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## WBCN-FM's radio rivals: 'Bye Howard, hello ratings

By Dean Johnson  
Thursday, October 7, 2004

Shock talk superstar Howard Stern's decision to leave traditional radio at the end of 2005 to join the Sirius radio satellite network is not good news for local affiliate WBCN-FM (104.1).

But it's great news for every other radio station in Boston.

The most likely candidates to pick up Stern's old listeners include the WEEI-AM (850) morning show with Dennis and Callahan, which recently has shown Stern-like numbers. Longtime morning man Greg Hill at WAAF-FM (107.9) also could carve away some listeners with his mix of rock and talk.

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Matt Siegel at WXKS-FM (107.9) and his blend of Top 40 and talk appeals to a wide variety of local listeners. Some even might drift over to rival syndicated talker Imus on WTKK-FM (96.9).

As for WBCN, the station now must try to replace a profitable show that is always at the top of the ratings. WBCN had no comment, but others certainly were talking.

"In the short term, the potential for WBCN is great," said local radio consultant Bruce Mittman. "There will be renewed interest in Howard, and he'll probably see a big ratings spike.

"But in the long term, he's a franchise that will be very hard to replace," he said. "If they can't find a dynamic replacement - and they have a year to do that - then I think there will be a need to take a deep look at that station."

Stern's ratings are so big that if another local morning show can lure away just half of Stern's old crowd, it'll likely be the top dog.

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