

COMMENTS BY FCC CHAIRMAN JAMES H. QUELLO

FOR THE GOLDEN MIKE AWARD

PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY

MARCH 8, 1993

AGAIN, I'M DELIGHTED TO BE WITH YOU, MY FELLOW BROADCAST PIONEERS, TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SIGNIFICANT GOLDEN MIKE AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE DISTINGUISHED PIONEER STATION KING TV IN SEATTLE.

NOW IS A PARTICULARLY AUSPICIOUS TIME FOR SUCH AN AWARD. IT COMES AS THE COMMUNICATIONS WORLD IS LITERALLY CHANGING BEFORE OUR EYES -- ALMOST AS QUICKLY AS THE RATE OF POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE WORLD. AS WE STRIVE TO IMPLEMENT THE ADMINISTRATION'S GOAL OF AN "ELECTRONIC MULTICHANNEL SUPER HIGHWAY," WE ALSO FACE AN UNPRECEDENTED RANGE OF VITAL PRESENT AND FUTURE POLICY CHOICES AND DECISIONS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS. IMMEDIATELY, WE HAVE THE COMPLEX JOB OF IMPLEMENTING THE 1992 CABLE ACT WITHOUT ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL. WE ALSO HAVE A REPORT AND ORDER ON THE LONGSTANDING ISSUE OF FINANCIAL INTEREST AND SYNDICATION SCHEDULED FOR OUR APRIL MEETING. IT IS APPARENT THIS IS NO TIME TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF A CARETAKER COMMISSION. IT IS AN ACTIVE CONTENTIOUS TIME TO BE AT THE COMMISSION AND I'M GRATEFUL WE HAVE EXPERIENCED COMMISSIONERS AND A DEDICATED CAPABLE STAFF TO HANDLE THE JOB AT HAND AND TO PLAN FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY WAS THE USE OF SATELLITE LINKS DURING THE CONFLICT IN THE PERSIAN GULF. IT PROVED TO BE THE FIRST WAY IN WHICH ACTUAL COMBAT WAS PRESENTED TO AMERICAN AUDIENCES LIVE IN "REAL TIME." THIS PHENOMENON HIGHLIGHTED THE CAPABILITIES, AS WELL AS THE NEED FOR PRESS RESPONSIBILITY, IN THE USE OF NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES.

NOW VARIOUS JOINT VENTURES ARE RACING TO PROVIDE A TRUE DBS SERVICE. THE HUBBARD ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROGRAMMING CONTRACTS WITH HBO AND VIACOM WILL SERVE AS A CATALYST OF MORE TO COME. THE LONG-AWAITED MULTICHANNEL COMPETITOR TO CABLE TELEVISION WILL BECOME A REALITY IN 1994 AND IT WILL BE IN THE DEDICATED HANDS OF A GREAT BROADCASTING PIONEER FAMILY.

AS YOU KNOW, VARIOUS PARTIES HAVE ALSO APPLIED FOR AUTHORIZATION FOR DAB-DIGITAL AUDIO BROADCASTING. ONCE SPECTRUM AND OTHER TECHNICAL PROBLEMS ARE RESOLVED, THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY COULD ELIMINATE INTERFERENCE PROBLEMS AND GREATLY ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF RADIO BROADCASTING.

THEN TOO, AN FCC ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS NEAR THE COMPLETION OF EVALUATING VARIOUS HDTV SYSTEMS, WITH A GOAL OF RECOMMENDING AN INDUSTRY STANDARD. JUST AS DAB PROMISES TO REVOLUTIONIZE RADIO, HDTV COULD HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON FUTURE VIDEO BROADCASTING.

TELEPHONE COMPANIES (AND OTHERS) ARE NOW ENGAGED IN PROVIDING VIDEO AND COMPUTER AGE SERVICES VIA FIBER OPTICS.

SOME OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES LITERALLY TURN OUR TRADITIONAL VIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS ON ITS HEAD. INCREASINGLY, VIA CELLULAR TELEPHONE AND PROPOSED PERSONAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, TELEPHONE SERVICE IS BEING DELIVERED OVER-THE-AIR. AT THE SAME TIME, MANY OF THE SERVICES WE NORMALLY THINK OF AS OVER-THE-AIR SERVICES ARE BEING DELIVERED BY WIRE AND INCREASINGLY BY FIBER.

PERHAPS IT IS TIME TO START CALLING THIS A CLINTON ADMINISTRATION NEW ORDER IN COMMUNICATIONS. WE ARE VERY MUCH IN A STATE OF DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION. BUT THEN, CHANGE IS ONE FACTOR WE WILL ALL HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH. AS WE GO THROUGH THE TRANSITION, I BELIEVE THAT BROADCASTERS WHO HAVE PIONEERED THE SERVICES, WHO HAVE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENTS AND HAVE A PUBLIC INTEREST OBLIGATION SHOULD HAVE A PRIORITY IN IMPLEMENTING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES.

BUT DESPITE ALL THAT IS HAPPENING, THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT NEVER CHANGE. ONE OF THE CONSTANTS IS THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY A BEDROCK SYSTEM OF LOCAL BROADCASTING. BROADCASTING HAS ALWAYS PROVIDED, AND CONTINUES TO PROVIDE AN INFORMATION AND ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCT THAT IS UNMATCHED ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

OF COURSE, NONE OF THE ADVANCES WE ARE SEEING TODAY WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY, AND PARTICULARLY BROADCAST LEADERS LIKE ANCIL PAYNE, JACK CLIFFORD, AND TONY WEIBELL.

IT IS QUITE A TIGHTROPE WE ARE WALKING: SEEKING TO PROMOTE THE NEW WHILE PRESERVING THE OLD. BUT YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT THE COMMISSION -- AND PARTICULARLY THIS "PIONEER" CHAIRMAN-- WILL GIVE IT HIS BEST SHOT.

BUT THE PRINCIPAL MATTER TONIGHT IS TO HONOR THE SINGULAR PIONEER ACHIEVEMENTS OF KING BROADCASTING. I HAVE WITH ME TODAY A TRUE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL FCC LICENSE FOR KING BROADCASTING TO PRESENT FOR YOUR COMPANY ARCHIVES.

IT IS PARTICULARLY PLEASING THAT THIS PIONEER LICENSE IS IN SUCH RESPONSIBLE GOOD HANDS. KING TV HAS PROVEN A MOST WORTHY CUSTODIAN OF THIS DISTINGUISHED PIONEER STATION. YOUR STEWARDSHIP HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY DEDICATED ADHERENCE TO QUALITY, INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN PROGRAMMING AND MANAGEMENT.

SO MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO TONY WEIBELL, PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF KING TV AND BEST WISHES FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS AND BROADCAST LEADERSHIP IN THE EXCITING YEARS AHEAD.

IF WE ARE TO MAINTAIN THIS NATION'S COMMUNICATIONS LEADERSHIP POSITION, WE MUST ALL REMEMBER THE BROADCASTER'S GOAL OF PUBLIC SERVICE IS A VITAL PART OF THE FCC'S OVERALL GOAL . . . OF INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT WORKING TOGETHER IN A CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT OF MUTUAL COOPERATION. IN THIS SPIRIT OF COOPERATION, WE ASSURE THAT AMERICANS CONTINUE TO BE THE BEST INFORMED, THE MOST GAINFULLY EMPLOYED AND BEST SERVED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.

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