

black business



Jay F. Springs, general manager at radio station WSMX, has brought an experienced background and expertise to the six-month-old station. Springs says the response from the religious community to the medium has been tremendous (photo by James Parker).

Business Of The Week

Spreading Gospel Over The Air

By Edward Hill Jr.
Staff Writer

When Bishop S.D. Johnson of Macedonia Tru...y... Pentecostal Holiness Church of God became interested in purchasing a radio station, the first person he sought was Jay F. Springs.

And why not? Over a 10-year period, Springs had gained a wealth of valuable experience in the medium as an announcer, a sales manager, a production manager and a general manager at several stations.

"When I left here in November of 1980, Bishop Johnson and I had established a very mutual relationship," recalled Springs, a native of Winston-Salem. "I went on to work for WIGO in Atlanta for nine months and I later got a job with a UHF TV station. Then in February of 1982, he contacted me and informed me of his interest in purchasing a radio sta-

tion. He wanted to share ideas of the feasibility of it working. I sent him a proposal and in late April he offered me a job as general manager."

Springs accepted and on June 23, WSMX was born as Winston-Salem's first and only all-black, gospel radio station. Located in the 1700 block of Link Road, the facility was previously owned by Power Media Inc.

WSMX operates from sunup to sundown, Monday through Sunday. Its transmitter is located on Old Walkertown Road, so it is operated remotely from the studio on Link Road. Nestled at 1500 on the AM band, WSMX has a maximum radiated power output of 10,000 watts, which Springs boasts "is the most powerful in the Triad area."

WSMX is a "directional station" that reaches into Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee and various parts

of North Carolina. Although it is a black-owned and operated station, Springs said, the station is not restricted to race.

"We mainly have black churches that broadcast on our station," Springs noted. "But we are also involving white churches because we are dealing with Christianity and that has nothing to do with color. We are a 'message-music station' for all Christians, be they black or white.

"We are trying to involve the entire community. We want to reach out and serve all Christian groups, senior citizens, different churches, the underemployed and the unemployed."

WSMX has five announcers who play gospel music ranging from traditional to contemporary. The station also features news and information and a Saturday sports show. But there is another part of the station's programming that Springs considers equally

important.

"Under our blocked format, part of our broadcast day is designated for music and news and information," Springs explained. "We devote another part to teaching and preaching Christianity. We have local and national ministers on the air because that is a vital part of our commitment here at WSMX."

In addition to his announcers, Springs' staff includes a traffic director, an executive secretary, a chief engineer, a program director and a maintenance engineer to help run the station. The offices inside the small station are organized and tidy and the atmosphere among the staff is very congenial.

Springs said that he plans to set up a program in the near future that will provide training for young people interested in different aspects of Christian broad-

See Page 26

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Bennett Professor Designs Self-Employment Program

GREENSBORO — Bennett College's Queen Hester Bell has acquired the reputation of "doing, going, and seeking" in Bennett's academic arena where she has taught for 14 years. Whatever it takes to create an exciting learning experience for students in the home economics field, she will try it.

Her most recent accomplishment is the designing of a program which emphasizes the development of skills essential to entering and succeeding in self-employment in home economics and related fields. Emphasizing marketable job skills, Mrs. Bell's two mini-courses focus on careers in catering, housing and nutrition for the elderly, and clothing renovation-repair.

Another aspect of the training covers the repairing

and making of small appliances. In addition to the two mini-courses being offered during the spring semester, three existing courses — "Clothing for the Family," "Household Equipment," and "Family Life" — have been expanded to include special emphasis on alterations and electrical appliance repair. In-service training is included in the instructional experiences. Students will be assigned to small businesses in the community.

The program is supported by a \$15,000 grant from the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church.

"We invite inquiries from interested people in the community who have an interest in self-employment opportunities in home economics-related jobs," said Mrs. Bell, who is a pro-

duct of Bennett's home economics department. "The skills emphasized in the mini-courses and regular courses can be applied to a number of interests and can open up avenues to new sources of personal income."

Few people around Bennett realized the implications of Mrs. Bell's interest in self-help activities when her "Home Management Theory" class planted a vegetable garden on the campus a few years ago. Profits from the student project were used to refurbish the Home Management House, a learning laboratory on the campus for home economics students.

As the economy continues to play havoc with shrinking paycheck power, Queen Hester Bell is stress-

See Page 26

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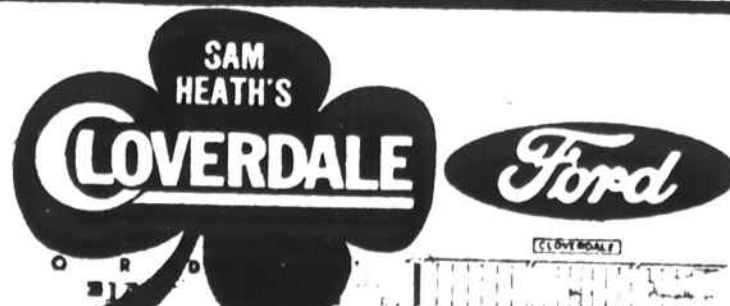


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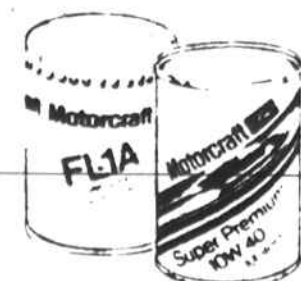
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