

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of )
)
JOE L. FORD, d/b/a )
FORD COMMUNICATIONS )
Licensee of Paging Stations KNKM966, KNKM224 )
KNKL902, KNKO751 and KNKO274 ) File No. EB-00-TS-149
Various Locations in Kentucky ) NAL/Acct. No. 200132100005

NOTICE OF APPARENT LIABILITY FOR FORFEITURE

Adopted: November 27, 2000

Released: November 29, 2000

By the Chief, Enforcement Bureau:

I. Introduction

1. In this Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, we find that Joe L. Ford, d/b/a Ford Communications (Ford), operated paging systems without Commission authorization, in apparent violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934 ("Act")^1, as amended, and Section 22.3 of the Commission's Rules ("Rules").^2 We conclude that Ford is apparently liable for a forfeiture in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

II. Background

2. Ford's authorization for Public Mobile Radio Stations KNKM966, KNKM224, KNKL902, KNKO751 and KNKO274, expired on April 1, 1999. On March 7, 2000, Ford filed applications for renewal of the authorizations for the stations and requested the waiver of Section 1.949 of the Commission's Rules.^3 Ford's waiver request indicates that Ford apparently operated paging facilities without authorization between April 1, 1999 and March 7, 2000. On April 20, 2000, the Commission granted Ford's waiver request and reinstated its authority to operate Stations KNKM966, KNKM224, KNKL902, KNKO751 and KNKO274.

III. Discussion

3. Section 301 of the Act sets forth the general mandate that no person shall use or operate any apparatus for the transmission of energy or communications or signals by radio within the United States except under and in accordance with the Act and with a license. Section 22.3 of the Commission's Rules

^1 47 U.S.C. § 301.

^2 47 C.F.R. § 22.3.

^3 47 C.F.R. § 1.949. This Section provides , in pertinent part, that "Applications for renewal of authorizations in the Wireless Radio Services must be filed no later than the expiration date of the authorization for which renewal is sought. . . ."

provides, in pertinent part, that stations in the Public Mobile Service must be operated with a valid Commission authorization. We conclude that Ford operated paging stations without valid licenses between April 1, 1999, and March 7, 2000, in apparent willful and repeated violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act and Section 22.3 of the Rules.

5. The Commission has stated that “The Wireless Bureau, after reviewing all the facts and circumstances concerning the late filing of [a] renewal application, may, in its discretion, also initiate enforcement action against the licensee for . . . unauthorized operation. . . .”<sup>4</sup> In addition, the Commission stated that applications for renewal received more than 30 days after expiration of the license may lead to “more significant fines or forfeitures.”<sup>5</sup> In this case, Ford operated without valid licenses and filed renewal applications after the licenses expired.

6. The guidelines contained in the Commission’s *Forfeiture Policy Statement*, 12 FCC Rcd 17087, 17113 (1997), *recon. denied*, 15 FCC Rcd 303 (1999), specify a base forfeiture amount of \$10,000 for operation without an instrument of authorization for the service. Section 503(b)(2)(D) of the Act<sup>6</sup> requires the Commission to consider “the nature, circumstances, extent and gravity of the violation, and, with respect to the violator, the degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, ability to pay, and such other matters as justice may require.” In this case, Ford failed to file applications for renewal and operated paging stations under circumstances where the Commission has envisioned “more significant fines or forfeitures” for violations in excess of 30 days. On the other hand, Ford had previously been licensed, so this is not comparable to “pirate” wireless operations, which typically have been subject to forfeitures of approximately \$10,000.<sup>7</sup> Taking these facts into consideration and all of the factors required by Section 503(b)(2)(D) of the Act and the *Forfeiture Policy Statement*, we conclude that a forfeiture of \$5,000 is warranted.

#### IV. Ordering Clauses

7. Accordingly, **IT IS ORDERED THAT**, pursuant to Section 503(b) of the Act<sup>8</sup> and Sections 0.111, 0.311 and 1.80 of the Rules<sup>9</sup>, Ford is hereby **NOTIFIED** of its **APPARENT LIABILITY FOR A FORFEITURE** in the amount of \$5,000 for violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and Section 22.3 of the Commission’s Rules. The amount specified was determined after consideration of the factors set forth in Section 503(b)(2)(D) of the Act, 47 U.S.C. § 503(b)(2)(D), and the guidelines enumerated in the *Forfeiture Policy Statement*.

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<sup>4</sup> The enforcement responsibilities of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau are now with the Enforcement Bureau. See 47 C.F.R. § 0.111.

<sup>5</sup> *Biennial Regulatory Review -- Amendment of Parts 0, 1, 13, 22, 24, 26, 27, 80, 87, 90, 95, 97, and 101 of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Development and Use of the Universal Licensing System in the Wireless Telecommunications Services, Memorandum Opinion and Order upon reconsideration*, 14 FCC Rcd 11476, 11485-11486 (1999).

<sup>6</sup> 47 U.S.C. §503(b)(2)(D).

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., *Jean R. Jonassaint*, 15 FCC Rcd 10422 (Enf. Bur. 2000).

<sup>8</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 503(b).

<sup>9</sup> 47 C.F.R. §§ 0.111, 0.311, and 1.80.

8. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT**, pursuant to Section 1.80 of the Commission's Rules, within thirty days of the release of this **NOTICE OF APPARENT LIABILITY**, Ford **SHALL PAY** the full amount of the proposed forfeiture or **SHALL FILE** a written statement seeking reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture.

9. Payment of the forfeiture may be made by mailing a check or similar instrument, payable to the order of the Federal Communications Commission, to the Forfeiture Collection Section, Finance Branch, Federal Communications Commission, P.O. Box 73482, Chicago, Illinois 60673-7482. The payment should note the NAL/Acct. No.: 200132100005.

10. The response if any must be mailed to Federal Communications Commission, Enforcement Bureau, Technical and Public Safety Division, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554, Ref: EB-00-TS-149; NAL/Acct. No.: 200132100005.

11. The Commission will not consider reducing or canceling a forfeiture in response to a claim of inability to pay unless the petitioner submits: (1) federal tax returns for the most recent three-year period; (2) financial statements prepared according to generally accepted accounting practices ("GAAP"); or (3) some other reliable and objective documentation that accurately reflects the petitioner's current financial status. Any claim of inability to pay must specifically identify the basis for the claim by reference to the financial documentation submitted.

12. Requests for payment of the full amount of this Notice of Apparent Liability under an installment plan should be sent to: Chief, Credit and Debt Management Center, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554.<sup>10</sup>

13. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT** this notice shall be sent, by certified mail, return receipt requested, to counsel for Joe L. Ford, d/b/a Ford Communications, Lewis H. Goldman Law Offices, Attention Lewis H. Goldman, 4141 North Henderson Road, Plaza Suite 9, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

David H. Solomon  
Chief, Enforcement Bureau

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<sup>10</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 1.1914