

Vashon Island has a radio station. It's on the air right now at 1650 AM.

To the FCC, we're known as WQHK904. Here on the Island, you'll know us as "Voice of Vashon Standing By."

The name serves as a kind of Statement of Purpose. Should disaster strike, such as an earthquake or even another serious windstorm, there will be information you need: What roads are closed? When will the ferries run again? Where can I find emergency shelter? How do I get potable water?

In such a scenario, Voice of Vashon Standing By has generator power and radio links to the Emergency Operations Center, allowing our trained volunteers to go on the air LIVE to pass you the information you need over 1650 AM the moment it comes to us.

Of course, if there's still Internet access and cable TV up and running, our live broadcast can be heard online at voiceofvashon.org or on cable channel 21. If the power is *out*, however, 1650 AM becomes your *only* source of current emergency information regarding Vashon and Maury Islands. You won't be getting it from Seattle radio stations. They'll have their hands full on the mainland. We'll be on our own.

Of course, this isn't the low-power FM of our dreams, but the politics are not in alignment for that door to open any time soon. That's why we're building Voice of Vashon Standing By... ten watts at a time.

Our only legal option, given the current media environment is a ten-watt Travelers' Information Service radio station. You've heard these (very) low-power stations before, whenever a sign tells you where to tune to get pass conditions along the highway as you head up into the mountains.

Our first transmitter, located at the VoV studios on Sunrise Ridge, can be heard on most car radios from a little north of downtown Vashon to just south of the intersection at Burton. East to west, you should hear us from around Lisabuela to Ellisport and along the western shore of Maury Island. Your mileage may vary, of course. Or yardage, as the case may be.

With time, and some determined fund-raising, we'll put a second transmitter up north to get a seamless signal from the ferry dock to Burton. Then we'd like to add a third transmitter at the south end, allowing us to eventually cover the island with an ongoing, 24/7 radio signal.

When the wind isn't blowing and the ground isn't shaking, you'll get a pre-recorded, rotating "program" that will keep you posted on events and activities that are happening on Vashon each week, along with any information that travelers can use when they tune in. We intend to find ways to make the station fun to listen to.

On October 13, during the island-wide disaster drill, VoV Standing By will give you valuable emergency preparedness tips, and keep you posted on where drill activities are being staged around the island.

Many thanks go to Vashon Park District for agreeing to hold the actual TIS license (helping us meet FCC requirements). Huge thanks also goes to Puget Sound Energy and their partner Potelco, for donating the services of a crew and bucket rig to come out to the VoV site, drill a hole in the ground, and install our 40-foot transmitter pole and antenna. Theirs was a most generous gift of time and energy.

Next time you're in town, check out your Island information station at 1650 AM. Sure, it's only ten watts. You have light bulbs more powerful. In a disaster, though, those light bulbs could be useless. That's why you'll have... Voice of Vashon Standing By.