

Bosses of the CBS-owned station have been in talks through most of the year with city officials and a developer on building a new home for Channel 2 at Block 37, the Loop site bounded by State, Dearborn, Randolph and Washington streets. The Block 37 location reportedly would include a studio with windows overlooking Daley Center Plaza.

## Channel 5 hires new morning anchor

**Ellee Pai Hong**, morning news anchor at WFSB-TV, the CBS affiliate in Hartford, Conn., is headed for Channel 5 in the same role. Starting next month, she is expected to join **Dick Johnson** on the NBC-owned station's weekday morning newscast.

Pai Hong, who was born in Seoul, South Korea, has a master's degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. She worked at WAND-TV in Decatur and WIFR-TV in Rockford before joining the Hartford station in 2001.

Her multiyear deal was negotiated by agent **Joel Weisman**.

In related moves at Channel 5, former morning news anchor **Nesita Kwan** will anchor at 4:30 p.m. with **Marion Brooks**. Kwan also will take on additional duties as medical reporter. **Dr. Deanna Lites**, who covered the medical beat for two years, resigned last month for personal reasons.

**Zoraida Sambolin** will shift to the 11 a.m. newscast alongside **Art Norman**.

## Big John Howell's big surprise at WUSN

In the radio comeback of the year, **Big John Howell** returns Monday as morning personality at WUSN-FM (99.5). Howell was

dropped from the Infinity Broadcasting country music station after 14 years last March and then spent another four months hosting afternoons at Infinity's oldies WJMK-FM (104.3).

"It's great to return to my Chicago radio home," Howell said Thursday as he celebrated his 43rd birthday. "It feels totally natural. Actually, I feel like I've never really left the station."

Even during his absence as a full-time jock at US-99.5, Howell continued to host "Country Gold," the nationally syndicated weekend show that airs here from 6 to 11 p.m. Saturdays.

In returning to the morning show alongside co-hosts **Trish Biondo** and **Ramblin' Ray Stevens**, Howell replaces **Tom Rivers**, who had been doubling as morning host and operations manager since March. With the recent departure of program director **Justin Case**, Rivers will focus on his expanded programming duties.

"We've always considered John part of the 'USN family,'" said **Harvey Wells**, vice president and general manager of US-99.5. "It's like putting the band back together again. We're thrilled to have John back where he belongs."

Howell's multiyear deal was negotiated by agent **Steve Mandell**.



**Big John Howell**

## LEWIS LAZARE



e-mail:  
llazare@  
suntimes.com

...is on assignment