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Rush Limbaugh hospitalized with chest pains. A Hawaiian golf vacation turned into a health scare for radio's most listened-to air personality as Rush Limbaugh was rushed to Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu yesterday complaining of chest pains. Early today his website said Limbaugh was "resting comfortably" and told fans, "Rush appreciates your prayers and well wishes." Locals say they'd seen him playing plenty of golf this week at the country club next to the Kahala Hotel and Resort where he's been staying with a group of family and friends. KITV-TV reports Limbaugh told paramedics he was taking medication for a back problem. Limbaugh underwent treatment in 2003 for an addiction to prescription painkillers after injuring his back. Last year Limbaugh, 58, signed a contract that will keep him at Premiere Radio Networks through 2016, telling interviewers it would pay him about \$38 million a year and including a nine-figure signing bonus. Guest hosts were already filling-in for Limbaugh this week, although Rush was scheduled to return to his show Monday. *Get updates on this developing story at www.InsideRadio.com.*

The Year in Numbers: Sales plummet as just 534 deals closed in 2009. A frozen credit market meant 29% fewer deals closed this year than in 2008 when 747 transfers closed. Volume in the past 12 months is also considerably lower than in 2007 (995), 2006 (807) and 2005 (824). Brokers say the deal market has been largely at a standstill since mid-2008 — months before the financial meltdown — when banks stopped writing loans. While lenders have promised to begin making capital available to buyers, there's so far been little indication it's having an impact on the deal market. The biggest deal of the year was Alpha Broadcasting's \$40 million deal with CBS Radio for four Portland, OR stations (Broker: Kalil). Alpha CEO Larry Wilson had one of the other large deals, in an \$11 million purchase for Rose City Radio's Portland combo (Broker: Doug Ferber, Defcom). The biggest seller of the year was CBS Radio, which closed on deals to spin-off 18 stations. Since it began trimming its portfolio in August 2006, CBS Radio has sold 36 FMs and ten AMs for \$727.9 million. That list is likely to grow. Earlier this month CBS CEO Les Moonves told an investor conference, "Now that the marketplace is coming back, trimming some of the radio may be a better thing for us to do." Other big sellers included Textron's FFD Holdings, which sold 11 stations to former Pizza Hut franchise mogul Gene Bicknell's American Media Investments in a \$5.249 million deal Bicknell's deep pockets made getting a deal done in the current frozen credit market possible. Broker Michael Bergner doesn't expect much change in 2010. "We are in a prolonged period of inactivity," he says. "There is no deal market because there is no demand, and financing is just part of it." Bergner believes radio, like other mature local media, faces tremendous headwinds. That's not attractive to buyers. Bergner says, "The cash flow is worth more to the people who already own it than anyone else."

The biggest buyer once again: Educational Media Foundation. It's been growing at a rapid pace for years, and EMF closed on another 19 stations in 2009. That's even though president/CEO Mike Novak says they "tapped the brakes" on acquisitions this year. That "purposeful slowdown" is likely to continue into 2010. "We have become a more cautious buyer and more sensitive to what we want to do with our donor dollars," Novak says. The biggest buyer in 2007 and 2008 was Gap Broadcasting, but the growth mode was on hold this year despite its easy access to cash from majority owner Oaktree Capital. Gap added a single station this year: talk/gospel KTIB, Thibodaux, LA (640), which it reclaimed after Katrina Chase's Faith Broadcasting defaulted on its \$700,000 purchase. Ted and Jana Tucker's Desert West Air Ranchers Corp. quietly became a big buyer in the Rocky Mountain region and Midwest, closing on 12 stations this year. But it was Larry Wilson's Alpha

Dan has an hour-long commute every day. He used to pass the time with political talk. Now, with a sinking 401(k) and retirement on the horizon, the tired, old political talking points don't seem as relevant.



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