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## AM Revitalization? Clay's Dramatic Suggestion

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*Clay Freinwald, CPBE, has been active in radio broadcasting for more than 50 years. Responding to Radio World's coverage of the AM revitalization debate, he offers his own suggestions. Freinwald is a past recipient of Radio World's Excellence in Engineering Award, broadcaster of the year from the Washington State Association of Broadcasters and twice winner of SBE's Engineer of the Year award.*

Realize AM's technology and spectrum have served its purpose and move on. Here is what I would do if I were given the authority to make all the changes I wanted:

1 – Open up the spectrum immediately below the existing FM band (TV Channels 5 and 6 have been suggested) for aural broadcasting.

2 – Enact an all-channel radio rule that would require all receivers manufactured be capable of receiving the existing 88–108 MHz as well as the new expanded band (think expanded band AM radios or the all-channel TV rule).

3 – Create an allocation scheme that would ensure that all existing AM stations would have a level playing field and be treated equally.

4 – Set a date-certain for the process to start.

5 – Accept applications for the new band for one year.

4 – Grant construction permits with a required two-year period to construct.

5 – Require simulcast operation for a period of 10 years.

6 – Sunset the existing AM band at the end of the 13th year.

Other thoughts:

– Do not grant more FM translators to AMs; all this does is clutter up the existing FM band, and there is not



enough spectrum for every AM to have a translator.

– Perhaps require that all new-band stations operate hybrid mode until year 13 when analog FM could be turned off.

– Admit that AM HD and AM stereo are failures and eliminate any further use of HD Radio on the existing AM band.

My \$.02.

*Freinwald is employed by Washington State University and has his own business servicing clients in the Seattle area. He has worked in management and staff engineering for Entercom in Seattle, Tribune Communications (Tacoma), KMO(AM) and KCPQ(TV).*

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