



KCHU.org

KCHU: Community Public Radio
Prince William Sound and Copper River Basin

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170 AM Valdez * 88.1 FM Cordova * 88.3 FM Whittier * 89.7 FM McCarthy * 90.5 FM Glennallen



What's the difference between public and commercial radio.

That's a big question, but it's an important one. We are definitely two different animals. In fact, the only similarity is that we use radio waves and streaming to broadcast our content. Here's what's different.

- **Different Content-** The news and entertainment programming on a public radio station is very different from what you will find on most commercial stations. It is produced by other public radio stations and public radio networks across the country and around the world. Even our local content does not sound like it does on a commercial station; not better, just different.
- **Different Listeners-**It's not that a person can't listen to both public and commercial radio. Lots of people do just that. They listen to each type of station for the things it does best and those things are different. But public radio listeners are very dedicated and loyal to public radio; to the concept of stations that are supported and run by their members and content that is not influenced by commercial considerations.
- **Different Management-**All public radio stations are required to have both a Board of Directors and a Community Advisory Board drawn from that station's membership. That means that a public station's members quite literally run the station. The Board of Directors hires and supervises top station managers. They authorize all policies and the annual budget. No major programming decisions are made without input from the Community Advisory Board, which takes input from the members and the community at large. These are requirements of being a public radio station.
- **Public financial information.** All public radio stations are required to make their most recent audited financial statements and tax return available in their public files, which can be accessed from the station's web site. If you ever have a question about what your station costs and how it's paid for, you can look it up. You can see the report from our independent audit firm that shows more detail about the finances, where the numbers come from and how they are calculated. Not everyone wants all that information, but if you want it, it's just a few clicks away any time.
- **Public radio does not make money for anybody.** As a non-profit organization, your public radio station puts all of our revenue from any source back into operating the station. This is not what a commercial station does. A commercial station is meant to make a profit that goes to its owners or shareholders. That's how a commercial business operates. But public radio stations are IRS designated non-profit entities. We're not allowed to make a profit for anybody.
- **Public radio is not funded by advertising.** Public radio is funded by grants and donations. This includes income from Alaska Charitable Gaming, which is licensed only to non-profits with membership. Commercial stations are funded almost solely by the sales of advertising.

- **Underwriting is not advertising.** Underwriting announcements from local businesses show that business's support for the station. You will never hear about a sale or a product in an underwriting announcement. All they say is "This program (or KCHU) is supported in part by, (name of business), (location, phone number or web site of business) and (motto or tagline of the business)." It's right in the contract. Also, underwriting announcements are never more than 15 seconds long. That's about 30 words including our mandatory wording. **FCC policy requires that underwriting announcement exist to identify, but not promote a sponsor's business or organization. According to those guidelines, an underwriting announcement cannot include the following.**
 1. **Calls to Action** ("call, stop by, invite, join, come" or phrases prompting action)
 8. **References to price** ("free, on sale..." or the actual price)
 9. **Superlatives** ("best, greatest, most reliable, more..." or other qualitative descriptors)
 10. **Inducements to buy**, rent, sell, or lease ("discounts, complementary...")
 11. **Comparative language** however factual (award-winning, board-certified, top rated...")
 12. **Adjectives** ("cozy, stellar, lovely, happy...")
- **PSAs are not advertising.** Public Service Announcements, or PSAs are just that, a public service. Only non-profit organizations and government agencies can run PSAs. Yes, there is a charge for locally produced PSAs. KCHU staff has to record, produce, schedule them. We have to pay our staff and for the equipment we use and the building we use it in. As part of our mission to serve our community, KCHU usually includes several spots over and above those contracted at no cost. A KCHU produced PSA is never more than 30 seconds long.
- **Public radio has less interruptions.** A typical commercial radio station offers 18 minutes per hour of advertising. A typical public radio station usually has 1 minute of underwriting and public service announcements in an hour. That's the ideal we strive for.