

FCC proposal could limit KZUM plan

BY JIM ANDERSON

Plans for upgrading, or increasing the power of KZUM-FM, a Lincoln radio station, may be limited as a result of a recent Federal Communications Commission policy proposal.

The FCC proposal deals specifically with nationwide interference problems between the radio bands allotted to educational (non-commercial) radio stations and channel six television stations. A formula used in the proposal would limit KZUM's upgrading to 100 watts. The station's management had requested a power increase from its present 10 watts to 2000, or from two to seven-and-a-half miles.

Jim Skinner, KZUM's chief operator, said radio stations affected are in the 88-92 megahertz range, the lower end of the radio dial. Channel six television stations, he said, take up the 82-88mh bands.

Skinner said the closeness of the two bands

represents poor planning on the part of the FCC, which allotted them.

"They didn't figure that educational radio would ever be very popular," Skinner said, "so they didn't plan for any kind of guard bands, which would safeguard against interference."

The FCC formula limits the maximum power of educational radio stations based on station frequency and the strength of the channel six television signal. The weaker the TV signal, the less power the radio station will be allowed.

Using the formula in KZUM's case produces the 100 watt limit, which would cover more than a three mile radius from its transmitter at 19th Street and Cornhusker Highway. But there is still hope that KZUM can be as powerful as its management hopes.

Skinner said the FCC formula assumes that filter traps, devices built into television sets to screen out radio interference, will be used. He said, though, that the filter trap re-

ferred to by the FCC is a modest one which cannot handle extreme interference.

"If what I call a 'high performance' filter trap were to be used and a figure for it plugged into the FCC formula," Skinner said, "that could boost the (100 watt) figure by 100 percent—if they (the FCC) would buy that." He is currently developing such a device, which KZUM would make available to TV owners if the FCC approves.

"Eighty to ninety percent of the interference can be handled by the inexpensive (\$2 or \$3) filter trap. The 10 percent that isn't will be taken care of by the high performance trap.

A bill now pending in the House of Representatives would allow the FCC to deal with the problem more effectively. It passed in the Senate last fall, as SB 929, but hasn't yet been considered in the House.

The FCC has determined that TV owners are partially responsible for the quality of their reception and that it is up to them to

purchase inexpensive filter traps if they're not satisfied, Skinner said. TV manufacturers are also partially responsible for the quality of their sets and should fit them with the traps to begin with, he said.

"It has not yet been determined whether or not broadcasters are at all responsible for the quality of reception," Skinner said, "but most are voluntarily doing what they can." He said he personally agrees with the FCC proposal.

KZUM management is currently drafting comments on the proposal, which must be submitted by the middle of August. Private citizens are encouraged to comment as well.

Skinner said he's optimistic about the station's chances of eventually getting the upgrading that is wanted.

He is encouraged, he said, by the prospects of the filter trap he is working on as well as the bill pending in the House of Representatives.

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Photo by Tim Schaffert

Fourth of July fireworks light the sky at Holmes Park. Thousands of Lincolniters jammed the park for the fireworks show.

Softball players can improve batting skills if they're cagey

BY MARK KRIEGER

Lincoln's avid softball players can now try to improve their batting skills for the price of a Coke.

The Cage, 4835 Garland St., is Lincoln's only softball batting cage. It features automatic pitching machines for slow-pitch and fast-pitch softball, all on a coin operated system.

Jim and Lari Stopek, 911 Smoky Hill Rd., own and operate The Cage, which has been open a little over a week.

The Cage is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week.

"It's all coin operated with 10 balls for 50 cents," Mrs. Stopek said. "The balls are pitched every six seconds."

The Cage has helmets and bats available for no charge if the customers need them, Stopek said.

The Cage has six automatic pitching machines that hold 450 balls each. They are capable of throwing fast or slow-pitches. The slow-pitches have a high arc and travel slowly while the fast-pitches have a small arc and travel very quickly toward the plate.

"We have three set on fast-pitch and three set for slow-pitch," Mrs. Stopek said. The Cage also features a special team rate.

Storm watch looks skyward

BY PAT MASTERS

No, tornado spotters aren't people who lurk behind trees, hide behind bushes or just stand around looking for tornadoes. They're specially trained policemen and citizen band radio operators.

A weather service specialist for the National Weather Service in Lincoln, Cliff Kennel, said that when a tornado is reported, police verify if it touched down by sending spotters to the area. Lancaster County is divided into 39 areas, each manned by spotters from the Lincoln Police Department, the County Sheriff's Office or by CB operators.

Spotters are taught through films and literature to spot conditions that might be favorable for tornadoes. If conditions are right, tornado watches are ordered, Kennel said.

If a tornado sighting is verified, a warning is given and the civil defense sirens are sounded. The difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning is that a watch means conditions are favorable for a tornado and to beware and a warning means to take cover immediately.

Kennel said the weather service receives several calls from people who think they see tornadoes every time the weather changes.

Of course, if a tornado is reported to have touched down near Lincoln, the sirens are sounded without verification, Kennel said.

The spotters aren't usually in any danger because they know to drive at a right angle from a tornado's path instead of trying to outrun it. Kennel said tornadoes usually travel easterly and last about six minutes.

News director Don Wright said that television station KOLN-KGIN uses radar to determine relative positions of storms and where they are moving.

'Butterfly' graceful

BY JEAN TIMMERMAN

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Repertory Theatre's cast of "Madame Butterfly" accepted the challenge of a difficult opera and carried it off gracefully.

The July 1 opening of the Puccini opera at Kimball Hall, was pleasant both to watch and listen to. The opera was directed by Gregg Tallman.

Costume designer Mary Byington's batik-looking, handpainted costumes and umbrellas harmonized well to make an original Oriental look.

Peter Schroeder, as B.F. Pinkerton, a lieutenant in the U. S. Navy, played the part well. His actions, along with his physical characteristics, suited the materialistic Pinkerton

character.

Deanna Mumgaard, as Suzuki the servant, added a sweet, personal touch to the opera as she remained forever faithful to the estranged Madame Butterfly.

Cherie Carl, as Madame Butterfly, did a magnificent job at one of the longest roles written for a soprano. Her powerful voice carried well, though it faltered on a few occasions. Ms. Carl never let the audience forget that Madame Butterfly was alone, and nobody would be her friend since she had renounced her family and religion to marry Pinkerton.

Robert Emile conducted the music for the opera with his usual finesse.

The UN-L Opera Theater carried off "Madame Butterfly" professionally.

Ethanol plant gets go-ahead

BY PAT MASTERS

Despite concerns of local citizens, construction in northeast Lincoln of a \$27 million alcohol fuel plant producing about 10 million gallons a year may begin by 1984.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission recently voted 7-0 to recommend to the city council that it let Nebraska Fuels Corporation construct the ethanol plant at 8301 Fletcher Ave. The plant would change grain into alcohol.

Commission chairman Bob Hans said public hearings will be held in July before the city council considers granting a zoning permit to the corporation. If the council grants the permit, then the corporation must apply for a building permit and several other permits, a process that will take about two years.

Mary Bell, president of the Northeast Rural Neighborhood Association, said she was concerned about sewage disposal, plant fire prevention and offensive odors from the plant.

As a result of the association's concern, the commission added six conditions to the permit. The conditions include waste disposal stipulations, fire prevention standards, plant waste water line construction, a dangerous chemical listing and an engineer's or architect's certification that alcohol spill seepage won't contaminate the ground water.

Hans said if the City-County Health Department finds odors from the plant a nuisance or obnoxious to the community, a public hearing could be held and more conditions to the permit might be added. The health department could close the plant, he said.

Sandy Nystron, manager of The Weigh Station at 84th and Cornhusker, said if the plant causes any air pollution then she is against building it. The off-sale bar and night club is across the street from the proposed building area.

The president of Dobson Brothers Construction at 7845 Fletcher Ave. said the plant shouldn't create any odor problems.

Adna Dobson said plenty of odors already come from the soybean processing plant Archer Daniel Midlands at 78th and Thayer and the new plant shouldn't be any worse.

"I'm sure the plant will be safe," said John L. Hoppe jr., the president of John L. Hoppe Lumber Co. at 75th and Cornhusker.