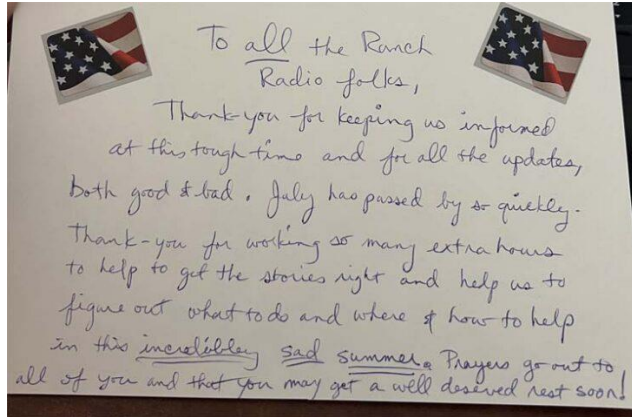


Texas Hill Country Radio Stations Helping Community Recover a Year After Flood

This July Fourth marks first anniversary of tragic flooding in Kerr County

By [Randy J. Stine](#)

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A listener thank you note to the staff at Ranch Radio. Click to enlarge.

As the country gathers to celebrate this July Fourth, local radio stations in the Texas Hill Country will remember the flooding one year prior that disrupted holiday celebrations and spread unspeakable tragedy.

The scope of the disaster on July 4, 2025, was incomprehensible. As a result of heavy rain and flooding of the Guadalupe River, 139 people lost their lives, including 27 campers and counselors killed by flash flooding at Camp Mystic in Texas Hill Country.

In response to the tragedy, local radio broadcasters in Kerrville, Texas, rallied resources to relay lifesaving information around the clock to the surrounding communities.

Two local radio broadcast groups, Jam Broadcasting and Ranch Radio Marketing Group, called in staff to maintain operations as the scope of the catastrophe was unfolding.

The destructive and deadly flooding in the Texas Hill Country, located just northwest of San Antonio, brought to light the many deficiencies in the local warning systems. However, radio functioned as it should in an emergency, said those familiar with developments, delivering much needed details about the emergency and recovery efforts.

Devastation after the Guadalupe River flooding last July 4 in Texas.

As Justin McClure, owner and CEO of Jam Broadcasting, told Radio World: “We started helping at 6:00 a.m. on July 4th and our team hasn’t stopped.”

Springing into action

Local radio stations endured a stressful first 24 hours and beyond, McClure said, relaying nearly 30 EAS warnings the night of the flood into the next day.

“By 6:20 a.m. on the morning of July 4th, our entire on-air staff had voluntarily reported to the stations, ready to provide the critical updates and information necessary to keep our listeners safe.

“As the sun rose that morning and the true scale of the devastation became clear, the Jam Broadcasting team transitioned into a continuous emergency response,” McClure said.

McClure said most cellular phone service across the region failed at the height of the flooding, leaving a huge communications void that was partially filled by local radio.



Justin McClure helping with cleanup at
Dietert Community Center in Kerrville

“People were stranded for days by the flood and had no way to reach the outside for help,” he said. “We were the lifeline for information for many.”

Jam Broadcasting’s main studios, located in Kerrville, include three FM stations and one AM station with several FM translators. All are licensed to Kerrville or the surrounding area.

McClure said his stations and transmitter sites were not flooded, but sales revenue for JAM Broadcasting essentially stopped for approximately two months while its team was focused on assisting our community in the recovery efforts.

The radio stations donated airtime to local businesses, he said, that were struggling to remain open during the aftermath.

Station staff didn’t just stay behind the microphone. They were “on the ground mucking out flooded homes and businesses, transporting pallets of water and food, cooking and feeding families in need at shelters and churches, and assisting with direct logistics wherever needed,” McClure said.

Pitching in for nonprofits

The broadcaster opened its studios to every nonprofit and community organization in the region, he said.

“We served as a megaphone for those coordinating housing, food, and clothing for residents displaced by the water. And we donated more than \$560,000 in airtime to local nonprofits and charity organizations in our community.”

Jam Broadcasting crew (top, left to right): Justin Radikiewicz, Cody Nichols, Michelle Laton, John McClellan, Leslee McClure and owner Justin McClure. At front, Gabbie Larentz and Felecia Fessenden.

To help in the financial recovery of Kerrville, Jam Broadcasting helped co-sponsor a series of highly successful benefit events. The “Rocking the Rebuild” concert, a “Texas Artist Concert” at the Rockbox and multiple events held at the 11th Street Cowboy Bar in Bandera, Texas, raised a combined total of \$60,000.

“Beyond these concerts, we have continuously promoted fundraising events for various local organizations to ensure a steady stream of resources for those still rebuilding their lives,” McClure told Radio World.

Even now, as they mark the first anniversary of the flood, the work is far from finished, he said.

“We remain dedicated to helping residents access vehicles, housing, and long-term recovery resources,” McClure said.

Furthermore, McClure said he is currently overseeing the installation of GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) repeaters to extend the range of amateur handheld devices and personal mobile radios at Camp Mystic on the South Fork and to other strategic locations along the river.

“The infrastructure project will ensure community residents will always have a reliable way to communicate with each other and can link officials and the public during future severe weather events,” he said. “We have to make sure folks are alertable.”

McClure, who also hosts a morning radio program, said JAM Broadcasting believes that being a local broadcaster means more than just playing music. “It means being the heartbeat of the community when it matters most,” he said. “We believe, as broadcasters, we owe the communities that support us.”

He said his radio stations this year plan to broadcast live from Louise Hays Park in Kerrville on the night of July 4 during a fireworks show in somber recognition of the one-year anniversary of the flood.

Meanwhile, Ranch Radio Group launched Hill Country Strong, a coordinated, multiplatform effort to help lead the community through crises with real-time information.

According to a recap of station activities following the flood, on-air teams worked “extended hours” to provide continuous updates on-air and through social media, including, emergency alerts and safety warnings, road closures and rescue efforts, shelter and displacement resources, missing persons reporting information and volunteer coordination and supply needs.

[\[Related: “Here’s How Broadcasters Are Aiding Texas Flood Recovery Efforts”\]](#)

“The news gathering the first few days after the flood was very chaotic,” said AC Cantu, news director for the five-station group. “There was a lot of false information flying around. We had to verify everything we put on the air. We would hear one thing and then be told that might not be completely true. We had to be sure.”

In addition to on-air and social media coverage, Cantu said Ranch Radio Group created and maintained a “comprehensive, continuously updated website resource hub, which became a central destination for both those needing help and those looking to assist.”

She said the website provided direct contacts for food, shelter, and supply assistance; volunteer registration and coordination information; verified donation links for individuals, families, first responders, and relief organizations; mental health and crisis support resources; and financial recovery information, including FEMA, SBA, and local assistance programs.

“There is a huge need for communication following a disaster like this,” Cantu said. “Our stations connected thousands of residents to critical resources, coordinated volunteer awareness, and maintained a continuously updated information hub throughout both the crisis and recovery phases.”

Ranch Radio also partnered with organizations like City West Donation Center, South Texas Blood & Tissue Center, Convoy of Hope, Mercy Chefs, World Central Kitchen and others on relief efforts.

“Such a large area around here was impacted. The river runs through all of Kerr County, so Kerrville, Hunt, Ingram and Center Point, then it goes through Comfort then onto Canyon Lake, which is almost an hour away,” Cantu said.

Meanwhile, the Hill Country Strong campaign helped drive awareness and participation that contributed to more than \$280,000 in direct community support, Cantu said, benefiting local schools, volunteer fire departments, and relief organizations across the Hill Country.

Helping to heal

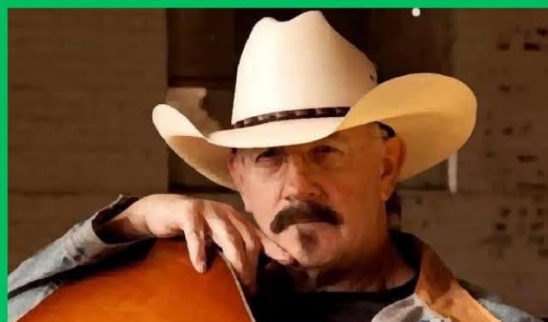


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Beyond physical recovery, Cantu said the radio stations supported the community's emotional healing by promoting mental health resources, encouraging community connection, covering vigils and memorials and sharing stories of resilience and hope.

"There is only one way to get through a disaster of this magnitude, and that is together," she said.

Recovery for the community continues, Cantu said, since many homes, stores and commercial structures have yet to be rebuilt.

"And there are still several bodies missing of those who perished. We've been living this every day for a year, so it's been a long journey that still is not over. My guess is the rebuild will take five years, but the mental anguish for many will last forever," Cantu said.

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