

Ownership change planned at KNZA, Inc.

(MSC News)---New ownership is the plan for a group of local radio stations, with the planned transfer to keep operations in local hands.

KNZA Inc., which includes radio stations KAIR, KNZA, KMZA, KTNC, AND KLZA, has filed an application for transfer of control with the Federal Communications Commission, necessary to place ownership into the hands of Justin Fluke, a current owner and Vice-President of Operations for the company.

Greg Buser, KNZA Inc. President and General Manager, announced in a news release that an application was filed with the FCC on September 29 as the first step in transferring control of the stations to Fluke, which would happen upon approval of the application.

Buser, in the release, cites his longtime business partner and fellow owner, Robert Hilton, when explaining the reason behind Flukes selection. Buser, in the release, notes that several others have approached him and Hilton through the years about acquiring the radio stations, but they didn't feel the potential buyers would keep investing in local employees and the local communities served by the radio stations. However, Buser says Fluke, who has been a part of KNZA Inc. for over 20-years, "has demonstrated he has the interest and the abilities to keep the stations full of local programming content and he will bring new ideas both on the air and to the [station website] mscnews.net."

Fluke, who's held an interest in broadcasting from a young age, accepted the full-time sports director position at KNZA Inc. in June, 2001. Since that time, Fluke has, according to the release, "successfully been involved in all aspects of the business," having started working in sales in 2006 before joining the management team in 2012, and then buying into the ownership group in 2015. Among volunteering and serving on boards for many local organizations, the release notes that Fluke was elected to the Kansas Association of Broadcasters state board in 2019 and will serve as chair-elect in 2022.

Fluke, in the release, says "he was grateful for the opportunity," saying he is "very excited and looking forward to continuing the legacy of providing trusted local information and staying highly involved" in the local communities served by the radio stations.

Saying that he shares the same philosophies and goals that Buser and Hilton built the company on, Fluke says he doesn't plan any major changes, and credits what he calls "a terrific and dedicated staff that consistently produces a great product." Buser plans to remain on-staff for approximately one year to focus on

his current advertising clients and "to help Fluke with the transition of 38-years of business details."

Hilton retired from active involvement in the stations in 2012.

Pending the timeline of application approval, KNZA Inc. hopes Fluke will be installed as owner by January 1, 2022.

Buser and Hilton, who worked together at Hiawatha's KNZA, one of the first small market FM only stations in the area, which came on-air in 1977, purchased it from Mike Carter and began operating it in June, 1983 as as KNZA Inc.

Many Signals Communications