

# Everything 'perfecto' at new Latino radio station

By Antonio Zavala

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The rugs are new, the station equipment is new and Guillermo Prince (no relation to the other Prince,) the station's program director, still needs staples, sturdy staples.

"Staples," says Prince to the office girl. "They're no good, I haven't used them."

Radio station WOPA 1200 AM hit the airwaves on Jan. 1 just as most Chicagoans were welcoming the New Year.

Ensnconced on the third floor of the renovated Soo Line Terminal railroad warehouse at 509 W. Roosevelt Rd., the new station hopes its "metro mix" format is palatable and pleasing to the taste and ears of Chicago's growing Latin American community.

The city already boasts four 24-hour Spanish-language radio stations. WOPA, being promoted as "Radio Exitó," hopes to carve a niche in the market.

The station is owned by Cid Broadcasting Co., whose president Arthur R. Velasquez Jr. made his fortune in packaged tortillas with Azteca Corn Products.

Martha Garza, an account executive with the new station, said the station will emphasize news, sports ("Chicago, like San Francisco, is very sports-minded") and musical hits from the past and present. "Not just Top 40," Garza said.

The station has a reach of 10,000 watts and its signal is able to reach all Chicago and some of the fringe communities. The station's antenna facilities are located in the South Side.

To operate the new station, Cid Broadcasting has wooed and lured some hefty talent. Besides Prince, there's Felix Arizon. Jaime Salinas and



**Guillermo Prince, the station program director says WOPA will be serious about community service.**

(Photo Eloy Reyes)

the man with the big lungs Ezequiel Banda-Sifuentes, a commentator with WOJO-FM who now becomes the station's news director.

Prince said he will try a mixture of news, music and local programming, including a morning drive radio talk show. The station's targeted audience is listeners 18-years-old and over who may have lived in Chicago at least eight years. Garza, however, said the target audience is listeners between 25 and 49-years-old.

Elisa Miguel, a news announcer, was scanning *USA Today* one morning only four days after the station went on the air. She said she was looking for light news to read on the air. She wanted to contrast this with the day's big story on the capture of Manuel Antonio Noriega. The UPI Spanish wire service was spewing copy on the floor near Miguel's feet.

"We don't want to bring our listeners down," said Miguel. "This way we elicit a smile."

"On the Noriega story," said Miguel, "nobody gives credit to the Catholic nuncio, they did a great job."

Elsewhere inside the brand new studios Jaime Salinas, a disc jockey, was busy at the controls.

"Perfecto," said Salinas. "Todo esta listo-Perfecto. everything is

working fine."

Jorge San Jose, president of San Jose & Associates, said the Chicago market should be able to support five 24-hour Spanish-language radio stations. Miami alone supports nine.

"I think it's beneficial," San Jose said, adding that stronger competition will force stations to find a niche in the Latino market and also attract more attention to Chicago from advertisers.