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Kansas Coal Debate Show Wins First Prize for KKFI's Heartland Labor Forum in National Labor Media Awards

For the second year in a row the Heartland Labor Forum on KKFI 90.1FM Kansas City Community Radio has taken first prize among radio programs in the International Labor Communications Association's (ILCA) Media Awards Contest. The winning show called *In Coal Blood: The Kansas Coal Debate* aired on May 8, 2008. It was produced by volunteer Shawn Saving.

Jan Brill, who writes and produces the Forum's monthly feature *Don't Be Ladylike*, also picked up an honorable mention in the Special Performance of Labor History category for her August 21 and February 14 2008 features on the Children's Crusade and Scab-mugging.

The judge for radio entries said of the Coal debate show, "This. . .show accomplished a difficult feat - setting up a debate between disagreeing unions and politicians over building a coal-fired generating plant. It used this to draw out the problems facing labor in creating jobs, while at the same time protecting the environment." The judge also praised the show's news coverage of affirmative action, a payroll protection initiative, and a strike at a local auto assembly plant.

The judge of the labor history contestants said of Brill's work that *Don't Be Ladylike* shows "how effective radio can be in presenting labor history, including stirring songs, to a

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wide audience. . . If the labor movement is going to revive and thrive, unionists and their supporters must figure out how to use the electronic media successfully. Brill provides a model in this regard.”

Shawn Saving is a Kansas State employee and former member of the Service Employees International Union. His program placed first against labor radio shows from national unions and from New York City.

ILCA is the professional organization of labor communicators in North America affiliated with the AFL-CIO and the Canadian Labor Congress as well as members of unaffiliated unions. ILCA’s several hundred members produce publications with a total circulation in the tens of millions. The awards will be presented at ILCA’s national meeting in September in Pittsburgh.

The Heartland Labor Forum is a project of UMKC’s Institute for Labor Studies and is produced by volunteers from area workplaces and unions. It is celebrating its 20th year on the air as Kansas City’s only electronic media program about working people. It airs on KKFI, Kansas City’s listener-supported community radio station whose mission includes providing a voice to sectors of the community which are underserved by the mainstream media.

To listen to the winning show and feature, go to www.heartlandlaborforum.org

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