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Website Helps Boost Local 336 Membership

Technology is daily becoming more dynamic: everyone, from sole proprietors to multibillion dollar corporations, has a website these days. Increasingly, AFM locals are taking advantage of the Internet and its limitless potential as a recruitment tool. That's especially true for Local 336 (Burlington, NJ). Early this year the local instituted a highly effective, professional-looking website without undue strain on its budget, and has been updating it with new features ever since. The site (www.local336afm.com) has received over 5,000 hits to date, and the local's membership has nearly doubled.

"The website works in conjunction with various programs we've instituted, and several more we plan on rolling out throughout the rest of the year," says Local 336 President Robert Bell, who is convinced that his local's recent jump in membership is a result of a confluence of the website, good public relations, and a newly formed 40-piece ensemble.

In January of 2005, the Burlington County Musical Society Concert Band, endorsed by Local 336 and made up exclusively of the local's members, received positive reviews in area newspapers. The reviews generated a buzz among musicians in the area, who began seeking out more information on the local's website. Interest in the band was further increased through demo clips included on the website that allow prospective members to listen in.

Since January, the local has welcomed 20 new members solely on the basis of interest in their concert band. "We're also rolling out a series of new projects, which will help increase our membership even more," adds Bell. This month, Local 336 plans to unveil a jazz band built on the same principles as the concert band. Also, in the coming year there are plans to form a swing band and an all-string band. By the end of 2006, Bell says all the bands should be up and running, and the local's website will be appropriately updated with music samples and information.