



# Sheila and Nick Darr Announce New Ownership Agreement For Big Z Media

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ALTON - A change in ownership is on the horizon for a Riverbend media company. Sheila and Nick Darr of Godfrey have entered into an agreement to become the new owners of Big Z Media, purchasing the controlling interest from current owner Sam Stemm of Alton.



The parties to the agreement have filed a Transfer of Control application with the Federal Communications Commission and once approval is given, likely within 90 days, the deal will be finalized.

What started as AM radio station WOKZ 75 years ago has grown and morphed into Big Z Media, which operates news/talk radio station WBGZ (1570 AM 107.1 FM) and oldies station MyMix 94.3 (94.3 FM and 92.3 HD3). In addition, it publishes the Advantage newspaper as well as a local news and information website AdvantageNews.com, which also serves as the streaming platform for both radio stations.

Nick Darr began his radio career at WBGZ in 2001 as a part-time news reporter. He ascended through the ranks and excelled as an advertising account executive and was promoted to sales manager. After a stint with Edward Jones as a financial planner, he returned to the Big Z in 2016 as vice president and general manager. His wife Sheila is an elementary school teacher. They are lifelong Riverbend residents and have four children.

Stemm has been associated with the company for more than 38 years, serving in various capacities including sports director, program director, and general manager. He secured his first ownership stake in 1991 and became majority owner in 2004 and has served as the company's president since that time. He retired as GM in 2016 when he hired Darr for that position.

Stemm says he's elated that the Darrs will continue a long stretch of local ownership.

"For more than 70 consecutive years this company has been in the hands of local owners. I couldn't be more pleased that this great community resource will be guided by Nick and Sheila, who have roots here and who share my vision of what a local media company should be."

Darr says that he has asked Stemm to remain active in the company. "Sam has served as a mentor over the years and I'm pleased he's agreed to stay on board. The company will benefit from his knowledge and experience.

Darr adds that the change in ownership won't lead to any immediate changes.

"When Sam hired me as GM, he told me he expected me to run the company as if it were my own," he said. "There's no need to change course now that Sheila and I are taking ownership."