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1,500-foot broadcast tower at MCC proposed

By TIM KANE – [tkane@nwherald](mailto:tkane@nwherald.com)
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CRYSTAL LAKE – McHenry County College could be home to a 1,500-foot-tall broadcast tower – taller than the roof of the Sears Tower – if a communication management company proposal gets approved.

The tower, if built, would greatly improve TV and FM radio reception in the area and could help the college pay for future construction projects.

Oklahoma-based BMB Communication Management LLC wants to buy 3.6 acres of land on MCC's Route 14 campus for the construction of the self-supporting tower, which would broadcast Chicago- and Rockford-based radio and TV signals.

The proposed tower would be three times the height of the tallest of four existing towers on college property.

The new tower would be on the southeast corner of the college's main campus, bordering on the ComEd right of way.

BMB will appear before the McHenry College Board at 7 p.m. Feb. 18 to show college trustees its plans to purchase the land for \$6 million.

"That's a pretty significant price," MCC President Walt Packard said. "If we decided to do this, getting those kinds of resources would really help us underwrite the kind of construction projects we would want to do in the future. It would allow us to get matching grants. It would be a bit of relief on the local taxpayers."

Thomas C. Zanck, attorney representing BMB, said the tower would greatly improve TV and FM radio reception in the area. Zanck added that his client also would need the approval of the Crystal Lake City Council.

Paul Buck, an engineer with Colorado-based Nextmedia Group, said Nextmedia owns the tallest of the four existing towers on the college campus. It stands 495 feet. The Sears Tower stands about 1,450 feet minus its antennas.

Buck said any tower taller than 500 feet would need to get approval from the Federal Aviation Administration if it is to be built so close to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

"Fifteen-hundred foot tower," Buck said. "That's a lot of steel."

John S. Maguire, a BMB official, said in a news release that the tower would stimulate the local economy by creating construction jobs and increasing the broadcast range for radio and TV stations.

"This particular piece of property is unique in that it will allow a number of area radio and television stations the potential to upgrade their signal and reach a significant number of new listeners," Maguire said.

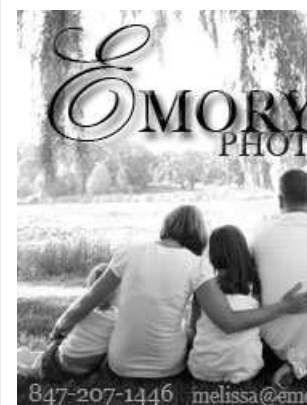


A 1,500-foot broadcast antenna proposed to be built on the campus of McHenry County College would rise higher than the roof of the Sears Tower in Chicago. The antennas on the Sears Tower do not count toward its structural height of 1,451 feet. (AP file photo)

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The college has no plans to expand its campus on the land where the tower would be built, Packard said.

"Because of all the potential upsides, the trustees thought, you know, we should at least consider this," he said.

Tall structures

Selected tall buildings and structures, including location and height:

- Burj Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates: 2,684 feet*
- Freedom Tower, New York: 1,776 feet*
- Proposed broadcast tower, Crystal Lake: 1,500 feet**
- Sears Tower, Chicago: 1,451 feet
- Trump International Hotel and Tower, Chicago: 1,362 feet
- Empire State Building, New York: 1,250 feet
- Aon Center, Chicago: 1,136 feet
- John Hancock Center, Chicago: 1,127 feet
- Eiffel Tower, Paris: 984 feet
- Statue of Liberty, New York: 305 feet

*under construction

**subject to approval

Sources: Emporis.com, BMB Communication Management LLC



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