



After a Week of Struggle, Radio Station Will Serve Thousands of Displaced Families

After a week of waiting, relief volunteers and independent media organizers in Houston, Texas, have finally launched Katrina Aftermath Media Project radio -- KAMP 95.3. This 6 watt radio station, which received a license to serve the people and families currently living at the Astrodome and adjacent buildings, will celebrate its official launch at noon central time, on September 13th.

The radio volunteers, led by community media organization Houston Indymedia, worked with a pack of volunteer engineers and technicians from all over the United States to get this station on the air. The FCC permit that the group is now using is the second permit the FCC approved for the emergency relief station. The first never went on air, after Harris County staff at the Astrodome and attendant buildings chose to deny the organizers of the station access to the Astrodome facility.

Spokeswoman for the Astrodome's Joint Information Center, Gloria Romer, told Renee Feltz of KPFT Local News, "The demands they required to do this we could not meet... Electricity supplies, phone lines, internet, chairs and computers, we could not accommodate that."

"Though the communications office of Harris County claimed that they didn't have the facilities to accommodate us, and that giving our producers regular access to the facilities would pose a security risk," said station organizer Tish Stringer. "But the residents of the Astrodome kept working with us, telling us the struggles they faced in getting the information they needed. So we didn't give up." The Federal Communications Commission approved a second license that broadcast from the parking lot of the Astrodome complex this past Sunday. This license, while broadcasting from outside the Astrodome rather than right inside, will reach the thousands of residents spending time in the parking lot outside the Dome, as well.

"A lot of the people don't know that they can come register for FEMA aid at the Tech Center rather than waiting in line all day," said Adan Medero, a volunteer working inside the Astrodome. "A radio station would help to get that message out, because the paging system is not working very well. A lot of times you can't hear it. So this would be great if the radio would do that for folks in the Astrodome."

"Katrina Aftermath Media Project -- 95.3 -- is an essential tool for families who really need communications right now," said Hannah Sassaman, an organizer with Prometheus Radio Project, a group which builds and supports community radio stations. "We will organize in Congress to build more Low Power FM stations for every big city and small town in the country."

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To listen to audio from 95.3 FM, visit
<http://evacuationradioservices.org>, or
<http://houston.indymedia.org>.

To learn more about Low Power FM radio, visit
<http://www.prometheusradio.org>.

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