

STATION BACK ON THE AIR

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COOKEVILLE -- The oldest radio tower in the county fell to the ground Sunday, knocking its historic station, WHUB, off the air for a time.

The 182-ft. tower, located at 807 Hickory Street, broke into two pieces and fell over a fence on the property, officials said.

The tower and the station are owned by Clear Channel Communications. The break occurred about 30 feet up on the metal tower, according to WHUB program director Mike Dyer.

"That tower was put up back in July of 1940 when WHUB went on the air and made Cookeville the smallest town in America to have its own radio station," Dyer said. "It's the oldest radio transmitter tower between Nashville and Knoxville.

Cookeville's population at the time the tower was erected was 4,364, a figure which at that time did not include any Tennessee Tech students who were not full-time residents.

"We don't know what caused it to fall, maybe just because it was so old and maybe the winds we've had lately," Dyer said.

No one was injured and no damage was done except to the fence on the property and except for some electrical damage to the transmitter, which is housed in the small building on the site, he said.

Dyer said the station got back on the air at limited power on Monday by using a wire cable from the tower site building to a large tree behind the building.

Further repairs were being made yesterday, and future plans are to switch the WHUB transmitter over to the WPTN building and tower, located on W. Jackson Street. That station is also owned by Clear Channel.

A radio tower transmits a station's signal, radiating the sound out through the air. WHUB is a 1,000 watt station.

The tower which fell is located near the Tennessee Tech campus, and TTU Police Officer Jonathan Williams discovered the fallen tower on Sunday afternoon, according to TTU Police Chief Gay Shepherd.

But the tower had fallen well before that, possibly even late Saturday night, according to Dyer.

Dyer said engineers were on their way to Cookeville from Nashville yesterday to begin repairs and prepare for the move to the W. Jackson St. transmitter.

Published December 13, 2005 10:40 AM CST : Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN.



Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea

Tennessee Tech Police Officer Jonathan Williams looks at the wreckage where the old WHUB radio tower, located on Hickory Ave. near the TTU campus, broke and fell last Sunday. It was erected in 1940.

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