Houston's KPFT, Two Bombs Later, Tries to Rebuild

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By MARTIN WALDRON
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HOUSTON, Oct. 23—The operators of KPFT, a noncommercial FM radio station that has been bombed off the air twice in six months, have begun scrambling for money to resume broadcasting and are demanding that the Federal Bureau of Investigation find out who blew up their transmitters.

Lawrence R. Lee, the general manager of the station, said it may be necessary to raise $185,000 to get the station, which specialized in in-depth news coverage and the airing of controversy and unpopular opinions, back into operation. "The insurance companies won't touch us now, and this is making it hard," Mr. Lee said.

The station is owned by the Pacifica Foundation, which also operates radio stations in New York City, Los Angeles and Berkeley, Calif.

No arrests have been made in either of the dynamite explosions here, which took place on May 16 and Oct. 6, although there have been wide reports that a splinter group of the Ku Klux Klan has claimed credit.

The Harris County sheriff's office reported that it had been unable to prove who set off the dynamite, and a request for an F.B.I. investigation, widely backed in the broadcasting industry, has not been acted upon.

KPFT, which is supported by listener subscriptions of $24 a year, was able to resume broadcasting about three weeks after the first dynamiting. But Mr. Lee said that because of its inability to obtain insurance, the station has not been able to lease a tower after the second explosion.

Mr. Lee is a 29-year-old reporter who worked for both The Associated Press and United Press International before joining KPFT, which began operation on March 1 of this year.

"We may have to build entirely new facilities to get back on the air," he said. This could cost up to $100,000, with the remaining $85,000 that is being sought used to cover additional operating expenses, he said.

The station is a cooperative, and each of the 11 paid employes receives $125 a week. Some program production and broadcasting has been done by volunteers.

Mr. Lee said that one-fourth of the money needed is in sight.