

*Celebrating  
75 Years!*





# THE LAKELAND BROADCASTING STORY

Lakeland Broadcasting Company has always been committed to serving our community. We strive to create and deliver programming that attracts the dominant share of the local audience, provides marketing services, connects people, and serves our community. All while operating on a base of our core values: passion, integrity, and respect for people.

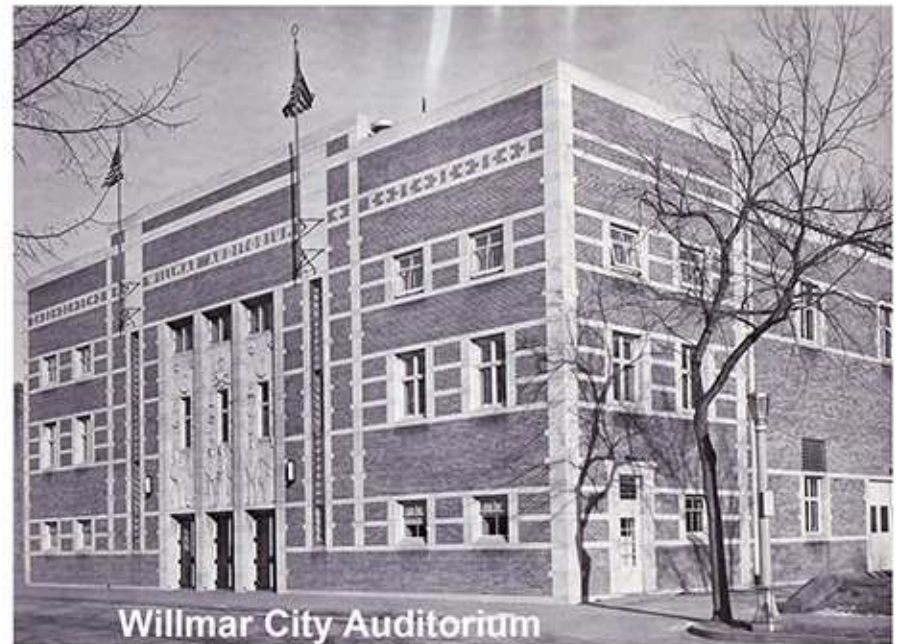


## HARRY LINDER'S DREAM

Harry Linder was a classic entrepreneur looking for an opportunity. As he traveled the state selling investments he discovered a business he had a passion for and a location that had the economic vitality he was looking for. He had the vision to see how radio would serve and thrive in the Willmar area. At the time, the FCC was reluctant to grant a license in a market as small as Willmar. After two visits to Washington D.C., Harry prevailed and the FCC granted him a license. His dream of providing radio broadcasting service in West Central Minnesota became a reality as KWLM went on the air October 5, 1940. The station signed on the air at 6:00 am with The Star Spangled Banner.

## THE FIRST LOCATION

"Willmar's new radio station KWLM will go on the air at 6 o'clock Saturday morning and a full day's program will be carried on from that time until 10 o'clock in the evening. The studios are situated on the third floor of the auditorium. The station, 100 watts and on a frequency of 1340 kilohertz, has its transmitter across the lake, north of the First Street Bridge and Highway No. 71, where the tower rises some 150 feet in height." (Willmar Daily Tribune)



Willmar City Auditorium



## THE BEGINNING: The 1940's



With his family proudly watching, Harry Linder's radio dream became a reality as KWLM went on the air October 5, 1940.



An early Linder family portrait in the KWLM studios. Front: Irene Peters (Irene Linder), Harry Linder. Back: Don Linder, Bill Linder



Irene Peters (as she was known on the air) was the wife of Harry Linder and the personality of "The Stork Corner," "Kiddie Quiz," and other programs.

## SOME OF THE FIRST ANNOUNCERS:



**JACK LYNCH** was the first announcer hired by KWLM and was known as KWLM's "Man About Town." He left to serve in the US Air Force in 1942, but returned to KWLM in 1946 and served as general manager for the next 40 years. Legislative Review began with Jack Lynch in the 1970s and is the longest-running legislative radio program in the state of Minnesota. Even after retirement in 1986, Jack still did sales work and on-air interviews at the station. His outstanding career and accomplishments in broadcasting and in community service set high standards for his fellow broadcasters.

Jack Lynch passed away, at the age of 77, on March 4, 1999.  
(Info & photo: The Pavek Museum of Broadcasting)



**BILL LINDER**, Harry Linder's son, trained at the Beck Radio School, and in 1940, at age 19, became a staff announcer at KWLM. He joined the US Navy in 1942 and served as a radio and radar instructor. In 1946 he returned to Willmar and rejoined the family business. He retired in the early 1990s, turning over his ownership in Lakeland Broadcasting to his sons. Bill passed away October 1, 2013 at the age of 92. He is shown (at left) sitting at the original KWLM studio control board.

(Info & photo: The Pavek Museum of Broadcasting)



**JOE MARTINSON** was born in Canby, MN but his family made several moves including to Mason City IA, Mankato and Winthrop, MN. Following his service as a Military Policeman with the U.S. Air Corps, Joe returned to Minnesota and attended Beck School for Radio. He had a brief "stint" with the Armed Forces Radio in Brazil, then joined KWLM in 1947 as an announcer. An avid sports fan, Joe was the voice of area high school, legion and Willmar Rails baseball for many years. (Info & photo: Peterson Brothers Funeral Home)



## THE 1940's... AM Radio Was King!



1943: Harry Linder with Gil Fraseth, manager of KMHL in Marshall. They are standing in front of the old movie theatre in downtown Willmar. By the way, the movie that was showing was 'Heaven Can Wait' starring Gene Tierney and Don Ameche.

Harry Linder was a visionary who knew he wanted to bring local radio to Willmar, MN. What he didn't know was that KWLM would be one of the last new stations "for the duration," a phrase that meant "until the war ends." In other words, no new FCC licenses, no new apparatus, and the rationing of tubes and wire. In an age with no television, radio stations like KWLM kept home spirits high and kept listeners informed.





## ARMISTICE DAY BLIZZARD

**November 11, 1940. KWLM is the original “social network”.**

KWLM was only on the air for a little more than a month when the Willmar area quickly discovered the value that radio's instant communication and information could provide in a rural area. It was the Armistice Day blizzard. Fall was extremely mild and across the Upper Midwest temperatures were well above normal on the morning of November 11th. When the storm exited the region, over a foot of snow had fallen, and more than 150 people and thousands of livestock were dead. With no television and certainly no internet, KWLM became the “social network” for the area, broadcasting weather information and connecting concerned loved ones.



KWLM became known to be wherever community events were happening... Chamber meetings and banquets, school programs, and sporting events. And, because there were so few AM stations at the time, KWLM could travel eighty miles from the transmitter site and still broadcast a political speech or baseball game with a very clear signal.



November 11, 1940 The Willmar American Legion Auxiliary delivers their first Veterans Day Broadcast from the KWLM studio. It's a tradition that continues to this day.



Hazel Larson, early secretary for Lakeland Broadcasting.



Jack Lynch drew crowds whenever he was out in public. Radio announcers in the 1940s were real stars. Imagine meeting your favorite radio personality as a kid!



**KWLM**  
**YOUR BLUE NETWORK STATION**



## THE 1940's CONTINUED:

### WILD ANIMAL SCARE - February 11, 1949:

Morris Chargo was the orchestra leader and M.C. of a weekly radio show. He wanted to test the size of his audience by announcing that a train car load of wild animals was on the loose. Parents quickly gathered their children, and householders bolted their doors. It was a hoax ala The War of the Worlds and the Willmar Chief of Police (Joe C. Jacobson) wanted to charge Chargo with something but didn't know what he could charge. He demanded that KWLM remove him from the air. A spokesman for KWLM said, "We don't think that will be necessary."

(Photo right: The original tower & transmitter shack in the same location as it is today.)



## THE 1950's AND 1960's:

### "Growth and change"

With the growth of television, radio found its strength in popular DJs who became household names in their local markets, including our own Jack Lynch, Joe Martinson, and Wild Bill Davis. Radio stations moved away from live in-studio performances in favor of playing less expensive recordings. A radio DJ could play records, announce the news and read advertisements. The "British Invasion" would have radio stations targeting a younger audience.

**K W L M**  
WILLMAR—1940—ABC

Frequency: 1340 Kc.....	Power: 250 Watts
Owned-Oper. By .....	Lakeland Bcstg. Co.
Business-Studio Address .....	1340 N. 7th St.
Phone Number .....	1340
Air Time .....	6 a.m.-M.
News Service .....	UP
Transcription Service .....	Cole
Representative .....	John E. Pearson
Membership .....	NARTB, BAB
President, Gen. Mgr. ....	H. W. Linder
Commercial Manager .....	Jack Lynch
Program Director .....	Joe Martinson
Chief Engineer .....	Francois Peterson

(Photo left: The Radio Annual and Television Yearbook, 1954)

**ON THE AIR TODAY** Radio's Best Programs **BLUE**

MUSIC COMEDY QUIZ NEWS ADVENTURE KID SHOWS DRAMA

From Radio City, New York, to Hollywood, California, the Blue Network originates top-notch programs for both daytime and night-time audiences.

"It's Easy To Do Business With The Blue"

**KWLM**  
YOUR BLUE NETWORK STATION

Studios in WILLMAR - MONTEVIDEO - REDWOOD FALLS

**K W L M**  
H. W. LINDER, President Willmar, Minnesota  
The Blue Network  
MUTUAL BROADCASTING SYSTEM **1340** KC.

TUNE IN  
"The Man of a MILLION Strange Facts"  
**Alexander McQUEEN**  
"Nothing but the Truth"  
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY, 12:00 P.M.  
Sponsored by **CAREY'S SALT**

Listen to **FRED WARING**  
Favorite of millions for his smooth, popular music - his Pennsylvanians are rated as one of America's top dance bands. Be sure to tune in  
EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT 6:00 P. M. DURAGLASS  
IT'S A BLUE NETWORK PROGRAM



## THE 1950's AND 1960's CONTINUED:



In the 40s and 50s, performers appeared in the studio to play their music live on the air.



1952: a two-story office building was constructed in front of and on top of the original transmitter building.



In the 50s, the importance of radio news continued to grow. National news came in through teletype newswire machines.



**BUD HANSON** was fascinated with radio when he worked for Mid-Continent and Braniff Airlines in the early 1950's. He auditioned with KMHL in Marshall and was hired. After working for Linder stations in Marshall, Montevideo, Mankato, and Redwood Falls, he joined KWLM in 1968 and originated the "Open Mic Show" in 1972. Open Mic continues today, hosted by Todd Bergeth with J.P. Cola as contributor. Bud was the national sales manager for the Linder Farm Network from 1984 until he retired in 1998. Bud was one of the first hosts of the KWLM State Fair Bus. He continued as host of the Open Mic Show on a part-time basis until he became ill in March 2009. Bud passed away at his home on April 29, 2011.

(Info: Harvey Anderson and Johnson Funeral Home)



## THE 1970's AND 1980's:

Top 40 radio arrives and thrives and FM reaches critical mass. Other niche formats develop like Adult Contemporary (AC), Hot Adult Contemporary, and Progressive Rock. Archival music from the rock and roll era expands and oldies radio stations begin to appear, later evolving into the modern Classic Hits format. Radio stations reached out to their local communities through call-in requests and contests. Ever-changing radio technology—from record turntables, to reel-to-reel, to radio carts (cartridges) to Compact Discs provide listeners with quality programming. Meanwhile, KWLM continued to grow as a heritage radio station.



1972 crew: (F): Dave Anderson, Don Stagg, Steve Linder, John Barnier (B): Randy Christensen, Bill Dean, Doug Johnson, Don Lee

After receiving a BA in Business Administration from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1972, Steve Linder returned to Willmar to work for the family business and build their FM station, KWLM-FM. He purchased Lakeland Broadcasting in 1990 and is the current president and visionary for the family of radio stations.



Steve Linder



**1965** - Though static-free FM radio was patented in 1933, FM stations were considered a burden for operators. But, once again, Harry Linder was forward-thinking and licensed KWLM-FM at 102.5 FM. He couldn't be sure how FM radio would pan out as there was little audience and most people didn't have FM radios. But he was waiting for the future. The FCC required some sort of programming be aired to maintain the license, so automated music was played on very large reels. This led many to believe that FM was commercial-free background music.

(\*) "Vintage Panasonic Two-Band Transistor Radio" by Joe Haupt.



In the meantime, using KWLM-FM's subcarrier frequency (a separated signal carried on a main radio transmission), MUZAK delivered background music to retail stores and other establishments. It was an additional revenue generator for the company.



## THE 1970's AND 1980's:

**A NEW YEAR!**



**A New Radio Station!**  
**The All-New KWLM-FM 102.5**  
**FROM WILLMAR**

ENTERTAINMENT THROUGH CONTEMPORARY, MODERN  
MUSIC; INFORMATION THROUGH CAPSULE NEWS,  
WEATHER AND SPORTS

**ALL STARTING JAN. 3, 1972**

### 1972:

KWLM-FM" changes call letters to KQIC...featuring live personalities and a contemporary, modern music format, news, weather, and sports. Its signal at 102.5 FM was "70,000 watts strong" on a 465' tower. (Compared to the current 100,000 watt signal of Q102 on a 775' tower near New London). Kids would hang antennas out of their windows to pick up the station! KWLM-FM would "sign off" at 1:00 a.m. each day.

### 1973:

"Clean Bill Dean" joins the KQIC-FM team. He participated in a promotion at Team Electronics in Willmar helping to install FM convertors for listeners who didn't have FM radios in their car. He hosted the Q102 morning show from '80-'82, became KWLM Sports Director and Mid Day announcer in 1982, and even acted as Assistant Farm Director. Finally, Bill took over KWLM mornings in 1994. He has been on KWLM ever since, making it 42 years of continuous service to Lakeland Broadcasting!



## Linder Farm Network

### 1976:

Lynn Ketelson becomes the original Farm Director for KWLM. By 1986, the Linder Farm Network was incorporated. Lynn is the LFN Farm Director today. And Steve Linder, current Lakeland Broadcasting president, is part owner of the network.





# THE LAKELAND BROADCASTING MISSION:

Connecting our community with local & relevant content.



## NEWS:



**JP Cola** was born in Minneapolis and raised in Bloomington, went to Brown Institute, and entered the world of radio. He came to Q102 in 1990 and then left to work in Sioux Falls South Dakota for four years before coming back to Lakeland Broadcasting to assume the post of News Director in 1998. JP tells the story of how he got a tape recorder for Christmas when he was just eleven years old and would record his own little radio shows with a record player. He would force his little brother and friends to be his guests on interview and phone-in programs and contests. It was always meant to be! What JP appreciates about being the News Director at Lakeland Broadcasting is the freedom to pursue stories and interact with people, officials and other newsmakers. Don't be surprised if you see JP riding his recumbent bike around town, bowling, or acting at the Barn Theater!



**Paul Stagg** was just 15 when he started his announcing career at KWLM in his hometown of Willmar in 1957. His family lived near the fairgrounds, and he rode his bicycle to work (it was a gravel road back then) because he wasn't old enough to drive. In the 1960's Paul moved to WDAY Radio and Television in Fargo, then to the Twin Cities for over 20 years, 18 of them with WCCO Radio and Television. Radio station ownership came next in Princeton and Duluth. Over the years Paul has voiced many radio and television commercials and marketing and training tapes for major corporations throughout the United States. Besides gathering and reporting the news, you can hear Paul's hour-long "Live @ 5" program each weekday at 5:00 PM on KWLM. He and his wife enjoy lake life at their home on Lake Florida.



## SPORTS:



**Todd Bergeth** was captain of his baseball team his senior year in high school where he was a right handed pitcher. He went on to pitch amateur baseball for six more years after high school, three years with Edina, one with Bloomington and two in Devils Lake. Todd began his broadcast career in Devils Lake, ND as a staff announcer in late summer 1986. Then there were stops at radio stations in Gillette, Wyoming, Palestine and Temple, Texas, Aberdeen, South Dakota, and Ottumwa, Iowa. He joined Lakeland Broadcasting in September of 1995 as Sports Director. Initially, he did morning sportscasts and play by play. Two years later, he became host of the midday show on KWLM and joined the Q102 morning show as cohost in the spring of 2001. He is passionate about sports and started to play golf "somewhat seriously" when he moved to Willmar.





# THE LAKELAND BROADCASTING MISSION:

Connecting our community with local & relevant content.



## WEATHER:

Since that Armistice Day Blizzard in November of 1940, Lakeland Broadcasting has excelled when it comes to severe weather coverage. Today, we are one of the few stations in the area that is staffed 24-7...ready to break into regular programming at a moment's notice. Our affiliation with the team at Weatherology, ensures that we are able to pinpoint severe weather and warn listeners quickly. *(Photo: Willmar Tornado 2008 by Steve Kneprath)*

## DIGITAL:

Since the mid 90s, our websites have been a powerful tool for connecting communities with News, Sports, Entertainment, Public Service announcements and programs that are downloadable "On Demand." With the tens of thousands of visits our sites receive in any given week, we are also able to connect our advertisers to our listeners with digital ads. KWLM.com, YourQ102.com, BigCountry100.com and 1065TheTrain.com are all hosted under our Lakeland Broadcasting umbrella site, [www.WillmarRadio.com](http://www.WillmarRadio.com).



## MARKETING:

Lakeland Broadcasting is fortunate to have an experienced staff of sales representatives committed to producing results for our advertising clients. Our sales team has a passion for creating brands and working with our clients to achieve their goals. Combined with our creative writing and production staff, we have earned the reputation of providing effective marketing plans that get results. Partnering with our advertising clients, getting to know them and working hard to produce results is the cornerstone of our sales success and long term relationships.





In 1980, KQIC-FM became "Q102." A short time later, the Q102 Mobile Studio Era began. The Mobile Studio was an excellent marketing tool for Q102. With Mike Schroeder at the turntables, it became a mobile disco, showing up at the KEC in Willmar almost every Friday night. Parents were happy that their kids had a clean, safe event to attend one of the more popular events associated with the Q102 Mobile Studio was the Hot Seat (R). Two contestants sat in "charged" wired bucket seats. When the drag racing-like light tree turned green, the slowest at hitting the "gas" got a shock in their backside! During the Kandiyohi County Fair, the carnival game operators asked that our Hot Seat game be shut down, because they were losing business on their own games!



**Mike Schroeder** was the popular live DJ for live Mobile Studio events. He has also been a sales representative for the company and is an engineer today. He has been with LBC for 40 years.



**Legislative Review** began with Jack Lynch in the 1970s. It's the longest-running legislative radio program in Minnesota. (Current line-up: Dean Urdahl, Dave Baker, Tim Miller, Lyle Koenen)



**Mary Overman** has been the Traffic Director (commercial scheduling) and HR person for Lakeland Broadcasting for many years. This picture circa 1980s.



The "Q CARD" started in the 1980s and entitled listeners (cardholders) to special consideration during Q102 Promotional Activities...and cash!



KWLM's June Dairy Days on-the-farm broadcasts began in the 1970s and are an annual tradition to this day.



**Bobbi Gates** gave regular cooking school demonstrations as well as shows on the air at KWLM. Many still have her "Cookin' with Bobbi" cook book.



**Doug Loy** joined Lakeland Broadcasting as General manager in the late 1980s and served for over 25 years. He continued the company's commitment to helping advertisers grow revenue.



The KQIC News department published a daily News Brief, that was distributed to restaurants, nursing homes.



**The Master Gardener Show** is a popular call-in show on Saturday mornings (seasonally) and at special events like the Kandiyohi County Fair.



## THE 1990's AND 2000's:

While the rise of FM changed the listening habits of younger Americans, KWLM continued to connect and grow as the Heritage News, Sports, and Information station. For Q102 and KOLV, digital technology changed everything in the 90s. Now, an entire day's music, commercials, and programs can be stored, edited and broadcast using the hard drive of a computer. Commercials that had to be edited by splicing tape are now done with the click of a mouse. Analog devices like cart machines and CD players disappeared, replaced with computer memory.



Tim Burns came to the Q102 Morning Show in 1994 with Sharon Kennedy. His co-hosts over the years were Laura Maki, Todd Bergeth, Abby Snyder and Chris Davis. He stepped down from the show in 2014 to work for the company behind the scenes, eventually hosting Big Country after-noon. His daughter Katie's first day of school recording "I Trust You'll Treat Me Well" was first aired in 1995 and continues to be requested today, thus outlasting even Tim's on-air time!



Ryan Seacrest & Tim Burns



Lakeland Broadcasting has always kept up with changing technologies. The company was one of the first in the Willmar area to purchase an Apple computer. And massive transition to a digital delivery system for music, commercials, and programs took place in 1997. (Right photo = Q102 Studio)



MARCIA HOFFMAN has seen many technological changes over the many years. But she's still our "Director of First Impressions!"



The Q102 Mobile Studio continued to be used as a mobile broadcast unit into the late 90's. It was also featured in many area parades (and even made the grand march for the Montevideo prom).

## OPERATION SNOW DESK Weather-Related Announcements

**JMS&K**  
Johnson, Moody,  
Schmidt & Kleinhuizen P.A.  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



While weather and weather-related announcements have always been part of the Lakeland Broadcasting public service, it was in the late 1990s that "Operation Snow Desk" was branded...especially for school, church, and sports announcements. Our radio stations broadcast the cancellations regularly and post them online with tens of thousands of visits per snow event.

## 1998:

KOLV was bought by Lakeland Broadcasting to join the family of stations and reach out to an even larger local audience. At 100.1 FM, it was first known as "Real Country." It became "Big Country" in 2009 and currently features Bob & Nanette on the morning show. Big Country is also the home of BOLD Warrior sports coverage.





## THE 2000's CONTINUED:



Q102 has presented its annual fireworks show as part of Willmar Fests since the 90's. But it was branded as "Works Over Water" in the early 2000s.



**2003:** KLFN Sunburg/Willmar joins the Lakeland Broadcasting family of stations at 106.5 FM. "The Train" plays the best feel-good pop, soul, and rock n' roll from the late '60s, the 70s, and the mid 80's.



**Big Country Barbecue Night** (Willmar Stingers game). (L-R) James Miller, Rick & Kelly Dahle, Prize Winner, Ben Taylor, Abby Michaels and Bob Stevens.



A T-shirt from the Q102 "Your Home Free" promotion in 2009. The winner had his mortgage paid for an entire year.



**Bev Davis at the KWLM Spring Show.** It continues today as the area's premiere trade show at the Willmar Civic Center.



**2012:** KWLM adds frequency 96.3FM to supplement KWLM programs on FM. It serves about a 20-30 mile radius.

## SERVICE TO COMMUNITY:



**Radio For Relief:** This on-air drive started in 2006 with "Tim & Todd" broad-casting from the Willmar Fire Station parking lot. Year after year, it has grown to include all of our morning show personalities simulcasting on all stations for one morning at the end of March (Food Share Month). In the last seven years, Lakeland Broadcasting's on-air efforts have resulted in a total combined cash/food total of \$364,457 (and growing)!



**Community Spotlight** Annually, community groups, non-profits, schools and churches apply for advertising grants to promote their organization on our radio stations.



**Going Green,** a clean up the city recycling event, was launched by Lakeland Broadcasting in 2008. It has occurred every two years to this day.



**Stuff the Bus** is an annual school supply drive along with United Way of West Central Minnesota.



Sales representative Mike Miller ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. Through matched donations, we were part of a 1 day record of \$22,620.00 raised!



## A LETTER FROM OUR LAKELAND BROADCASTING PRESIDENT:



*It's been an incredible 75 years at Lakeland Broadcasting Co. We are grateful for the relationships we have built with listeners, advertising clients and the community.*

*Our core purpose is "Connecting People" and we remain committed to serving our local communities with quality programming, results oriented advertising services and community involvement. We are committed to being a leading, ethical company which values our employees, listeners, clients and the communities we serve.*

*Localism and Broadcasting is a powerful combination and we look forward to creating excellent broadcast services using all available technology to stay connected.*

*Steve Linder*

**KWLM**  
1340 AM 96.3 FM  
NEWS/TALK

102.5 FM  
**102**  
Your Station

**BIG** 100.1 FM  
**Country**  
BIG STARS...BIG SONGS

**106.5**  
*the train*  
CLASSIC HITS



*Editor's note: On September 12, 2015, Steve Linder was inducted into the Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Fame. He joins his grandfather, Harry; father Bill and Uncle Don in the Hall. The Linder name is associated with great radio broadcasting throughout the state.*







**CANDICE BECKLER**  
Sales Manager



**TODD BERGETH**  
Sports Director



**CHUCK BLUM**  
Sales Representative



**CHRISTINE BLUM**  
Sales Representative



**TIM BURNS**  
Brand Manager



**JP COLA**  
News Director



**PAUL COOL**  
Sales Representative



**ART CRUZ**  
Sales Representative



**BILL DEAN**  
On Air Personality



**KELLY GONZALES**  
On Air Personality



**ERIC GRIEGER**  
On Air Personality



**JENA HILLENBRAND**  
Sales Representative



**MARCIA HOFFMAN**  
Director of First Impressions



**STEVE KNEPRATH**  
Chief Engineer







**RJ LINDER**  
Sales Representative



**STEVE LINDER**  
Owner & President



**MARYELIN MACHT**  
Operations & On Air Personality



**MIKE MILLER**  
Sales Representative



**NANETTE**  
On Air Personality



**MARY OVERMAN**  
Traffic & Accounting



**MOLLY PENNY**  
On Air Personality



**STEVE PETERSON**  
General Manager



**DAN SCHNELL**  
On Air Personality



**MIKE SCHROEDER**  
Engineering



**ERIC SPENCER**  
Sales Representative



**PAUL STAGG**  
On Air Personality



**BOB STEVENS**  
Production & On Air Personality



**BEN TAYLOR**  
On Air Personality









**KWLM**  
1340 AM 96.3 FM  
NEWS / TALK

1 0 2 . 5 F M

**Q102**  
Your Station

**BIG 100.1 FM**  
**Country**  
BIG STARS...BIG SONGS

**106.5**  
*the train*  
CLASSIC HITS

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[www.willmarradio.com](http://www.willmarradio.com)