

Hello Folks-

Joking aside, many of our KAXE listeners live on the fringe... of our reception area, of course! I include myself in that category as I live outside of Bemidji where 91.7 starts to fade out as does 105.3 so I live with poor reception.

Radio reception has deteriorated from the early days in the 1970's when really not very many FM stations were broadcasting. Now, the broadcasting stations are spaced close together on the dial resulting in interference with each other. Recently, a religicaster has put up a translator in Walker at 104.9 that sometimes over-rides Bemidji's 105.3 signal. Couple that with a general deterioration in the quality of FM radios and you have "Perfect Storm" for poor reception. But there's good news.... there are 2 ways you can dramatically improve your FM reception: 1) **buy a good radio** and 2) **use an antenna**. Here's the skinny on both...

## Radios

A good radio will make a dramatic difference in your reception. The trick is finding a good one because what you buy at the discount stores is usually very poor. Here's a list of table-top radios that sound great and have excellent reception. You'll have to find an online retailer to buy these from because they are not carried in area stores.



### **Boston Acoustics Receptor** [Boston Acoustics Storefront](#)

This is a combination digital alarm clock and radio. It is perfect for your bedside. Well built, great sound, great reception. It runs about \$150 just about everywhere you buy it and is available directly from the company itself, too. A word of caution: the HD model that sells for around \$300 is not proving to be as good as the analog model so buy the plain Receptor, not the Receptor HD. KAXE does not broadcast an HD signal anyway so there would be no advantage to using the HD version of this radio.



### **Tivoli Model One** [Tivoli Website](#)

The Model One is a sweetie of simplicity. No clocks to blink at you, analog tuning dial, and it is a great radio for around \$120. Target just discontinued carrying these radios, which is very disappointing. The reception is on par with the BA Receptor but the look is very different so pick what suits you. Also, there is a Model Three, which incorporates an analog alarm clock but I don't like the fact that you have to manually set the alarm each nite as you go to bed, just like the old bedside clocks. For me, this is a recipe for forgetting to set it or waking up six times to check to make sure you DID set it.



### **Sangean WR-1** [Review of the radio](#)

I have not personally tested this radio but it is getting rave reviews from those who have. It has a cool look and a lighted slide rule dial which is very retro. This radio runs about \$100 and has some nice back panel features... headphone jack, option to run it on 12v (great for sailboats), and an aux input for your own device.

## Tuner/Receivers

It is getting hard to buy just a plain FM receiver without alot of video routing features built in. A few exist but it is okay to buy a receiver with "AV features" even if you don't use them. Here is where you may find something at a local retailer/music store and there are some things to look for:

- The all-in-one cubes with colored lights typically bought at Target/Kmart/Walmart have very poor radios and while may sound good in the store, have poor reception.
- Look for a real receiver with a separate antenna input, not the "rat tail" wire hanging out the back. A modern digital tuner may help keep adjacent stations from bleeding into KAXE signal if your old tuner just isn't separating out the stations.

## Antennas

In addition to having a good radio, having an antenna other than what came on the radio will make a large difference in reception. People have added antennas for TV reception for years and the time has come to use one for FM. Here's two commonly available types:

### Dipole

This is a flimsy piece of wire in a "T" shape that can help reception over the radio's own internal antenna. They don't work miracles but they help and they are very inexpensive.. like around \$5 at Radio Shack or just email me and I'll send you one. The orientation of the T makes a difference but there's often not much choice on the wall as to which way to orient it.

### Yagi

This is the classic VHF television antenna and infact, a TV antenna can work very well if it is mounted on a rotor that can turn it for best reception. These type of antennas are VERY directional and really must be aimed. Because they are directional, this antenna can be very useful for reducing interference from a strong station nearby the KAXE frequency. There are also dedicated FM antennas that perform much better than a TV antenna as they are tuned to FM frequencies. Some examples of dedicated FM antennas are:

- Radio Shack model 15-2163 which may be in some stores locally for \$26 but is discontinued
- [Antennacraft FM6](#), identical to the Radio Shack antenna and is available widely online
- [APS antennas](#) for FM
- [Winegard antennas](#)
- Magna Dynalab [MD-10](#) and [MD-6](#)

People have very mixed results with the indoor, powered antennas sold for high prices. My suggestion if you want one of these is to buy it from a place that will accept returns. There just isn't a substitute for mounting an antenna as high as possible and aiming it correctly.

## Alternative Radios



One last item...there are radio now that operate off of your household WiFi signal. Since we've upgraded KAXE's stream quality and capacity, this may be a good alternative especially if you live out of our signal area, like in Germany. It may be the way of the future for much of radio and KAXE is prepared for that leap. I haven't tried one of these yet and there are many models out now but readily available ones are these:

- [Acoustic Energy](#)
- [Roku R1000](#)

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