and a broad spectrum of creative radio or radio art programs. Many local events will also be broadcast live on the FM station.

"Community radio is a unique volunteer-based media format," said Catskill resident and media educator Aliza Dichter, "This station will be a way for us to both boost our local economy and celebrate the diverse cultures in our area. We can deal with serious issues, have fun, and build bridges across our towns and across the two counties."

"We want to give members of the community a chance to take the microphone, go on the air, and talk about what is going on in Greene and Columbia counties," says free103point9 Program Director Tom Roe. "This is a special opportunity for this area, and all the talented artists, hard-working activists, and unique personalities here to become the local media."

During the day the station will feature weekly and monthly programs on topics such as gardening, hunting, schools, arts, music, politics, and other issues important to the community. There will be programs by youth and for children. Evenings will feature DJs and live broadcasts from events all over the two counties. Late nights and Saturdays will be filled with international radio art, experimental music, and special local broadcasts. "The week before elections we want to give every local candidate the chance to go on the air and give listeners specific reasons to vote for them," Roe says.

Critical support from this project began in 2007 with interest from local agencies and community leaders; small donations from individuals and families across the region made it possible to conduct the initial legal and engineering work for the application. Planning for the radio station is now underway with leadership from a Community Council that includes Haines Fall's Dharma Dailey (Ethos Wireless); Hudson artist Max Goldfarb; Hosneara Kader (Hudson Family Literacy); Debra Kamecke (Cairo Public Library); free103point9's Tom Roe; Alan Skerrett (Columbia County NAACP); Hudson Talbot (Catskill Community Center); and Andy Turner (Cornell Cooperative Extension Agroforestry Resource Center). Aliza Dichter (Catskill Community Center), Galen Joseph-Hunter (free103point9) and Kaya Weidmann (Germantown Community Farm) have also provided crucial efforts and support for the station project.

Based in an area between the huge New York City media market to the south and the Capitol District to the North, the villages and rural communities of Greene and Columbia Counties have little in the way of local broadcast media, with only occasional coverage in regional news. As a valuable complement to our various daily/weekly town papers, this Greene Columbia community radio station will be a unique forum for discussions, news, culture, and emergency information across our two Counties.

Artists and activists lack a central network here for letting people know about their work. Live performances from local venues will sometimes be featured in the evenings on the online web streams and the FM radio station. "We are looking forward to collaborating with the many extraordinary organizations in our area, and providing an opportunity for their programs to be on the air," says free103point9 Executive Director, Galen Joseph-Hunter.

"We've spent the year since we applied for the station building relationships with cultural, civic, and economic groups across the listening area. Partnering with groups that are already providing important services to our community is a key part of our strategy for getting the most value to the community out of having a new radio station," says Dharma Dailey. "The station will support media literacy and media production for groups like the Catskill Community Center and the Agroforestry Center, as well as schools, libraries, and local businesses. We are also interested in working with other broadcasters and news outlets to improve news coverage throughout Columbia and Greene counties."

free103point9 is a non-profit arts organization focused on establishing and cultivating the genre Transmission Arts. free103point9 activities support and promote artists exploring the many forms of "radio art" including works about the idea of transmission or using the physical properties of the electromagnetic spectrum. free103point9's programs include public performances and exhibitions, an online radio station, the free103point9 Transmission Artists, an artist residency program, grant opportunities, a distribution label, a sculpture garden, and an education initiative including a study center and online archive. This FM station will be the first radio station in the U.S. to focus on radio art (many stations in Europe and Canada do).

free103point9 will webcast a performance by avant folk musicians MV & EE with the Golden Road and local musician Jeremy Kelly at 9 p.m. Fri. Nov. 7 at The Spotty Dog Books & Ale at 440 Warren St. in Hudson, NY, and will be giving out more information about the new FM station at the performance. Admission is \$5.

Initial fundraising and planning for the station, which should be on the air in 2010, will begin this winter. A series of workshops to train citizen journalists and reporters are planned next year at the Cairo Public Library, Catskill Community Center, Germantown Community Farm, and other locations. Please contact Tom Roe at tr@free103point9.org or 518-622-2598 to get involved, or for more information.

More information:

<http://free103point9.org/communityradio/>