

GMM undaunted despite Hot Wave closure

A-Time Media, a radio business subsidiary of GMM Grammy, expects to enjoy at least 10-per-cent revenue growth to Bt1.2 billion this year despite the fact that Hot Wave 91.5 FM is no longer on the air.

After entertaining Bangkok's young listeners for 20 years, Hot Wave radio station ceased broadcasting last month when its concession contract with the Royal Thai Army expired.

Saithip Montrikul Na Ayudhaya, managing director of GMM Media, yesterday said the company was waiting for regulations governing the conversion from analog to digital radio broadcasting, the drafting of which is being overseen by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC).

The company hopes to be able to re-operate the station if it can win a licence under the new rules, she said.

Though the company has lost its radio station targeting young Bangkok listeners, she said she strongly believed that its three other radio stations – Chill 98 FM, EFM 94 and Green Wave 106.5 FM – remained strong and would post healthy growth throughout this year.

Of projected revenue of Bt1.2 billion, radio business will take the lion's share of 70 per cent, followed by 15 per cent from show business, 10 per cent from Green Channel (satellite-TV station) and the remainder from travel business.

Saithip stressed that Green Wave remained a spearhead radio business for which the company anticipated continued growth, as it also did for Green Channel.

Because of the closure of Hot Wave, A-Time Media has allocated the station's former staff and disc jockeys to other units such as EFM 94 and Green Wave. Some of them will also help EFM staff to produce entertainment programmes for Green Channel.

The company's projection of at least 10-per-cent growth in revenue this year is in line with the industry's predicted growth.

Last year, overall income from radio advertising rose by more than 7 per cent to about Bt6.3 billion, according to a media survey by Nielsen.

Saithip added that her company was keen to bid for licences to operate digital radio broadcasting and hoped to re-operate Hot Wave as soon as it possibly could.

The NBTC has said it will begin drafting regulations for the transition to digital radio on the VHF (very high frequency) band by March.

Once the rules have been finalised, the watchdog will welcome anyone wanting to join a trial for digital radio transmission.

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