

FCDC NEWS

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KOFO FCDC Member Feature

One of the great things about the FCDC membership is the diversity of our economy that is representative of our members. The feature member this month is one that you all know well and invite to your home, car, and office on a regular basis. KOFO is our local radio station that serves our community so very well. I am excited to feature KOFO this month.



KOFO started operation in 1949. No, Brad Howard was not the original owner! James and Herbert Jobes started the radio station having no previous experience. Fortunately, these two took a chance and started what is now a staple of Ottawa and a six-county area. KOFO can be heard in Franklin, Anderson, Miami, Linn, Osage, and southern Douglas County.

Brad Howard is the 5th owner of the station, and the longest serving owner as well. Brad and another partner purchased the station in 1987. Brad found two new partners in 1989. Bob and Liz Reusch have been involved with KOFO since that time. Brad is the majority owner and is the operator of the station.

The station has changed with the times. KOFO was originally only an AM station but added FM in August of 2016. In June of 2022 they began streaming their station so you can listen to it just about anywhere you want. So, if you find yourself out of range of the AM/FM option, you need to get back to town. No seriously, you can now listen to KOFO online.

KOFO is also another good employer in our community. They currently have 6 fulltime employees and 6 part-time employees. They would like to add more, just as many of you would as well. It is difficult to find folks that want to work in radio but if you have visited the station and worked with the folks there, you know it would be a great place to work. These folks have fun!

Brad attended Pitt State and had dreams of working in radio in the Kansas City market. He worked at several stations and had some of his best experiences while working in the Joplin area. He was approached by the ownership group at the time about buying the business here in Ottawa and so Brad did, and Ottawa has benefitted from that decision ever since.

I asked Brad to give us a look behind the microphone. What does maybe a listener like me not fully understand about the radio business. Brad shared that what we enjoy on the air is a result of a tremendous amount of preparation time. Preparation can take as much as 1 ½ hours for every hour on the air. Since Brad is running the station he cannot commit as much time as he would like to preparation, but I for one think the product reflects some good preparation by him and his team. Brad said being in broadcasting is much like being in the dairy business. You must be committed.



The radio station does take a team of people. There is so much information to gather and share as well as great entertainment. Getting prizes and advertising put together also takes a tremendous amount of time and preparation. All the folks at KOFO do a great job and as I mentioned before, they always have a smile on their face and seem to be enjoying themselves. I have the opportunity to join them a couple of times a month and it is one of my favorite activities.

It is always a good time at KOFO!

KOFO has been a great supporter of FCDC. They have helped us get important news and activity updates out and have supported us on a number of events. One great example is the on-location production they provided for us for the Franklin County Career Day. This brought great energy to the event and the youth enjoyed it. Of course, Derek Chappell was terrific.

At the end of the day Brad wants KOFO be the voice of the community. They truly want to help businesses be better. When you do business with KOFO the money stays in our community. They are not looking to just fill airtime with sales, they truly want to build a plan with their customers that will enhance and grow their business and grow our community. Gosh, sounds a lot like the goals of FCDC!

I also need to lift KOFO and Brad up for their community service. Brad's greatest joy in the radio business is utilizing their opportunity to support others in need. KOFO is a leader in our community in raising funds for programs or individuals in need. They do great work for the Cancer Society with their annual fund drive. They also just wrapped up a food drive. This is truly a business in our community that supports our community with their dollars and actions!

A big thank you to KOFO for all they do for our community!

It is a GREAT day to live in Franklin County!

Paul Bear

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