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Classic rock cranks it up in February PPM ratings. Classic rock shattered its PPM ratings record in a pair of key demos in February, underlining the timeless nature of the music that makes up its library. The format cranked up its 6+ share to a 5.1, a new record, and matched its previous record among 25-54 year-old listeners (5.6), first set in July 2014. Never mind that much of the music is 40 years-old. Classic rock has seen a steady updraft among 18-34 year-old listeners during the past year. In February it set a new high in the demo with a 4.4 share. Classic rock is “now consistently the second most popular rock format with that audience behind alternative,” Nielsen says in a new report. The format’s ability to attract Millennials born before most of its music was recorded suggests it’s moved beyond total dependence on Baby Boomers and is attracting new generations of listeners. It was hard to miss the excitement triggered by the ongoing re-issue of Led Zeppelin’s catalogue during the past eight months — the re-release of “Physical Graffiti” landed at No. 11 on The Billboard 200 chart. “As each year goes by, and we don’t see much on the forefront in current rock, classic rock gains more relevance and credibility with younger audiences,” Cox Media Group VP of radio programming Steve Smith says. “Even without a lot of current rock hits, every kid wants to be a rock star.” Alternative hit pay dirt in February too, posting a 3.0 share in 6+ for the first time in four years, to tie its own all-time PPM best.

FEBRUARY'S TOP FORMATS

Persons 6+	Hol. 14	Jan. 15	Feb. 15
News/Talk	7.8	9.0	9.2
CHR	7.6	8.1	8.5
Country	6.8	7.5	7.6
AC	12.7	7.6	7.4
Hot AC	*6.6	6.3	*6.6
Classic Rock	4.6	4.9	*5.1
Classic Hits	5.2	4.9	4.9
Urban AC	5.0	4.9	4.9
Sports	4.4	5.1	4.1
Urban Contemp	3.3	3.1	*3.4
Regional Mexican	3.2	3.4	3.4
Rhythmic CHR	3.1	3.0	3.2
All News	2.5	3.0	3.0
Alternative	2.6	2.9	3.0

All-time best results in PPM measurement noted by (*) **INSIDERADIO**
Source: Nielsen, 45 non-embedded PPM markets, Mon-Sun, 6am-12mid, AQH share

February rewind: CHR sizzles, sports returns to earth. After this year’s dramatic NFL playoffs delivered a ratings rush to sports radio in January, the format returned to planet Earth in February, dropping a full share-point in Nielsen’s PPM markets, from 5.1 to 4.1. Frigid February weather heated up ratings for news/talk, especially in the Northeast. Across PPM markets, the format trekked 7.8-9.0-9.2. All-news, meantime, held steady at a 3.0. February’s biggest gainer was CHR, a format that typically sees its largest gains in summertime. CHR moved 8.1-8.5 and is up nearly a full share 6+ since Nielsen’s Holiday survey. The format’s performance is so consistently superior that it sometimes gets taken for granted. CHR is almost always No. 1 among listeners aged 18-34 and 25-54 across PPM markets, a feat it repeated again in February. But this time it tied its all-time best 25-54 share (9.2) last seen in February and June of 2014. Close cousin hot AC tied its 6+ share record in February (6.6). And on the heels of its most successful PPM ratings year ever, urban tied the record it set in December (3.4) to rank tenth among all formats in February.

A mixed ratings bag for country. No format takes a bigger ratings licking from the holiday format than country. But from sea to shining sea, country stations continued to break out of the holiday ratings doldrums in February. In Baltimore, iHeartMedia’s WPOC (93.1) chugged 6.6-8.3-8.8 to rank first. Ditto Cox Media Group’s “Y 100” KCY, San Antonio, which marched 6.1-6.3-7.0. The first quarter ratings recovery had country advancing from fourth place in January to third in February with a 6.8-7.5-7.6 three-book trend. That’s country’s second-best February ever under PPM measurement, behind only last year’s 7.7. Still, Nielsen calls February a “mixed bag” for country based on a continued exodus of 18-34 year-olds.

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The format is still second only to CHR among Millennials but the gap between the two is widening. February's 8.4 share among 18-34 year-olds is the lowest non-holiday-book for the format since December 2012. It trails both last year's 9.3 and 2013's 8.9.



FCC's Wheeler: the market's Working on FM chips. FCC chair Tom Wheeler has told Congress he thinks FM chips in smartphones are a "good idea" and he's happy to see them in a growing number of handsets. But as more phones include activated FM chips, it's better for the FCC to stick with a hands-off approach. "I know broadcasters around the country are running commercials saying, write to the FCC and Congress and make them do it," Wheeler said. "I think this is something that is being resolved in the marketplace and we ought to monitor that and watch what happens." Wheeler said he believes "technological challenges," such as antenna size and battery drain, remain as hurdles for carriers. His comments echo statements made by commissioner Ajit Pai at a recent conference, when he told broadcasters that he too thinks the FCC should keep track of what's happening but hold off on taking any action. "I am optimistic that we will continue to see progress on this issue as a result of commercial negotiations and competitive pressure in the private marketplace," Pai told the Symposium on

the Future of Radio in Toronto in February. The National Association of Broadcasters says it's not seeking a government mandate, but concedes it wants the FCC to use its sway with cell phone companies to turn on FM chips, which lay dormant in the vast majority of smartphones. Beyond the FCC, broadcasters have found better reception at the Federal Emergency Management Association. FEMA administrator Craig Fugate has strongly advocated for the activation of FM chips in phones. When disaster strikes and phone service is cut-off or overwhelmed, a phone is as useful as "a brick," he said. "It would be another way to ensure that when all else fails, you get information from the broadcasters," Fugate said in a recent video post, adding, "And that may be the only way to get it."

Funding behind plan to shut FCC officers. It's a move that some broadcasters say will have pirate radio operators dancing in the streets — or doing worse on the airwaves. The Federal Communications Commission is looking at closing two-thirds of its field offices around the country and laying off most of the agents who work in them. "We need to make sure that in a flat or reduced budget that we're spending our money efficiently," Wheeler said. "When you have more trucks than agents, which is the reality that exists today, you have to ask whether you are distributing resources as they ought to be distributed." During a House Telecommunications Subcommittee hearing yesterday, he said some field offices don't have enough work to justify keeping the lights on all the time, noting in some a manager oversees just four staffers. Instead, the FCC is considering creating a "strike force" that would fly into a city when there's trouble. The FCC's current target is to deal with interference complaints within 24 hours, and Wheeler thinks they'll still be able to meet that goal. "We believe we can do this without a diminution in quality," he said. During a four-hour hearing, lawmakers expressed concerns about having too few field agents on the job or having them stationed in distant cities where they'd be of little help to local law enforcement. But coming as a belt-tightening Republican budget proposal was being released, talk of spending less at the FCC was decidedly on-message. GOP commissioner Ajit Pai said he understands the Enforcement Bureau's field offices perform "core functions," such as resolving interference disputes and helping protect public safety, but added he's "still studying the issue." He's already met with the union that represents FCC employees. "I want to make sure however it's reorganized, we protect the public," Pai said. Perhaps most telling, no one in Congress has suggested spending more to keep the FCC's field offices open. Asked whether he'd supply lawmakers with quarterly reports on how the Enforcement Bureau is managing under the proposed change, Wheeler agreed, calling it a "good idea."

Analyst sees hyper-local as radio's answer to connected car competition. The car is where 60% of radio listening is done, and a new generation of dashboard entertainment systems will present new opportunities and challenges for broadcasters. One analyst believes the answer for dealing with new competitors is going hyper-local. Macquarie Capital analyst Amy Yong says stations need to "leverage [their] presence in smaller markets," noting that "Pandora and other digital

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players are mainly focused on hiring sales teams in larger urban markets.” She also thinks broadcasters should rip a page from Townsquare Media’s playbook by “taking a holistic approach to advertising and cross-sell with digital and live events.” It’s a strategy she tells investors in a research report is successful enough for her to raise her revenue outlook for Townsquare. But Yong says there’s no denying how quickly the dashboard is changing. Today, a mere 2% of Pandora listening is done in a vehicle, but she sees the increasing connectivity paving a fast lane for streaming to grow in cars. Macquarie auto analysts estimate one-third of cars are being sold with internet access today, but forecast connected dashboards will be installed in about 60% of new cars by 2018. Of course installing the web in a car doesn’t mean listeners will use it. A survey released by Ipsos last month found just 34% of drivers want internet radio in their next car, compared to 80% who want FM/AM radio. In fact, twice as many people said they want a CD player than streaming. Consumers also showed they’re frustrated with digital dashboards, as 91% said they want carmakers to leave the typical car radio with buttons and knobs just as they are.

iTunes Radio adds programmatic buying. Add Apple’s iTunes Radio to the list of webcasters making inventory available to advertisers via programmatic buying. Machine-based iTunes Radio sales are made possible by iAd, the tech behemoth’s mobile ad network. According to Ad Age, the company will increase its targeting ability by anonymously cross-referencing its massive database of user phone numbers and email addresses with marketers’ own data. That will give advertisers the ability to use custom segments of Apple users, based on their mobile identifier, the company’s equivalent of a cookie. At the same time, Apple is making some iTunes Radio inventory available through AdWave, the audio ad exchange owned by AdsWizz, which works with iHeartRadio, Emmis, New York Public Radio, TuneIn and Marketron, along with ad networks and agencies. The moves signal a strategy shift beyond just the top-dollar Fortune 100 companies Apple courted for its 2013 iTunes Radio launch and into a larger pool of advertisers. Digital experts see it as a milestone for streaming audio. “It’s a very important step,” AdsWizz CEO Alexis van de Wyer tells *Inside Radio*. Advertisers have been keen on digital audio’s targeting ability but have been picky about choosing premium brands and high quality audiences, he says. Apple offering premium audiences at scale “is a clear signal that the industry as a whole is maturing,” van de Wyer says. Another sign of maturity is how agencies are using streaming in combination with other media, van de Wyer says. “The ability to combine media and overlay audio with demographics, tracking and targeting gives them a way to offer their advertisers a different format and product.”



Radio One gears up for taking all of TV One. Radio One is getting the financial pieces in line as it moves forward with its pending \$550 million deal to buy out Comcast’s 47.9% share of the broadcaster’s cable channel TV One. Radio One has gone into the market to refinance \$119 million of outstanding debt. CFO Peter Thompson told analysts on a conference call this month the move is just the first part, with the debt getting rolled up into Radio One, which will then look to do a larger refinancing of its debt totaling roughly \$1 billion. “We’re hopeful to get a better rate,” CEO Alfred Liggins said, pointing out the company will head into the debt market with TV One as an elixir for any lender worries. “We believe that this substantially improves the credit of the company and the collateral package,” he said. As Radio One becomes more of a multimedia company, it estimates half of revenue will come from radio, and the other half will be split between TV One and digital. Liggins said it’s an evolution he promised not only to shareholders, but also to advertisers. “In the continually browning America, multicultural advertising continues to rate strong and move forward and I think that we’re right at the epicenter of it,” he said. “We’ve got some more exciting announcements and initiatives in the coming months as it relates to really firming up and filling out this platform.”

Royalties: now producers and engineers want a cut. It’s not just songwriters, artists and record labels who think they should be paid more from streaming music services, including FM/AM radio webcasters. Now producers and studio engineers are pushing to clearly define their royalty payments. And two House members have introduced a bill to make that happen. Reps. Joe Crowley (D-NY) and Tom Rooney (R-FL) have introduced the Allocation for Music Producers Act. It would amend federal law to change how producer and engineer royalties are determined. It’s currently a haphazard system

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that leaves producers and engineers to hash things out for themselves with SoundExchange honoring those agreements. SoundExchange president Michael Huppe says the bill will make it easier for producers and artists to ensure everyone involved in the creative process is paid for their contributions. "For years, SoundExchange has proactively supported artist requests to direct royalties to the producers and engineers who work with them, and we fully support adding this practice to ensure fair payment into law," he says in a statement. The bill would, for the first time, give producers the statutory right to receive compensation for the recordings they produce. It would also create a procedure for producers and engineers to seek permission from artists or to receive royalty payments for using recordings older than 1995. Crowley says producers are the equivalent of a film director. "Making music is a team effort," he says. "As someone who has recorded a song or two in his lifetime, I'm familiar with just how integral producers and engineers are to the music industry." The bill has the backing of The Recording Academy and SoundExchange, which collects and distributes the royalties. The Recording Academy's chief lobbyist Daryl Friedman says they hope the bill is ultimately made part of a wider overhaul of music copyrights.

Inside Radio News Ticker...Entercom renews Patriots deal...The Patriots Monday tradition that began on sports talker WEEI, Boston 20 years ago will continue into the 2018 season. So will Patriots Friday, which launched in 2008. The NFL team and the Entercom sports station have announced a three-year extension for the broadcast rights to the exclusive seasonal programming. While WEEI doesn't have the Patriots play-by-play rights, it has turned a 20-year tradition into appointment listening for Patriots fans in and outside the market. **...Rulemaking petitions go online...**So much of the FCC's business is done on the internet that a requirement that petitions for rulemakings be filed on paper was on a shortened list of offline demands. That's changing as the FCC says it will now allow filers to submit a petition for rulemaking on its website. While it's most helpful to broadcast attorneys, more widely it's an indicator that the FCC isn't done yet shifting more of its work to the web. **...People Moves...**Cumulus Media's country "Nash FM 94.7" WNSH, New York promotes general sales manager Marie Mason to general manager. iHeartMedia promotes Jay Cruze to SVP of programming for its six-station Augusta, GA cluster. Entercom's hot AC "Hot 103.7" KHTP, Seattle splits with husband-and-wife morning drive team Candy and Jerry Potter. And NPR has hired Michael Oreskes as senior vice president of news and editorial director for the network. Read People Moves at Insideradio.com.

Two equipment makers align for HD Radio fix. Life on the fringe of HD Radio signals can be a frustrating experience for listeners as the digital signal switches back and forth with analog. It's not just sound quality that's the problem, so too is a delay. But engineers at Wheatstone and Belar say they've come up with a new solution. It will use a combination of software and hardware. Wheatstone's latest Automatic Control Interface, the hardware that allows on-air processors to communicate with other devices and systems within the radio station itself, or anywhere in the world, will work with Belar's software solution: a new Automatic Delay Correction algorithm. The companies say the result will be a real-time fix for the HD Radio delay problem. Belar's FMHD-1 modulation Monitor will continuously measure FM/HD time alignment and transmit delay corrections back to the Wheatstone on-air processor. The end result is a consistent and seamless HD blend to analog whenever the digital signal drops out.

GatesAir in-sources equipment manufacturing. It was one year ago that Harris Broadcast split itself in two under new owner The Gores Group, with GatesAir focused on over-the-air broadcasting and sister Imagine Communications focused on digital products. While new hardware has come to market during the past 12 months, one of the lesser-noticed developments is where those products are now being made. CEO Phil Argyris says the company has "returned to its heritage" with all of its products made in the United States and operations now consolidated in its Quincy, IL manufacturing facility. In a [blog post](#), Argyris also says station owners are increasingly looking toward technology to address what's happening in the wider media world. "Though over-the-air broadcasting remains a powerful force, TV and radio broadcasters worldwide feel the burden of rising operational costs, a shrinking labor workforce and fragmented audiences, the last of which makes attracting advertisers a clear challenge," Argyris says. To that end, GatesAir says it will hold a series of client events at the NAB Show next month in Las Vegas. But unlike traditional showcases of new tech products being brought to market, the focus will instead be on the changing media landscape.

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