

Remarks by Commissioner James H. Quello
Before the
Community Broadcasters Association
Annual Convention
Washington, DC

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[INTRODUCTORY REMARKS]

This *Lifetime Achievement Award* perhaps reflects, in part, the fact that I have appeared at four CBA conventions, evidencing my early and ongoing support for this industry. It is gratifying to see that since my first appearance at a CBA convention in 1989, the industry has grown dramatically. You are to be congratulated on your progress and growth as an industry. The public and the telecommunication industry may not be aware of your remarkable growth. Let's look at the impressive figures.

- In 1989, there were 726 licensed LPTV stations. Today, there are 1453 licensed LPTV stations.



- In 1989, there were 312 LPTV station licensees. Today, there are 696 LPTV station licensees. These licensees include FM and full power broadcasters, newspaper publishers, schools and colleges, churches and religious groups, minority groups and women, first-time broadcast entrepreneurs from all walks of life, and a woman who runs a station known as "Granny's TV."
- Since 1989, the FCC has held 5 national LPTV application filing windows, attracting about 7000 applications. From these applications, more than 4700 construction permits have been granted.
- Since 1989, the Commission relaxed the application acceptance standard for LPTV applications, expanded the role of terrain shielding in the application process, and opened the door for LPTV operators to have four-letter call signs.

Now, I hear from Keith Larson, Chief of the Low Power Television Branch, that you are wondering when the heck the FCC is actually going to get around to assigning these new call signs. Keith

apparently told you earlier today to be patient just a little while longer. Well, "a little while longer" has arrived, and I am pleased and proud to be able to tell you that **TODAY**, the Commission is releasing a public notice announcing the assignment of the first round of four-letter call signs for LPTV stations.

I know that four-letter call signs are a big issue for the CBA. In some ways, I view the advent of four-letter call signs as the maturation of a service that has come a long way in proving itself as the community broadcasters. This group took seriously my call many years ago to focus on "specialized localism," and the needs of your communities in programming your stations. And you have been extremely successful in doing so. Minorities own 13% of all LPTV stations; dramatically higher than the 1% minority ownership of full power stations. Community programming is now the hallmark of your service. Perhaps more important, involvement in the day-to-day concerns of your communities is quite simply, yet profoundly, a way of life to this industry.

These attributes are exemplified in the operation of a long-time friend of mine, Sherwin Grossman. Sherwin retired from broadcasting

much the way I did: by hitting the ground running with a second career. After a brief foray into banking, Sherwin returned to his broadcasting roots and founded a low power station, WJAN, in Miami. WJAN went on the air in April of this year, and reaches 420,000 homes (95 percent of the Hispanic DMA) with its Spanish-language programming. To mention just some of the outstanding programming on this station, WJAN has its own news team in place, will be the official county station during emergencies, airing bilingual emergency alerts; weekly call-in programs hosted by the two local members of Congress; school programs and a live children's educational show featuring bilingual puppets. WJAN will also be airing programming from South American countries such as Argentina, which will differentiate the station from its full power Spanish language colleagues in Miami, which air exclusively Mexican shows.

In addition to this outstanding programming, though, in the short time WJAN has been on the air, it has provided an invaluable service to its community. During the recent Cuban refugee crisis, Sherwin worked with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to obtain the names of refugees who had arrived safely at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As soon as these names were received, Sherwin scrolled their

names across the screen on WJAN so that families and friends of the refugees would know as quickly as possible that their loved ones were safe. It is stories like this that exemplify the community service standard achieved, and exceeded on a regular basis, by the low power television service.

There is another issue of concern to this group that I would like to discuss -- an issue that Sherwin apparently is dealing with now. Must carry for low power television stations. While the 1992 Cable Act included some must carry rights for low power stations, I know most of you think those rights did not go far enough. I would urge this group not to focus on must carry. The world around you is changing and changing fast, and I think that you will survive, indeed flourish, in this new world without must carry. Because what you have developing all around you is "want carry." With the growth of Fox, and the imminent launch of the Paramount and Warner networks, there is a demand for low power stations to affiliate with these fourth, fifth, and sixth networks. I understand that Fox has entered into affiliation agreements with ten LPTV stations; and that the new networks are in active discussions with other LPTV stations. What you have is what these new networks need:

over the air access to the public in urban communities, and a strong backbone of local public interest and news programming. "Want carry," in my view, is the key to the future of LPTV, and will help ensure the continued growth of this industry.

With your "specialized localism" and established importance to your communities, you will fill a need for the multi-channel programming demands of the upcoming telecommunications superhighway. Cable, phone companies and emerging networks will want to carry you. The public usually loves a local *under-dog* -- and so do I. So, best of luck to you. The *Lifetime Achievement Award* is especially appreciated -- thanks for adding another pleasant memory to my lifetime experiences.

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