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Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554
October 8, 2003

In Reply Refer to:
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NAL/Acct No. MB-AD 20031810071

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Capstar TX Limited Partnership
c/o Dorann Bunkin, Esq.
Wiley Rein & Fielding, LLP
1776 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

In re: WSNV(FM), Salem, VA
Capstar TX Limited Partnership
Facility ID No.: 73956
File No. BR-20030602CMF

Dear Ms. Bunkin:

This letter refers to the captioned application of Capstar TX Limited Partnership ("Capstar") for renewal of license for station WSNV(FM), Salem, Virginia. For the reasons set forth below, we issue a NOTICE OF APPARENT LIABILITY FOR A FORFEITURE to Capstar for violation of the Commission's rule regarding a broadcast station's public inspection file, 47 C.F.R Section 73.3526, and we grant the WSNV(FM) license renewal application.

Public file rule violation. Section III, Item 3 of the license renewal application form, FCC Form 303-S, requests that the licensee certify that the documentation required by Section 73.3526, has been placed in the station's public inspection file at the appropriate times. Capstar indicated "No" to that certification, attaching an Exhibit explaining that a routine audit of station operations by its corporate parent revealed that quarterly radio issues/programs lists were not included in WSNV(FM)'s public file. Specifically, from August 2000 (the date of the current licensee's acquisition) through the second quarter of 2003, local management placed on a quarterly basis, in the public file, "letters of thanks" regarding station support of community events and awareness campaigns, but was unaware that this did not comply with the reporting requirements of 47 Section 73.3526(e)(12). Station management has since attempted to recreate issues/programs reports that contain as much information available for the missing quarters. However, due to the passage of time and missing data, some of the reports are incomplete. Capstar asserts that during its license term it has provided programming of interest to its community as well as broadcasting numerous public service announcements. Lastly, the licensee pledges that it has taken steps, including a quarterly audit by senior station management and a

yearly audit by its corporate parent, to ensure that future quarterly issues and programs reports are prepared correctly.

Section 73.3526 of the Commission's Rules requires broadcast licensees to maintain a public inspection file containing specific types of information related to station operations. The purpose of this requirement is to provide the public with timely information at regular intervals throughout the license period.¹ In this regard, where lapses occur in maintaining the public file, neither the negligent acts or omissions of station employees or agents, nor the subsequent remedial actions undertaken by the licensee, excuse or nullify a licensee's rule violation.²

Section 503(b) of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. § 503(b) and Section 1.80(a) of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.80(a), each state that any person who willfully or repeatedly fails to comply with the provisions of the Communications Act or the Commission's rules shall be liable for a forfeiture penalty. For purposes of Section 503(b) of the Communications Act, the term "willful" means that the violator knew it was taking the action in question, irrespective of any intent to violate the Commission's rules.³ A continuing violation is "repeated" if it lasts more than one day.⁴

The Commission's Forfeiture Policy Statement sets a base forfeiture amount of \$10,000 for public file violations.⁵ In this case, the violations were admitted to the Commission in the context of the license renewal application, and the licensee has corrected the violation and instituted measures to prevent its recurrence. On the other hand, the violation continued from August 2000 (the date of the current licensee's acquisition) through the second quarter of 2003. This is a significant time period. Considering the record as a whole, we believe that a \$4,000 forfeiture would be appropriate for the violation in this case.⁶ However, in light of the licensee's voluntary disclosure, we are reducing the forfeiture by \$1,000, for a total forfeiture of \$3,000.⁷

License renewal application. In evaluating an application for license renewal, the Commission's decision is governed by Section 309(k) of the Communications Act. That section

¹ Cf. *Letter to Kathleen N. Benfield from Linda B. Blair, Chief, Audio Services Division* (April 3, 1997), 13 FCC Rcd 4102 (1997) citing *License Renewal Applications of Certain Commercial Radio Stations*, 8 FCC Rcd 6400 (1993).

² See *Padre Serra Communications, Inc.*, 14 FCC Rcd 9709 (1999)(citing *Gaffney Broadcasting, Inc.*, 23 FCC 2d 912, 913 (1970) and *Eleven Ten Broadcasting Corp.*, 33 FCC 706 (1962)); *Surrey Front Range Limited Partnership*, 71 RR 2d 882 (FOB 1992) ("Surrey").

³ See *Southern California Broadcasting Co.*, 6 FCC Rcd 4387, 4387-4388 (1991).

⁴ *Id.*, 6 FCC Rcd at 4388.

⁵ *The Commission's Forfeiture Policy Statement and Amendment of Section 1.80 of the Commission's Rules*, 12 FCC Rcd 17087, 17113 (1997), *recon. denied*, 15 FCC Rcd 303 (1999).

⁶ See *KLDT-TV 55, Inc.*, 10 FCC Rcd 3198 (1995); see also *Barry D. Wood, Esq.*, 7 FCC Rcd 6262 (FOB 1992).

⁷ See *Surrey*.

provides that if, upon consideration of the application and pleadings, we find that (1) the station has served the public interest, convenience, and necessity; (2) there have been no serious violations of the Communications Act or the Commission's Rules; and (3) there have been no other violations which, taken together, constitute a pattern of abuse, we are to grant the renewal application.⁸ If, however, the licensee fails to meet that standard, the Commission may deny the application – after notice and opportunity for a hearing under Section 309(e) of the Act – or grant the application “on terms and conditions that are appropriate, including a renewal for a term less than the maximum otherwise permitted.”⁹

The public inspection file rule serves the critical function of making available to the public important information regarding programs that provided a station's most significant treatment of community issues during the license term. On balance, however, we find that Capstar's violation of Section 73.3526 does not constitute a “serious violation” of the Commission's rules warranting designation for evidentiary hearing. Moreover, we find no evidence of violations that, when considered together, evidence a pattern of abuse.¹⁰ Further, we find that station WSNV(FM) served the public interest, convenience, and necessity during the subject license term. We will therefore grant the license renewal application below.¹¹

Conclusion/Actions. For the reasons set forth above, and pursuant to Section 503 (b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. Section 503(b), and Sections 0.283 and 1.80 of the Commission's Rules, 47 U.S.C. §§ 0.283 and 1.80, Capstar TX Limited Partnership is hereby advised of its apparent liability for a forfeiture of \$3,000 for willfully and repeatedly violating Section 73.3526.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to Section 1.80 of the Commission's rules, that within thirty days of the release of this Notice, Capstar TX Limited Partnership, SHALL PAY to the United States the full amount of the proposed forfeiture or SHALL FILE a written statement seeking reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture.

⁸ 47 U.S.C. § 309(k)(1). The renewal standard was amended to read as described by Section 204(a) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996). See *Order, Implementation of Sections 204(a) and 204(c) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Broadcast License Renewal Procedures)*, 11 FCC Rcd 6363 (1996).

⁹ 47 U.S.C. §§ 309(k)(2), 309(k)(3).

¹⁰ For example, we do not find here that the licensee's station operation “was conducted in an exceedingly careless, inept and negligent manner and that the licensee is either incapable of correcting or unwilling to correct the operating deficiencies.” See *Heart of the Black Hills Stations*, 32 F.C.C.2d 196, 198 (1971). Nor do we find on the record here that “the number, nature and extent” of the violations indicate that “the licensee cannot be relied upon to operate [the station] in the future in accordance with the requirements of its licenses and the Commission's Rules.” *Heart of the Black Hills Stations*, 32 F.C.C.2d at 200. See also *Center for Study and Application of Black Economic Development*, 6 FCC Rcd 4622 (1991), *Calvary Educational Broadcasting Network, Inc.*, 7 FCC Rcd 4037 (1992).

¹¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 309(k).

Payment of the forfeiture may be made by credit card through the Commission's Credit and Debt Management Center at (202) 418-1995 or 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. referenced above.

The response, if any, must be mailed to Peter H. Doyle, Chief, Audio Division, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room 2-A360, Washington, D.C. 20554 and MUST INCLUDE the NAL/Account number referenced in the caption of this document (MB-AD 20031810071).

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.

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, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554. *See* 47 C.F.R. § 1.1914.

Finally, IT IS ORDERED, that the application (File No. BR-20030602CMF) of Capstar TX Limited Partnership for renewal of license for station WSNV(FM), Salem, Virginia IS GRANTED.

Sincerely,

W. Kenneth Ferree
Chief, Media Bureau

cc: Capstar TX Limited Partnership