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## WLNG Sound Is Larger Than Life

Wheatstone processors handle oldies and remotes for iconic station

### USERREPORT

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SAG HARBOR, N.Y. — WLNG(FM) is indeed a unique station. Situated on the eastern end of Long Island, the station has served the Hamptons community with news, local information and music since 1963. Originally on 1600 AM, WLNG signed its FM on at 92.1 MHz in 1969 and in 1998 became an FM-only station.

Throughout its history, WLNG has had a special bond with its community. A big part of that is consistency. Newscasts, remote broadcasts and other community announcements are prominent features on the station every day. That consistency is not only present in the on-air content, it is vital behind the scenes in the technical department.

One of the features of the station is the “WLNG sound.” Crafted in the 1970s by then-President Paul Sidney, the sound has always been punchy and “larger than life” on both the AM and the FM. That included reverb and carefully selected processing pieces to shape the sound. As technology advanced, so did the sound. But care was taken to keep the reverb and keep the sound larger than life. You knew it was WLNG when you tuned in.



GUI for Wheatstone FM-55

One of Paul’s calling cards was his desire to keep the station in mono, and the station remained that way into the millennium. But as times changed we knew we had to as well, and there was nothing technically preventing us from going stereo. Well, maybe finding the right audio processor.

We looked at a number of processing options on the market and decided to turn to Wheatstone and Mike Erickson. Mike was a Long Islander (and WLNG employee in the 1990s) and spent more than a decade at CBS Radio crafting the sound some of their New York City FMs, including another legendary station, WCBS(FM). Mike suggested, at the time, the Wheatstone FM-4 processor. We auditioned one and purchased it.

All was well until Hurricane Sandy taxed our facility. WLNG made it through the storm, but on the other side we started to look for ways we could have redundant systems and improve our reliability during major storms — after all, WLNG is the go-to place for people to find out information during a storm. We get called before the power company!

We wanted another FM-4 so we would have a backup processor. We again turned to Mike. Fortunately, the FM-4 was discontinued. I say fortunately not because the processor was bad but because Wheatstone now had an even better option.

WLNG purchased one of the first FM-55 audio processors after seeing and hearing it at the NAB Show in 2014. We were immediately impressed on the increased consistency of the box both in modulation and tonal balance between cuts. As stated, WLNG’s broadcast day consists of lots of spoken-word segments intermingled with music that spans five decades of pop. To have a processor be able to deal with all of this using one preset was something to hear. The FM-4 did a good job, but we had a few tradeoffs at the



time. One of the few things about the FM-4 was latency. Our jocks listen off air and the FM-4 had about 9 ms of latency. The FM-55 just about cut that number in half. Latency is a mere 5 ms, quick enough for even the most discerning air talent.

Setup was easier than the FM-4 as well. A front-panel OLED screen got us aligned with input levels as well as the output composite and pilot injection levels (the processors are

located at the studio with a composite STL). While there are flexible sound adjustments on the front of the FM-55, the GUI is where the magic happens. We were able to quickly dial in our sound and save the preset. We literally haven't touched the box since.

What is most interesting is how unique you can make the FM-55 sound. We could sound like the other stations in our market if we wanted, and if we ever needed to go

there it's just a few adjustments away. But the FM-55 can also break out of the mold of other processors on the market and yield a unique sound, one that fits WLNG to a T and has attracted listeners and clients for 53 years. Consistency and flexibility to evolve and we wouldn't want it any other way.

**For information, contact Jay Tyler at Wheatstone in North Carolina at (252) 638-7000 or visit [www.wheatstone.com](http://www.wheatstone.com).**