

**Grassroots Radio Conference Coming to Urbana:
Hundreds from across the country will converge July 26-29
to chart the future of community radio.**

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Urbana, IL—From July 26-29, the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center will be hosting the Grassroots Radio Conference, an annual conference celebrating the vibrant and democratic medium of local, community-driven radio. Highlights include a Friday night keynote by *New York Times* best-selling author Joe Torres, a bus tour of UC2B, Urbana-Champaign's new public broadband system, and a celebration of WRFU's new radio tower, which will enable the station to reach the entire Champaign-Urbana community. Registration is \$125 (\$75 low-income) and can be done at www.grassrootsradioconference.org.

“We're calling it 'The Future of Community Radio' because we're at a crucial juncture for radio,” says GRC co-organizer Austin McCann. “Congress passed the Local Community Radio Act in 2010, which means that more than 1,000 new community stations might be going on air in the next few years. Meanwhile, digital technologies have opened up a new frontier for radio stations. What do we want this new media landscape to look like? How can we best use this incredible opportunity to grow our democracy? We want to use this conference as a fun & challenging space to have these conversations while we learn indispensable tools about how to start and run our own stations.”

With the rise of digital technology, community radio stations have an opportunity to engage global audiences, deploy mobile studios, share community wireless internet, and become multimedia community centers. Participants in the GRC will chart a vision for community radio as a dynamic community-building tool for decades to come.

The keynote address will be delivered by Joseph Torres, co-author of the *New York Times* bestseller *News for All the People: The Epic Story of Race & the American Media*. Friday, July 27, at 8:00pm. This event is open to the public, and free for GRC registrants. Single tickets are \$25 (\$10 low-income and are available at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/256811> or at the IMC on the day of the event.

The conference will also feature ‘SPEAK Café featuring Hakim Bellamy’: acclaimed poet-activist Hakim Bellamy & the poets of Speak Café will perform at Grassroots Radio Conference 2012 in Urbana on Saturday, July 28 at 8:00pm. This event is open to the public, and free for GRC registrants. Single tickets are \$15 (\$7.50 low-income) and are available at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/257782> or at the IMC on the day of the event.

Founded in 2001, the UC-IMC is a grassroots organization that fosters the creation & distribution of media emphasizing underrepresented voices and promoting empowerment & expression through media & arts education. Located in the historic downtown Urbana post

office, the UC-IMC includes a low-power radio station (Radio Free Urbana 104.5 LP-FM) among its many projects.

The Grassroots Radio Coalition held its first conference in 1996. Each year, the conference provides skill-building workshops, conversation spaces, and panel presentations on a variety of relevant topics. Volunteer-based community radio stations are cultural institutions in their communities, reflecting the unique concerns and passions of the people who live there. With a system of governance based on openness and collaboration, and diverse programming produced by volunteers and funded by listeners, these stations are cornerstones of participatory democracy, offering ordinary citizens the chance to exercise First Amendment rights in a mass medium and audiences the opportunity to directly support the programming that is of importance to them.

This year's conference partners include Free Press, Prometheus Radio Project, Media Action Grassroots Network, the New America Foundation's Open Technology Initiative, WRFU 104.5 - Radio Free Urbana, WEFT 90.1 FM, Illinois Public Media, Urbana Public Television, Volo Broadband, Makerspace Urbana, and Chambana.net.

Grassroots Radio Conference 2012 will take place in Urbana, IL, with workshops & events from July 26-29. To register for the conference, go to www.grassrootsradioconference.org.

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The Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center is a grassroots organization committed to using media production and distribution as tools for promoting social and economic justice in the Champaign County area. We foster the creation and distribution of media, art, and narratives emphasizing underrepresented voices and perspectives and promote empowerment and expression through media and arts education.