

Bext Is Multitasking for Clear Channel

FM Transmitter Configured
For Multiple Missions Deep
In the Heart of Texas

USERREPORT

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AUSTIN, TEXAS — I am technical director of Clear Channel Radio Austin and national disaster coordinator for Clear Channel.

Over the course of many years we have had good results with Bext gear. Back in 2008 when I took over the Austin cluster, the purchase of a Bext transmitter was underway, to add a medium-power FM transmitter for mission-critical, multi-station backup in the Austin, Texas market.

We found that some of our old aux backups might fail along with those main antennas at other sites, so we decided to look at Bext again.

COMPACT

Bext has an interesting compact line of efficient, solid-state FM transmitters up to 30 kW, including a unit that could handle 7 kW in a small rack on wheels which I could move around by myself! (Ed. Note: Bext says

the series is now available in versions offering up to 15 kW in the same-sized 20 RU rack cabinet, and up to 30 kW in a taller, 40 RU rack cabinet.)

In my case space was a critical issue since the room already housed a main, aux and an HD Radio transmitter, so the roll-around fit the bill. We decided that a 7 kW power level with its small footprint would cover our needs, and we purchased the Bext FB 7000 FM transmitter.

The objective was to build a system capable of supporting our Clear Channel stations 96.7 KHFI(FM), 98.1 KVET(FM), 100.7 KASE(FM) and 102.3 KPEZ(FM), all located in Austin.

Like other transmitters we had purchased from Bext, the model type we chose offered features that were useful in achieving our objective.

The solid-state PA section is totally redundant, with a dual-PA module configuration. Inside each module there are multiple power supplies and multiple RF sections; even in the unlikely event of something going wrong it will stay on the air at reduced power rather than being completely off the air.

The PA is broadband and the exciter section is programmable to any frequency in the 88 to 108 MHz FM band. This allows these transmitters to be used not just for primary transmitter applications, but also as a backup for multiple stations. When we have a mission-critical station that would really need to be ready to get back on the air at a moment's notice to restore a signal, the Bext



FB 7000 would be used for that purpose.

This transmitter, when needed, is hooked up to a transfer switch connected to our broadband antenna, which covers all of our FM station frequencies. We just dial in the frequency of the station that needs a backup transmitter on the air.

Making these transmitters more user-friendly is that we can easily reassign the frequency and power level of operation even remotely. All we need to do is connect to the transmitter using any PC, use the standard HyperTerminal function built in to Windows, and "tell" the transmitter when to turn on, what frequency we want it to come up on and at what power level. No need to load any software on the PC. I can access my password-protected transmitters from any PC anywhere.

The FB 7000 is efficient and will keep our power bill in check. Speaking of electrical, we like that it can be rewired in the field easily for either single- or three-phase.

The duty of this particular 7 kW Bext unit is to cover all four of my FM stations at the KHFI main location on an 800-foot tower. We simply reassign the audio feed off our ISDN unit corresponding to the one station we want, and we are on. It could also be offered as a pay-as-needed service to other stations that may need an occasional emergency solution, as long as ours are covered.

Thanks to Bext, we can cover our own needs as well as help a fellow station in trouble across town should the need arise. And we know that given the record of Bext gear at Clear Channel, this transmitter will serve us well for many trouble-free years. As a regional engineer, I had Bext transmitters shipped to many of my markets, with satisfied engineers and general managers that could keep their stations on the air through major storms and disasters.

Whether it is for a good backup, main transmitter or even translator needs, I give Bext a thumbs up. And the price is good too.

For information, contact Paula Matthews or Tino Romagnoli at Bext in California at (888) 239-8462 or (619) 239-8462 or visit www.bext.com.