

# Listeners to decide on 'Prairie Home'

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The fate of "A Prairie Home Companion" radio show will be decided Saturday night.

KSMU's listeners be asked to support financially the increasingly popular public radio program if they want it to continue for another year.

The public radio station will ask listeners to pledge \$1,890 — the program's new yearly cost — during the two-hour show. If pledges of at least \$1,100 are made, the show will continue through the summer until another fundraiser is made.

"We are starting to get a little trickle of interest, not a great groundswell," KSMU Station Manager Arlen Diamond said today. "We will let the listeners decide the fate of 'A Prairie Home Companion.' We will let them know before, during and after the program how they can save it."

Public announcements will begin during "All Things Considered," the popular news program. Other announcements will be made during "A Prairie Home Companion's" intermission and at the end of that show.

About 22 people have contacted the Southwest Missouri State University-owned station since officials announced the show will end because of high costs. The program is scheduled

to end Saturday night.

Purchase cost of "A Prairie Home Companion" will increase from \$520 to \$1,890 yearly, forcing KSMU officials to scrap the program.

National Public Radio's "A Prairie Home Companion" airs live on most NPR member stations Saturday nights. The show, NPR's most popular program, is carried by 193 stations.

Locally, the live program is heard from 5-7 p.m. The show has attracted a loyal following from KSMU listeners who consider it their "most popular program without a doubt," Diamond said.

Its popularity results from several factors, including eclectic musical acts, host Garrison Keillor's meandering tales of Lake Wobegon and commercials. Both the town and the commercials are figments of Keillor's imagination.

Diamond said KSMU officials have received pledges from listeners who want the show continued from St. Paul, Minn. One man pledged \$100 and a woman said her family would pledge \$10 monthly over a year's time.

"We've been telling people who called in yesterday 'Don't send in any money right now, but listen to the program Saturday,'" Diamond said.