

Big changes at Moose FM in Bancroft

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By Chris Drost

There are changes afoot at Bancroft's Moose FM radio station. Vista Radio Ltd. has begun a consolidation process that will see Bancroft as a hub for a cluster of stations in South-Eastern Ontario, including stations in Barry's Bay, Kemptville, Prescott and a new station in Bolton.

The first sign of the recent changes was the recent departure of radio host Mathew Reisler, who is now working out of the Vista Radio station in Bracebridge in their news department.

On the morning of Oct. 13, a new voice greeted early morning listeners. Joel Lamoureux, a radio host with 30 years of experience in a variety of sized markets in seven provinces, is now also the regional cluster program director for the Bancroft hub. Joining him at the station is his wife, Tracy Lamoureux who will take on the role of general manager and general sales manager for SE Ontario. Chris Walker will be the host of the afternoon show.

"This is a real boost for Bancroft with its long history of radio. It is also a coup for Mike McAlpine who has such a great relationship with all his clients," says Joel. The equipment at the station in Bancroft has also been enhanced and new technologies added.

For the first time in a number of years, Moose FM will have a dedicated news person who has already begun the role working from Barry's Bay. Trevor Smith-Millar will provide news updates for the entire cluster of stations in SE Ontario, allowing Joel to concentrate on the morning show and his program director duties. Smith-Millar will be relocating to Bancroft in the coming weeks.

Bancroft has a long history of community radio. The station originally began as CJNH in 1975 on the AM band at 1340 kHz and partially rebroadcasted in Belleville on CJNH and CJTN in Trenton. It was on March 2, 2001 that approval was given to convert to FM. In 2012, Vista Broadcast Group acquired Haliburton Broadcasting in cooperation with Westerkirk Capital. Vista Radio owns more than 45 stations across Canada, with a head office in Courtney, B.C.

"We have taken time to research and speak to the community as far as content and music is concerned. We will be refreshing the music in Bancroft and increasing the library but I don't want to give away some of the surprises," adds Joel.

The focus of the hub in Bancroft will be on local community. They have already hired some additional news staff. "We have gone from two to three people in Bancroft to five to seven employees. We are creating employment when a lot of other places are reducing," says Joel.

The Lamoureux family is planning on "digging some roots" in Bancroft. In fact, Joel explains that his wife Tracy is actually originally from Whitney.

"We are excited to create new opportunities. If there is one message that I hope gets across, it is that Moose FM is here for a long time, we guarantee that," says Joel.