



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WBBB RADIO 96.1 CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF REBRANDING WITH NUMBER ONE RANKING

RALEIGH, NC (November 20, 2012) For the first decade of its existence, WBBB-FM was, by most accounts, a very good radio station with very unpredictable ratings. “Whenever the ratings were about to come out, it was like a cliffhanger,” recounts the station’s Vice President/General Manager Mike Hartel. “We never knew if we’d be ranked third or thirteenth.” Some of that inconsistency was a byproduct of the station’s notoriously fickle target audience. “Rock listeners just can’t be satisfied,” according to Hartel. “It seems you’re never new enough, classic enough, hard enough, mellow enough, familiar enough or obscure enough because everyone has their own ideal and definition of what ‘rock music’ is. The whole rock radio genre is a study in contradictions.” The advent of curated music platforms like Pandora and Spotify only served to exacerbate WBBB’s identity crisis, so in August, 2011 the station’s parent company, Curtis Media Group, conducted a massive consumer research project to identify the most viable market position in a rapidly changing media landscape. Hartel said the study’s results weren’t surprising. “We got a hundred different answers from a hundred different listeners as to what the station—then called 96rock—meant to them and how we could get better,” he said. “The signals were so mixed, we decided to blow up the brand and start from scratch.”

After further market research, WBBB was relaunched as Radio 96.1 on November 21st, 2011. Gone were many of the familiar air personalities as well as the harder edges of rock. The commercial load was reduced and all extraneous talk eliminated. According to Hartel, one blaring headline of the listener study was clutter. “As much as our audience appreciated the local deejays, it kept coming back again and again— just shut up and play the music,” said Hartel. Besides its new name, the station embraced a fresh branding slogan: “More music, less blah, blah, blah.” Response was immediate. By May, the station narrowly edged out Curtis Media Country sibling WQDR and Clear Channel’s WDCG for the number one ranking with Adults 25 to 54 years of age, the demographic most coveted by advertisers. In the latest ratings (for October, 2012) WBBB tied with non-commercial WUNC-FM for number one with Adults 25 to 54*.



“They call 25-to-54 Adults ‘the money demo,’” says Hartel, “because the vast majority of ad buys are placed against that consumer segment. That makes it the money demo for us as well.” Hartel says the ratings success of Radio 96.1 should ultimately propel the station into the rarified air of the Triangle’s top-billing radio stations, WQDR and WRAL-FM. “We’ve already seen a significant increase in revenues since March,” he said, “and we’re projecting a nice bump in 2013. There’s no way we’d be in this great position had we not listened to the marketplace and responded. That’s the power of well-executed consumer research.”

Curtis Media Group (CMG) is North Carolina’s largest independent radio broadcaster with 25 radio stations and 70 affiliates reaching more than two-million weekly listeners across the state. CMG also operates the North Carolina News Network, Triangle Traffic Network, Southern Farm Network, CMG Southern Sales, CMG Interactive Marketing, TriangleHelpWanted.com, Triad Sports Network and State Government Radio.com.

*All ratings information copyright 2012, The Arbitron Co., Adults 25-54, AQH Rating, M-Su, 6A-12M

For More Information:

Mike Hartel (919)882-3731
mhartel@curtismedia.com