

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

In the Matter of)	
)	
Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure)	
Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee)	MM Docket No. 00-168
Public Interest Obligations)	
)	
Extension of the Filing Requirement)	MM Docket No. 00-44
For Children’s Television Programming)	
Report (FCC Form 398))	

REPORT AND ORDER

Adopted: November 27, 2007

Released: January 24, 2008

By the Commission: Chairman Martin and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, and Tate issuing separate statements; Commissioner McDowell concurring in part, dissenting in part, and issuing a statement.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. We commenced this proceeding to determine whether our current requirements pertaining to television stations’ public inspection files are sufficient to ensure that the public has adequate access to

information on how the stations are serving their communities.¹ We tentatively concluded in that *Notice* that our current requirements were not sufficient and that a standardized form to provide information on how stations serve the public interest would be desirable. Additionally, we proposed to enhance the public's ability to access information by requiring television licensees to make the contents of the public inspection files, including the standardized form, available on their stations' Internet websites or, alternatively, on the website of their state broadcasters association. In this *Report and Order* we adopt a standardized form for the quarterly reporting of programming aired in response to issues facing a station's community and a requirement that portions of each station's public inspection file be placed on the Internet.²

2. In adopting these new disclosure requirements, we are not altering in any way broadcasters' substantive public interest obligations. Those obligations are being considered and will be addressed in other proceedings.³ We simply are making information about broadcasters' efforts more understandable and more easily accessible by members of the public.

II. BACKGROUND

3. The Commission first adopted a public inspection file rule more than 40 years ago.⁴ The public file requirement grew out of Congress' 1960 amendment of Sections 309 and 311 of the Communications Act of 1934 (the "Act").⁵ Finding that Congress, in enacting these provisions, was guarding "the right of the general public to be informed, not merely the rights of those who have special interests,"⁶ the Commission adopted the public inspection file requirement to "make information to which the public already has a right more readily available, so that the public will be encouraged to play a more active part in dialogue with broadcast licensees."⁷ Although we are separated from that decision by more than four decades, during which period the public file rule has been changed many times, our goal remains the same. The action we are taking, which is based in part on the changes in technology that have occurred since 1965, will make the information in the public inspection file more useful and more accessible to the public, improving communications between broadcasters and the public they serve.

¹ See *Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 15 FCC Rcd 19816 (2000) ("*Notice*"). Prior to issuing this Notice we had developed a record in our television public interest obligation proceeding *Notice of Inquiry in MM Docket No. 99-360*, 14 FCC Rcd 21633 (1999) ("*Notice of Inquiry*") that indicated that members of the public had encountered difficulties in trying to access information that our Rules require to be maintained in stations' public inspection files.

² This *Report and Order* only pertains to television stations, pursuant to the *Notice* in this proceeding. But we note that we similarly sought comment on these issues as they pertain to radio in the *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in the Digital Audio Broadcasting proceeding. See *Digital Audio Broadcasting Systems and Their Impact on the Terrestrial Radio Broadcast Service*, Second Report and Order, First Order on Reconsideration and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 22 FCC Rcd 10344, 10391 (2007).

³ *Broadcast Localism*, Notice of Inquiry, 19 FCC Rcd 12425 (2004); *Public Interest Obligations of TV Broadcast Licensees*, Notice of Inquiry, 14 FCC Rcd 21633 (1999).

⁴ *Report and Order in Docket No. 14864*, 4 R.R.2d 1664 (1965); *recon. granted in part and denied in part* 6 R.R.2d 1527 (1965).

⁵ 47 U.S.C. §§ 309 and 311.

⁶ *Report and Order in Docket No. 14864* at 1666 (citing, e.g., *Senate Report No. 690*, 86th Cong., 1st Sess., to accompany S. 1898, "New Pre-Grant Procedure" (Aug. 12, 1969) page 2).

⁷ *Id.* at 1667.

4. Over the past four decades, the Commission's public inspection file requirements were modified on several occasions. For instance, in 1984, the Commission required that television stations place in their public inspection file "every three months a list of programs that have provided the station's most significant treatment of community issues during the preceding three month period."⁸ This issues/programs list also must include a brief narrative describing what issues were given significant treatment and the programming that provided this treatment together with the time, date, duration, and title of each program in which the issue was treated.⁹ In adopting the issues/programs list requirement for television stations, the Commission expected it to be "[t]he most significant source of issue-responsive information under the new regulatory scheme."¹⁰ Moreover, the list was intended to be a significant source of information for any initial investigation by the public, competitors, or the Commission when renewal of the station's license is at issue.¹¹

5. In 1998, the Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters issued its *Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters*.¹² The Advisory Committee Report considered, *inter alia*, the public inspection file and recommended that the currently required reports on issue-responsive programming and children's programming be augmented. The Advisory Committee found that such public information could be distributed to the public more effectively if it was placed on television stations' Internet websites and it designed a sample standardized form which could be used to that end.¹³ Subsequently, People for Better TV submitted proposals to the Commission in a Petition for Rulemaking and Petition for Notice of Inquiry asking the Commission to initiate a rulemaking proceeding to determine public interest standards and obligations of digital broadcasters.

6. After the issuance of the Advisory Committee Report, the Commission adopted a *Notice of Inquiry* seeking comment on several issues related to how broadcasters might best serve the public interest during and after the transition from analog to digital television.¹⁴ Some of the issues raised in that *NOI* related exclusively to television broadcasters' use of their digital spectrum. Other issues, however, related to how broadcasters could meet their public interest obligations on both their analog and digital spectrum. Among these were how to enhance the public's ability to access information on a station's performance of its public interest obligations with regard to both issue-responsive and children's programming, both during and after the analog-digital transition. As a result of comments on these latter issues received in response to the *NOI*, we issued the *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in this proceeding.¹⁵ The Commission proposed to replace the current issues/programs list for TV stations with a standardized

⁸ *Revision of Programming and Commercialization Policies, Ascertainment Requirements, and Program Log Requirements for Commercial Television Stations*, Report and Order, 98 F.C.C.2d 1075, 1107-11 (1984) ("*TV Deregulation*"); see also 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.3526(e)(11), 73.3527(e)(8).

⁹ 47 C.F.R. § 73.3526(e)(11). This requirement was similar to that previously adopted for commercial radio stations.

¹⁰ *TV Deregulation*, 98 F.C.C.2d at 1109.

¹¹ *Id.* at 1109-10.

¹² See Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters, *Charting the Digital Broadcasting Future: Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters*, (Dec. 18, 1998) at 45 ("Advisory Committee Report"). The Advisory Committee Report can be found at: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/pubintadvcom/piacreport.pdf>.

¹³ *Id.* at 46 and Appendix A, "Public Interest Programming and Community Service Certification Form."

¹⁴ *Public Interest Obligations of TV Broadcast Licensees*, Notice of Inquiry, 14 FCC Rcd 21633 (1999) ("*NOI*").

¹⁵ See n.1, *supra*.

form and to require TV broadcasters to make their public inspection files available on the Internet. For the reasons discussed below, we now adopt, with some modifications, these proposals.

III. REPORT AND ORDER

A. Placing the Public File on the Internet

7. In the *Notice*, we tentatively concluded that television licensees should be obligated to place the contents of their public inspection file on their websites or the websites of their state broadcasters association. Commenters supporting this tentative conclusion argued that this would not be unduly burdensome given that the majority of broadcasters already have their own websites.¹⁶ United Church of Christ (“UCC”) cites a study by Ball State University and the Radio-Television News Directors Association (“RTNDA”) that found that 88 percent of the 773 stations polled said they operated websites.¹⁷ The National Association of Broadcasters (“NAB”), which opposes our adoption of such a requirement, conducted a survey that found that 83.9 percent of television stations responding currently have their own websites.¹⁸ Thus, it appears that most TV stations are currently using the Internet to provide information and promotional material to the public. By their own actions broadcasters have confirmed that the Internet is an effective and cost-efficient method of maintaining contact with, and distributing information to, their viewership.

8. Most commenters opposing a requirement to place the public inspection file on the Internet cited the cost of converting and maintaining the public file electronically. According to Benedeck *et al.*, to convert a public inspection file to electronic format and index the documents would cost an estimated \$10,000.¹⁹ State Broadcasters Associations estimate that it would take a professional listserver approximately fifteen minutes to one and a half hours, at a cost of \$65 per hour, to post each page of a broadcast station’s public file.²⁰ This cost burden would, State Broadcasters Association continues, come at the very time when the industry’s resources are being directed to “implementation of the enormously expensive and risky new DTV service.”²¹ Others echo these claims.²²

¹⁶ See, e.g., Comments of CBC at 4; Comments of UCC at 25 (*citing Comm. Daily*, Oct. 12, 2000); Comments of NAB at 19.

¹⁷ Comments of UCC at 25 (*citing Comm. Daily*, Oct. 12, 2000). Given that this data is almost seven years old, we believe that the percentage today is even higher.

¹⁸ Comments of NAB at 19. NAB asserts, however, that only approximately one-quarter of stations with websites actually host, develop and/or maintain their own sites. *Id.* at 19-20.

¹⁹ Comments of Benedek Broadcasting *et al* at 3, n.7. Not apparently included in this estimate was the cost of a server which was estimated at \$10,000 to \$15,000. *Id.* at 3, n.8.

²⁰ Comments of State Broadcasters Associations at 21 (referencing Exh. A, “Declaration of Dave Biondi”).

²¹ *Id.* at 22.

²² STCBroadcasting estimates that it would take approximately 1,000 hours to scan the 17,000 pages of public file material that it has, and to create a search engine and folders for this material would require an investment of at least \$8,000. Reply Comments of STC at 5. It also calculates a total initial cost for starting up the website would exceed \$10,000. *Id.* Viacom estimates that the average public file contains approximately 4,000 pages of material and estimates the cost of leasing capacity for this material would be almost \$2,000 per year. Comments of Viacom at 25. Startup personnel costs for scanning the complete contents of the public file and converting it to PDF format would be nearly \$3000, plus approximately \$1,000 for a heavy duty scanner. *Id.* at 25-26. It estimates that placing a public file on the Internet might require the hiring of an additional person at an estimated salary of approximately \$30,000 per year. *Id.* at 26. NAB filed a report by MicroServe Consulting, Inc., estimating that to convert a 14,000 page paper public file to Hyper Text Mark-Up Language (“HTML”) and to provide a search mechanism to allow for

(continued....)

9. We believe that many of the estimates of the costs of complying with our requirement are grossly inflated.²³ As an initial matter, our own cost estimates are considerably lower than those of a number of commenters.²⁴ First, we are not requiring stations that do not already have a website to create one. As proposed in the *Notice*, we are only requiring a station to post its public inspection files on its website if it already has one.²⁵ This will eliminate all costs of starting up a website that were included in the estimates supplied by commenters.²⁶ Also, the volume of material will be less than estimated by some commenters as a result of our decision, discussed below, not to require posting of letters from the public and allowing licensees to link to material available on the Commission's website in lieu of posting it on their own websites.²⁷

10. Moreover, we believe that the benefits of licensees placing their public inspection files on the Internet outweigh the cost, especially since the requirement will only apply to stations already using the Internet for other purposes. Many of these stations are already equipped to place material on the Internet. For example, stations must already place EEO reports on their websites, to the extent that they have one.²⁸ The ongoing additional costs of putting their public files on the Internet should be relatively modest once the initial conversion of the existing paper file is complete.²⁹ While the cost of this initial

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full text searching, would cost approximately \$292,000. Comments of NAB at 22 (*citing* Attachment B at 2-3). Moreover, MicroServe estimated that stations would incur the following costs to place their public inspection files on the Internet: (a) document conversion - \$128,112; (b) search mechanism software - \$164,000; (c) creating a website - \$204,500 for hardware, software and integration costs; (d) \$211,000 for site development; (e) website maintenance - \$109,000; and (f) first-year hosting costs - \$95,400. *Id.* at Attachment B. This estimate does not include any cost for updating converted documents.

²³ See, e.g., Comments of WCPE at 1; Reply Comments of STC at 5; Comments of NAB at 22 (*citing* Attachment B at 2-3).

²⁴ Even if a station's public inspection file, excluding those materials we have said could be excluded, contained as many as 10,000 pages, Commission staff estimates that the cost of placing that volume on a broadcaster's existing website would involve a one-time cost less than \$15,000 and the cost of maintaining that volume on a server should be less than \$20 a month. We expect that much of that material would already exist in electronic form, but even if it had to be converted into electronic form the staff estimates that this would cost from as little as \$0.03 to as much as \$1.50 per page. As discussed in the text, however, given our exclusion of certain material from the requirement, we expect the volume of material required to be posted to be dramatically less than 10,000 pages. Therefore, as a result of the fact that conversion into electronic form is likely to be towards the middle to lower end of our range, and the volume of material required to be posted is expected to be dramatically less than 10,000 pages, we think the upper bound of total one-time cost estimates are highly unlikely to be reached.

²⁵ More specifically, we proposed that stations post their public inspection file on their website, which assumes they have one, or on their state broadcasters association's website, which assumes permission of the state broadcasters association to do so. See *Notice, supra*, at 19829.

²⁶ Benedeck *et al.* cite a projected estimated cost of \$35,000 to start up a website and operate it for a year. Comments of Benedeck *et al.* at 3. This estimate included both equipment and personnel. We are not, however, requiring stations to start up a website, and general operating costs cannot be attributed to our requirement.

²⁷ Almost half of the items that are required to be placed in a licensee's public file are also available on the Commission's website. These include authorizations, applications, ownership reports, EEO reports, a copy of *The Public and Broadcasting*, and children's television programming reports. By eliminating these documents from the number of pages to be placed on a licensee's website, which can eliminate hundreds of pages, we expect that the volume of material to be posted will be significantly less than the estimates discussed above.

²⁸ 47 C.F.R. § 73.2080(c)(6).

²⁹ Of course, broadcasters with only rudimentary websites that they update irregularly, if at all, or who would find the requirement unduly burdensome may always seek a waiver of the requirement by the Commission.

conversion may be appreciable, it is a one-time expense and, in nearly all cases, should not be overly burdensome. Moreover, these costs are outweighed by the benefits to the public of Internet accessibility to the information. It is beneficial for the community to have Internet access to information it may not otherwise be able to obtain. Links to information available on the Commission's website, including a copy of ownership reports, and children's television programming reports, educate consumers on issues that they might not otherwise know about, absent an ability to visit a station to inspect the public file. Further information available in the public file, including information regarding Commission investigations and complaints, issues/programs lists, and citizen's agreements assist consumers in educating themselves as to the licensee and its programming. As discussed in previous Orders, the Commission has found that each of the items required to be placed in the public file are important, and need to be accessible to the public.³⁰ Internet access to such information only improves public access. As such, we believe these interests justify potential increased costs. If a particular broadcaster finds the requirement beyond its means, we will entertain specific, documented waiver requests for relief to lessen the financial burden on the licensee.

11. Other commenters objecting to placing public file material on station websites argued either: (1) that few people actually have visited the stations' studios to view their public files, or (2) that placing public file material on the station's website would only enhance availability of that material to persons outside the station's service area and that such persons have a less compelling interest in accessing that information.³¹ NBC, for example, notes that it receives relatively few requests to examine its stations' public inspection files.³² Viacom characterizes visits to its stations' public inspection files as "exceedingly rare...less than one annually, virtually all of whom are college students on assignment."³³ The Walt Disney Company provides a similar estimate of public file usage at its stations.³⁴ Educational Information Corporation, licensee of WCPE asserts that in twenty years it has had only a single member of the public ask to review its public file.³⁵

12. Before the Commission adopted the public file requirement in 1965, commenters argued that the rules were unnecessary because there would be little or no demand for the information contained therein. The Commission responded:

we do not base our decision in this proceeding on a widespread articulate demand by the public for the information we propose to make locally available. Our primary purpose in the present proceeding is to make information to which the public already has a right more readily available, so that the public will be encouraged to play a more active part in a dialogue with broadcast licensees.³⁶

³⁰ See, e.g., *Review of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Main Studio and Local Public Inspection Files*, Report and Order, 13 FCC Rcd 15691 (1998); *Amendment of Sections 73.1125 and 73.1130 of The Commission's Rules*, Report and Order, 2 FCC Rcd 3215 (1987).

³¹ *Id.* at 18; see also Comments of NAB at 25.

³² Comments of NBC at 15.

³³ Comments of Viacom at 26.

³⁴ Comments of the Walt Disney Company at 17. (Indicating that those most interested in the public file are advocacy groups, political candidates and the press "each of which typically has the resources to request documents from the public file in person.").

³⁵ Comments of WCPE at 2.

³⁶ *Report and Order in Docket No. 14864*, at 1667.

Similarly, here we are merely making material more accessible to the public. By doing so we, like our predecessors in 1965, hope to encourage the public to play a more active role in a dialogue with broadcasters. The fact that our current rules may not have resulted in widespread review of the public files by members of the public only serves to underscore the desirability of improving the accessibility of these files. It may well be that the requirement of physically going to the station and viewing the file during normal business hours has discouraged public interest in viewing the public files. By making the file more available through the Internet, we hope to facilitate access to the file information and foster increased public participation in the licensing process.

13. We find it entirely consistent with Congressional intent in adopting Section 309 of the Act to embrace a public file requirement that enhances the ability of both those within *and* those beyond a station's service area to participate in the licensing process. Additionally, we disagree with those arguing that stations placing their public inspection files on the Internet will only benefit those outside a station's service area; it will also benefit those within the service area who will be able to access the file without visiting the station during normal business hours.

14. Opponents also assert that the Commission lacks authority to impose such a requirement. For example, Viacom argues that “[m]aintaining a Web site – let alone posting the voluminous contents of a public inspection file – is simply too far afield from the core activities of broadcasting for the Commission to regulate.”³⁷ Similarly, Sinclair argues that “[t]he Commission does not have jurisdiction over websites and therefore simply lacks the authority to enforce these requirements.”³⁸ The Media Institute argues that a requirement to post the public inspection file on a station's Internet website would pose problems of a constitutional dimension. It argues that

[t]he proposal demands careful scrutiny on First Amendment grounds – particularly because the constitutional concerns here might easily be overlooked on the assumption that a Web site was merely an electronic filing cabinet The Commission is overreaching to suggest that it can compel broadcasters to post certain types of speech on their Web sites.³⁹

15. We disagree. The manner in which broadcasters communicate with their communities is a core function of their role as licensees. Thus, for example, we require applicants to publish notice of their filing of certain applications in local newspapers.⁴⁰ A requirement for broadcast stations to place their public inspection files on the Internet website does not constitute an assertion of jurisdiction over the medium on which it must be maintained or take us beyond those areas of a broadcaster's activity within the Commission's jurisdiction. Moreover, we see no constitutional infirmity in this requirement. As an initial matter, our public inspection file rules have, for more than 40 years, required broadcasters to make certain categories of information available to the public.⁴¹

16. Even assuming, *arguendo*, that “intermediate scrutiny” is the appropriate standard, a content neutral regulation such as this will be sustained against claims that it violates the First Amendment if: (1) it advances important governmental interests unrelated to the suppression of free speech; and (2) does not

³⁷ Comments of Viacom at 21 (*citing NAACP v. FPC*, 425 U.S. 662 (1976)).

³⁸ Comments of Sinclair at 6.

³⁹ Comments of Media Institute at 4.

⁴⁰ See 47 C.F.R. § 73.3580(c).

⁴¹ See ¶¶ 3-4, *supra*.

burden substantially more speech than necessary to further those interests.⁴² The instant regulation meets both tests. First, it has been established that the public file requirement advances the important governmental interest that Congress found in public participation in the licensing process when it adopted the pre-hearing procedures contained in Sections 309 and 311 of the Act. Second, the requirement does not burden speech more than necessary to further that interest. It is limited to only those items that members of the public would reasonably need to be aware of in order to have a dialogue with their local broadcaster and, if necessary, to participate in pre-hearing procedures with respect to the licensing process. Indeed, we are not requiring the posting of some public file material because doing so would impose excessive burdens and we are allowing broadcasters merely to link to material also found on our website. Thus, to the extent that our new regulation can be said to burden speech at all, we have assured that it “does not burden substantially more speech than necessary” to further the interest served by the public file rules.

17. Accordingly, we will require those television stations that have an Internet website to place their public inspection file on their station’s website and to make this file available to the public without charge. These stations have already recognized the value of this tool to inform viewers about station programs and activities. In order to provide sufficient time for affected television broadcasters to come into compliance, we will require that stations currently having a website place their public inspection files on that website 60 days after the Commission publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing Office of Management and Budget approval. Stations not having their own website as of the date that this *Report and Order* is adopted will have to place their files on any website they may later create by the date above or within 30 days of the date it makes the website available to the public, whichever is later.

18. As an alternative, stations having a website may place their public inspection files on their state broadcasters association’s (“SBA”) website, where permitted by the SBA to do so. If a station places its public file on the website of its SBA, however, the station must provide a link from its own website to that of the SBA on which its public files are located. We are not persuaded by the comments filed in this proceeding that this alternative is unwarranted and unworkable. Although, as UCC points out, “[m]ost viewers probably do not know what an SBA is, let alone the address of the local broadcaster’s SBA website,”⁴³ they do not have to know this information in order to follow a link to that site from the station’s website. State Broadcasters Associations argue that this would place an “enormous strain on the personnel and resources of those associations.”⁴⁴ In addition, as Media Institute points out, we have no jurisdiction to require such organizations, which are not themselves under Commission regulatory control, to make their websites available for such a purpose.⁴⁵ For these reasons, we will not require SBAs to permit stations to place their public inspection files on their websites. Instead, we will simply permit television stations, over which we do have jurisdiction, to comply with our requirements by placing their public files on their SBAs’ websites, as long as their SBA permits, and the stations provide a link to their public inspection files from their own websites.

19. *Political File.* Sections 73.3526(e)(6), 73.3527(e)(5), and 73.1943 of the Commission’s Rules require that stations keep as part of their public inspection files a “political file.”⁴⁶ The political file chiefly consists of “a complete and orderly record . . . of all requests for broadcast time made by or on

⁴² *Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. v. FCC*, 520 U.S. 180, 189 (1997)(citing *U.S. v. O’Brien*, 391 U.S. 367, 377 (1968)).

⁴³ Comments of UCC at 23-24.

⁴⁴ Comments of State Broadcasters Associations at 21.

⁴⁵ Comments of Media Institute at 4.

⁴⁶ 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.3526(e)(6), 73.3527(e)(5), and 73.1943.

behalf of a candidate for public office, together with an appropriate notation showing the disposition made by the licensee of such requests, and the charges made, if any, if the request is granted.”⁴⁷ These records must be placed in the political file as soon as possible.⁴⁸ In amending our public inspection file rule to, *inter alia*, require that stations that maintain their main studios and public files outside their community of license must make available pursuant to telephone request photocopies of public file material, we exempted the political file from the requirement.⁴⁹ We did this for two reasons. First, we recognized that candidates and their representatives make the heaviest use of the public inspection files, making daily or even more frequent requests for political file information during a campaign, because the information is in flux throughout each day of the campaign.⁵⁰ We determined that, were they able to make requests for political file material by telephone, such a heavy volume of telephone calls could unduly disrupt a station’s operations.⁵¹ Second, we found that candidates or their representatives, when seeking political file information in their professional capacities, are more likely to have greater resources and be more able to access the main studio and public file in person than would an average citizen.⁵²

20. This reasoning also applies to Internet access to the political file. Daily and even more frequent requests for access by political candidates and their campaign personnel, combined with a need for the station to update the file frequently, may make requiring the station to place this material on the Internet inappropriate. Resources available to political candidates likely provide them with greater access to the station and distinguish them from members of the general public who will benefit from ready access to Internet posting of other parts of the public file. Political candidates and campaigns make heavy use of the file and require quick access to material, and if the volume of material is too great, the station may not be able to update the Internet file quickly enough. Our rules currently require that records be placed in the political file as soon as possible, which the rule defines as meaning “immediately absent unusual circumstances.”⁵³ This may mean multiple updates each day during peak periods of the election season. Some commenters argue that an Internet posting requirement for the political file would be unduly burdensome for licensees due to the need for frequent updating of the file and the volume of material it contains.⁵⁴ While Internet access would obviate the need for physical access to each station and free station personnel from having to assist candidates and their political committees, we conclude that the burden of placing this material on the Internet outweighs the benefits.

21. *Children’s Television Programming Reports (Form 398)*. In MM Docket No. 00-44, the Commission, among other things, extended indefinitely the requirement that commercial broadcast television licensees electronically file their quarterly Children’s Television Programming Reports (Form 398) with the Commission and required broadcasters in the future to place the reports in their public files

⁴⁷ 47 C.F.R. § 73.1943(a).

⁴⁸ 47 C.F.R. §73.1943(c).

⁴⁹ *Review of the Commission’s Rules Regarding the Main Studio and Local Public Inspection Files of Broadcast Television and Radio Stations*, Report and Order, 13 FCC Rcd 15691 (1998), *recon. granted in part*, 14 FCC Rcd 11113 (1999).

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 11122.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ 47 C.F.R. § 73.1943(c).

⁵⁴ Comments of NAB at 28 (need for frequent update); Comments of Benedeck *et al.* at p.4, n.12 (volume of material).

at the time they are prepared.⁵⁵ At that time we also issued a *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (“*FNPRM*”) seeking comment on whether broadcasters should be required to provide their completed quarterly reports at their own websites.⁵⁶ Because of the similarity of the issues presented in that proceeding to those present here, we will resolve them in this *Order*.

22. Only two commenters filed in response to the *Children’s Television Programming Report FNPRM*. Both the Center for Media Education (“*CME*”) and NAB supported requiring stations to create a link to station reports on the Commission’s Children’s Educational Television Website. Unlike NAB, however, *CME* also supported requiring stations to post Reports on their websites and to maintain them until final action on their next renewal application.

23. Like the other non-exempted contents of licensees’ public files, the Children’s Television Programming Reports must now also be made available on the Internet. We find, however, that it is sufficient to allow television station licensees having a website to provide a link from the public inspection file portion of that website to the Commission’s Children’s Educational Television webpage.⁵⁷ We agree with NAB that to replicate the reports on the licensee’s website would be redundant and cause needless expense to licensees.⁵⁸ Accordingly, we agree with NAB that a link to the Commission’s Children’s Educational Television webpage is sufficient and that the report forms need not be placed on any station’s website that contains such a link.

24. *Other Material Available on the Commission’s or Other Websites*. We will not require stations to post on their websites any other material that is also available on the Commission’s website, as long as they provide a link directly to the information on the Commission’s website. For example, stations need not post a copy of “The Public and Broadcasting” on their own websites as long as they provide a link to the manual on the Commission’s website.⁵⁹ It is not necessary for more than 1,600 television stations to each have this Commission publication on their website. It is sufficient that they each have a hard copy in their public files at the main studio, and a link to it on the Commission’s website from their own website. This measure will also serve to reduce the amount of material that must be placed on a station’s website, thereby reducing the cost of the requirement. Similarly, licensees can provide links to other websites containing relevant information rather than also placing the information on the station’s own website as long as that other site is freely available to the public and no registration is required.

25. *Letters from the Public*. We will not require stations to keep items covered by Section 73.3526(e)(9) of the Rules, “*Letters and e-mail from the public*,” on their website. One commenter contends that these letters are one of the more voluminous components of the public file.⁶⁰ Tribune estimates that one of its stations, WGN-TV, has a file of letters from the public that consumes nearly 32 linear feet of file space consisting of more than 72,000 pages.⁶¹ Comments filed in this proceeding raised

⁵⁵ *Extension of the Filing Requirement For Children’s Television Programming Reports (FCC Form 398)*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 15 FCC Rcd 22921 (2000).

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 22930.

⁵⁷ <http://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/prod/kidvid/prod/kidvid.htm>.

⁵⁸ Comment of NAB at 2-3.

⁵⁹ See 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.3526(e)(8) and 73.3527(e)(7).

⁶⁰ One commenter estimates that the file of comments from the public for only one of its stations comprised a stack of comments 18 inches thick. See Comments of Benedeck *et al.* at p. 4, n.11.

⁶¹ Reply Comments of Tribune at 3-4. See also Comments of NBC at 15 (estimating that its stations’ public files range from several thousand, to as many as 10,000 pages, “particularly [in] larger markets that receive a large

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the specter of having to reproduce on a station's website as much as six-plus feet of material.⁶² To alleviate stations' burden and cost, we will allow them to refrain from posting these letters on their websites as long as they retain them in their stations' "hard copy" public inspection files located at their main studios and make them available to the public at that location. Comments made by the public by e-mail will have to be placed on the station's website – because stations will incur no cost other than the cost of electronic storage – and also, either printed out and placed in a station's public file at its main studio, or made available on a publicly accessible computer database, per Section 73.3526(c). This will ensure that there is one location where all of the letters from the public will be maintained (*i.e.*, at the main studio). The website must also provide notice that a complete set of letters from the public is available at the main studio.

26. *Accessibility of Websites to Persons with Disabilities.* In the *Notice* we solicited comment on whether we should require or encourage television broadcasters to make websites, including those on which they will place their public inspection files, accessible to persons with disabilities using the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility ("W3C/WAI") guidelines.⁶³ Commenters were split on this issue. Several were in favor of making broadcaster webpages, including those containing their public files, accessible to persons with disabilities.⁶⁴ People for Better TV ("PBTv") asserts that "it would make little sense for the Commission to establish reporting requirements without clarifying the goal of making the reports fully accessible to the community of license."⁶⁵ Others argue that that it will take substantially longer to make a website disability friendly, as much as two-and-a-half to three times longer, and would increase costs.⁶⁶

27. We conclude that in designing the public inspection file portion of their websites, television licensees must make them accessible to the disabled through a minimal level of compliance with the most recent W3C/WAI guidelines. As noted by one commenter, "[i]t is urgent that the Commission ensure that the technological capabilities offered by new technologies, such as making web content accessible to persons with disabilities, are used to maximize the potential of persons with disabilities to benefit from technological innovation to the same extent as any other person."⁶⁷ These guidelines discuss accessibility issues and provide accessible design solutions for them.⁶⁸ Furthermore, they provide checkpoints against which website designers can measure the accessibility of their site. Each of these checkpoints has a priority level assigned by the W3C/WAI Working Group based on the checkpoint's impact on accessibility. For example, a "Priority 1" checkpoint means that the web content developer must satisfy the checkpoint or one or more groups will find it impossible to access information in the document.

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volume of correspondence from the public"). Tribune opposes being required to place its stations' public inspection files on the Internet and contends that the remedy, if stations are violating the public file rule, is for the Commission to enforce the rule. We are not, however, taking the instant actions because we have found widespread violation of the public file rule by licensees. Indeed, we have not found any pattern of such violation. Rather, we are taking these actions in order to make the file more accessible to the public.

⁶² Comments of NAB at 20. NAB estimated that, based on a survey it conducted, the average public inspection file of the stations surveyed contained 14,000 pages.

⁶³ *Notice*, at 19829-30.

⁶⁴ *See, e.g.*, Comments of CBC at 5; Comments of WGBH at 3; Comments of PBTv at 13; Comments of TDI at 2; Comments of UCC at 28.

⁶⁵ Comments of PBTv at 14.

⁶⁶ Comments of State Broadcasters Associations at 21; Comments of NAB at 23, n.41.

⁶⁷ Comments of TDI at 2.

⁶⁸ *See* <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/#Introduction>.

Satisfying this checkpoint is a basic requirement for some groups to be able to use Web documents. Other priorities either “should” or “may” be addressed in order to remove barriers to access. Additionally, the guidelines define three different levels of conformance to the guidelines – Levels A, Double-A and Triple-A. Level A means that all Priority 1 checkpoints have been satisfied in the design of the website. Level Double-A means that all Priority 1 and 2 checkpoints have been satisfied, and so on.

28. We will require television station licensees who maintain their public inspection file on their Internet website to adhere to the most recent Conformance Level A with regard to the public inspection file portion of their website. By satisfying the minimal requirement of satisfying Priority 1 checkpoints, no group should find it impossible to access the contents of the public files.⁶⁹

29. Commenters suggested additional ways to make the public file more accessible over the Internet to persons with disabilities. WGBH urged that we require licensees to post public file information on a toll-free telephone line.⁷⁰ TDI suggested that “broadcasters can make chat rooms or listservs available for on-line discussions and to disseminate information to individuals with disabilities.”⁷¹ We believe that requiring such measures would impose excessive costs on licensees.⁷² A disabled-accessible electronic public inspection file is, we continue to believe, the best way to make the information accessible to those with disabilities while imposing the least additional costs on licensees.

30. *Other Means of Communicating with the Public.* In the *Notice* we also asked whether there were other methods by which we could foster licensee interaction with the public through Internet websites. We did not propose to mandate any such method. Instead, we encouraged broadcasters to use their websites to conduct discussions with members of the public and sought comment on this approach.⁷³ We agree with the sole comment filed in this regard. Capitol Broadcasting Company, while supporting the notion that broadcasters should interact with their community by means of broadcaster-sponsored online forums, asserts that any mandatory requirement on licensee interaction with the public through the Internet would be premature.⁷⁴ Although broadcaster/public interaction is desirable, we do not see a need in this case to mandate any specific measures beyond those being adopted herein.

31. We also solicited comment on other methods for distributing public interest information to the public. Our tentative conclusion was that we should not require on-air notifications of the contents and location of the issues/programs list or mandatory publication of public interest information in local newspapers. A few commenters supported adoption of such methods.⁷⁵ Upon further consideration, we believe that viewers should be notified of the existence, location and accessibility of the station’s public file. This will increase viewer awareness and help promote the ongoing dialogue between a station and

⁶⁹ We note that television station licensees may have other requirements for accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Rehabilitation Act, Pub. L. No. 101-336, § 401, 104 Stat. 327, 336-69 (1990) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794(d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-220), August 7, 1998.

⁷⁰ Comments of WGBH at 4.

⁷¹ Comments of TDI at 5.

⁷² Our requirement that licensees make public file information available by phone only applies to those licensees that maintain their main studios and public files outside their communities of license. 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.3526(c)(2)(i) and 73.3527(c)(2)(i). See ¶19, *supra*.

⁷³ *Notice*, at 19830-31.

⁷⁴ Comments of CBC at 5.

⁷⁵ See Comments of PBTv at 13; Comments of UCC at 28.

the viewers they are licensed to serve. We believe that the most appropriate time for licensees to provide such notice is during the regular station identification announcements required under our rules.⁷⁶ The notice must state that the station's public file is available for inspection and where consumers can view it – e.g., at the station's main studio and on its website. In order to minimize the burden on stations, we will only require such notice twice daily. At least one of the announcements must occur between the hours of 6 p.m. and midnight.

B. Standardized Form

32. In addition to proposing that public file information be accessible through Internet connections, we also proposed to adopt a standardized form for inclusion in the file that would replace the existing quarterly issues/programs disclosure.⁷⁷ In 1984, the Commission eliminated many of its specific programming obligations and substituted a general requirement that commercial television broadcast station licensees must provide coverage of issues facing their communities and place lists of programming used in providing significant treatment of those issues (issues/programs lists) in the station's public inspection files on a quarterly basis.⁷⁸ In this proceeding we proposed to adopt a standard programming disclosure format to be used in place of the issues/programs list. In making this proposal, we noted the difficulties that members of the public had encountered in accessing programming information in the existing format.⁷⁹ We felt that the use of a standardized disclosure form would facilitate access to this information and would make broadcasters more accountable to the public.⁸⁰ In addition, a standardized form would benefit the public by reducing the time needed to locate information and by providing the public with a better mechanism for reviewing broadcaster public interest programming and activities.⁸¹

33. We also tentatively concluded that the standardized form should ask questions about categories of programming and should include information on broadcasters' provision of closed captioning and video description.⁸² Furthermore, we solicited comment on whether licensees should provide a narrative description of the actions taken, in the normal course of business, to assess a community's programming needs and interests.⁸³ We specifically stated, however, that we did not intend this obligation to constitute a detailed and formal ascertainment requirement but, instead, only intended it to provide the public with information on how, in the normal course of business, licensees assess community needs and interests.⁸⁴ We did not propose to include on the form non-broadcast community service activities by broadcasters. We sought comment on whether licensees should forward an electronic copy of the disclosure form to the Commission for inclusion in the license file.⁸⁵

⁷⁶ See 47 C.F.R. § 73.1201.

⁷⁷ Notice, at 19816.

⁷⁸ See *TV Deregulation*, 98 F.C.C.2d at 1091 and 1109-11.

⁷⁹ Notice at 19819.

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 19820.

⁸¹ *Id.*

⁸² *Id.* at 19824-25.

⁸³ *Id.* at 19826.

⁸⁴ *Id.* Comments filed by NAB in response to the *Notice of Inquiry* had indicated the vast majority of broadcasters consult with local leaders in deciding which issues to address. *Id.* at 19826-27.

⁸⁵ *Id.* at 19828.

34. In this *Report and Order*, we adopt a standardized programming report form to replace the current issues/programs list.⁸⁶ We intend this form to provide the public with easily accessible information in a standardized format on each television station's efforts to serve its community. The form includes information about efforts that have been made to ascertain the programming needs of various segments of the community, and information regarding closed captioning and video described content. Adoption of this revised disclosure requirement is, we believe, amply supported by the record and will not be unduly burdensome for licensees.

35. Commenters urging the adoption of such a form have noted the difficulties that they have encountered in obtaining information on public interest programming from broadcasters, as well as the benefits of standardized disclosure.⁸⁷ They report that broadcasters are confused about what they should put in their public files and describe instances in which documents were missing and files outdated.⁸⁸ UCC reviewed the issues/programs lists of several broadcast stations in preparing its comments in this proceeding. It found that some broadcasters listed everything and anything they considered to qualify while others listed only a few programs.⁸⁹ It found that "[t]he lack of uniformity and consistency of the issues/program lists make it difficult to discern both how much and what types of public interest programming a broadcaster provided," which makes any "overall assessment or comparison between broadcasters virtually impossible."⁹⁰ One commenter noted that its most consistent finding was the lack of consistency in station public inspection files.⁹¹ Such commenters have pointed to the benefits that a standardized form can bring, including enhanced access to information on the extent to which broadcasters are meeting their public interest obligations,⁹² ease of use by the public and broadcasters alike,⁹³ and the promotion of a dialog between stations and the public they serve.⁹⁴

36. Broadcast interests uniformly oppose use of a standardized form. Several contend that the proposals made by the Commission in the instant *Notice* would be unconstitutional because the proposed form would constitute programming "quotas" in violation of the First Amendment.⁹⁵ This fear is misplaced. Our decision here does not adopt quantitative programming requirements or guidelines.⁹⁶ This *Order* does not require broadcasters to air any particular category of programming or mix of programming types. Accordingly, we reject the claim that our decision mandates programming quotas or guidelines, or otherwise improperly intervenes in licensee discretion.

37. Some opponents of the form assert that, if there are problems with the level of issue-responsive programming being offered by a specific station, the Commission's concern should be directed

⁸⁶ See Appendix B, *infra*.

⁸⁷ See, e.g., Comments of PBTv at 2-4; Comments of CBC at 2-3; Reply Comments of UCC at 11.

⁸⁸ Comments of PBTv at 2-5.

⁸⁹ Comments of UCC at 3.

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ Comments of People for Better TV at 4.

⁹² Reply Comments of PBTv at 5.

⁹³ Comments of CBC at 3.

⁹⁴ Comments of PBTv at 18.

⁹⁵ Reply Comments of Tribune at 2.

⁹⁶ As noted above, broadcasters' substantive public interest obligations are being considered in other proceedings. See *Broadcast Localism*, Notice of Inquiry, 19 FCC Rcd 12425 (2004); *Public Interest Obligations of TV Broadcast Licensees*, Notice of Inquiry, 14 FCC Rcd 21633 (1999).

to the particular station(s) involved rather than imposing a standardized form on all television broadcasters.⁹⁷ In addition, they assert that the issues/programs list has worked well for two decades⁹⁸ and that any shortcomings of the current issues/programs list can more appropriately be addressed through modest changes to that process rather than adoption of a new form.⁹⁹ Our action is not premised on the existence of rule violations by licensees or the failings of a particular station. Rather, the problem addressed here is the lack of accessibility and uniformity in the issues/programs list information. These defects in the current requirements are not susceptible to cure through the issuance of forfeitures. The problem is systemic. According to those who have used the current list, it has not worked well; the changes we are making are narrowly tailored and an effective response.

38. Others argue that a lack of uniformity in issues/programs lists is desirable and simply reflects the diversity of issues identified by broadcasters and the programming aired in response to those issues in different markets.¹⁰⁰ We disagree that a lack of uniformity in reporting is desirable or that diversity of issues identified by broadcasters is the problem. For those attempting to make use of the list and to compare the efforts of various stations, uniformity of reporting is desirable and, indeed, may be essential. As noted above, users of the issues/programs list have chronicled the difficulties they face when reviewing issues/programs lists compiled by different stations.¹⁰¹ Moreover, diversity of issues is not a problem, and our adoption of a standardized form should not limit broadcasters' flexibility to address various issues. We are not trying to impose uniformity in issue or program selection by adopting a standardized form; we are simply attempting to obtain uniformity in reporting.

39. Further, the record in the Commission's ongoing Localism Proceeding¹⁰²—especially that portion amassed during a series of public hearings conducted across the country—suggests that there may be a communications breakdown between licensees and their communities concerning the breadth of their local licensees' efforts to air programming that serves communities' local needs and interests. Written comments submitted in the Localism Docket and testimony received during several localism field hearings indicate that many members of the public are not fully aware of the community-responsive programming that their local stations have aired.¹⁰³ This lack of knowledge extends in many cases to the

⁹⁷ Reply Comments of State Broadcasters Association at 5.

⁹⁸ Reply Comments of Tribune at 4.

⁹⁹ Comments of Benedeck *et al.* at 8.

¹⁰⁰ Comments of NAB at 10-12.

¹⁰¹ *See, e.g.*, Comments of CBC at 2-3; Comments of PBTv at 2-5.

¹⁰² In August 2003, the Commission launched a "Localism in Broadcasting" initiative designed to review, and possibly enhance, localism practices among broadcasters (the "Localism Proceeding"). *See FCC Chairman Powell Launches "Localism in Broadcasting" Initiative*, News Release (Aug. 20, 2003). In addition to conducting a series of field hearings on the subject, the Commission issued a Notice of Inquiry seeking written input from the public on how broadcasters are serving the interests and needs of their communities; whether the agency needs to adopt new policies, practices, or rules designed directly to promote localism in broadcast television and radio; and, if so, what those policies, practices, or rules should be. *Broadcast Localism (MM Docket No. 04-233)*, Notice of Inquiry, 19 FCC Rcd 12425 (2004) (the "Localism Docket"). The Commission has conducted field hearings on localism issues in Charlotte, North Carolina (October 22, 2003); San Antonio, Texas (January 28, 2004); Rapid City, South Dakota (May 26, 2004); Monterey, California (July 21, 2004); Portland, Oregon (June 28, 2007); and Washington, DC (October 31, 2007).

¹⁰³ *Compare, e.g.*, Testimony of Mary Klensz, Co-President, League of Women Voters of North Carolina at Charlotte, North Carolina, Localism Task Force Hearing (October 22, 2003), Charlotte Tr. 133-135 (lack of local political programming); Testimony of Martin Kaplan, Associate Dean, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California, at Monterey, California, Localism Task Force Field Hearing (July 21, 2004),

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existing issues/programs lists, which broadcasters have long been required to compile and make available through their public files.¹⁰⁴ Because the lists are designed to help the public evaluate the performance of broadcasters in their communities, the Commission takes the mandate seriously and has sanctioned licensees that have failed to properly maintain them.¹⁰⁵ Evidence in the Localism Docket, however, indicates that the decades-old public file concept is not serving today's public well. At a minimum, the current public file regulatory regime imposes unnecessary inconvenience on the public because it essentially requires that interested individuals travel to the station during business hours to review the material.¹⁰⁶ Although such inconvenience was unavoidable generations ago, we find that it is not so today, given the development of the Internet over the past decade. According to the record in the Localism Docket and other proceedings,¹⁰⁷ broadcasters themselves are well aware of the communicative potential of the Internet and most maintain station-specific websites to stay in close touch with their audiences.¹⁰⁸ Evidence in the Localism Docket indicates that many members of the public are web-savvy as well.¹⁰⁹

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Monterey Tr. 63-65 (lack of local news, political programming) ("Kaplan Testimony"); Comments of Delia Saldivar, Radio Bilingue, Inc., KHDC-FM, Salinas, California, at Monterey, California Localism Task Force Hearing (July 21, 2004), Monterey Tr. 127 ("a large segment of the population [Latinos] is being excluded from effective radio service") at 2; with Testimony of Michael Ward, General Manager of WNCN-TV, Charlotte, North Carolina Localism Task Force Hearing (October 22, 2003), Charlotte Tr. 139 (television stations are successful due to local involvement and local relevance); Chuck Tweedle, Senior Regional Vice President of Bonneville International's San Francisco and St. Louis Divisions; General Manager of KOIT-AM/FM in San Francisco, California, at Monterey, California Localism Task Force Hearing (July 21, 2004), Monterey Tr. 78-79 (Bonneville produces and airs three local public affairs programs each week and its three bay area stations also broadcast more than four hours of locally-produced news. In addition, other individuals expressed their concerns during the "open microphone" portion of each hearing proceeding, while their local broadcasters discussed their responsive programming at length during the same hearing. See, e.g., Testimony of Deborah Lavoy at San Antonio, Texas Localism Task Force Hearing (January 28, 2004), San Antonio Tr. 153-54 (lack of quality news coverage of local issues); Testimony of Robert McGann, President and General Manager of KENS-TV, at San Antonio, Texas Localism Task Force Hearing (January 28, 2004), San Antonio Tr. 62-64 (localism is the business of local television, and KENS-TV programming is responsive to its viewers).

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g., Kaplan Testimony at 3, Monterey Tr. 66-67; Comments of Sam Brown, MB Docket No. 04-233, at 3 (Nov. 1, 2004).

¹⁰⁵ See, e.g., *WDBB-TV, Inc.*, Memorandum Opinion and Order and Notice of Apparent Liability, 21 FCC Rcd 6009(MB 2006); *Springfield Broadcasting Partners*, Notice of Apparent Liability, 21 FCC Rcd 1364 (MB 2006); *Libco, Inc.*, Notice of Apparent Liability, 20 FCC Rcd 16553 (MB 2005).

¹⁰⁶ 47 C.F.R. § 73.3526(b). In certain limited cases, the current public file rules allow members of the public to call a station and request that copies of public file documents be sent to the requester, at the requester's expense. See 47 C.F.R. § 73.3526(c)(2).

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., *Digital Broadcast Content Protection*, Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 18 FCC Rcd 23550 (2003), *rev'd and vacated*, *American Library Ass'n v FCC*, 406 F.3d 689 (D.C. Cir. 2005).

¹⁰⁸ See, e.g., Comments of KISS-FM, MB Docket No. 04-233, at 1,6 (Nov. 1, 2004), Comments of KLEW(TV), MB Docket No. 04-233, at 1,3 (Nov. 1, 2004); Comments of Media General/WJTV(TV), MB Docket No. 04-233, at 3 (Oct. 29, 2004); Comments of NBC Telemundo License Corp., MB Docket No. 04-233, at 15 (Jan. 4, 2005).

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Comments of Brian Wallace, MB Docket No. 04-233, at 7 (Aug. 18, 2004); Comments of Emily Viglielmo, President, Hawaii Chapter of Society of Professional Journalists, MB Docket No. 04-233, at 3 (Nov. 22, 2004); Comments of Campaign Legal Center and Alliance for Better Campaigns, MB Docket No. 04-233, at 5-6 (Nov. 1, 2004); Comments of Midwest Communications-Battle Creek, MB Docket No. 04-233, at 2-5 (Nov. 1, 2004) (discussing its bi-weekly solicitation for programming input from viewers and their e-mail responses); Comments of USC Annenberg School for Communication, MB Docket No. 04-233, at 3 (Sept. 1, 2004).

40. We believe that affording the public reader access to a station's public file through online posting requirements and use of the Standardized Television Disclosure Form will foster a better understanding of stations' localism efforts within their communities.¹¹⁰ That development, in turn, may produce notable benefits for the public. First, online posting of the completed standardized form could prompt more active dialogue between licensees and their audiences concerning issues of public importance to local communities and how broadcasters might go about addressing those issues on the air—which may quickly lead to the airing of more responsive programming. Second, by enhancing that dialogue, online posting of the standardized reporting form should help licensees develop, air, and document in an understandable way the kind of responsive programming directly relevant to license renewals and assist the Commission in determining whether the licensees are serving the public interest. Third, the disclosure form provides information that will be useful to the Commission and the public in assessing the effectiveness of current policies (e.g., closed captioning).

1. Programming Information

41. The first section of the Standardized Television Disclosure Form we are adopting asks for general information on the station: the station's call sign, channel number, community of license, ownership information, name of the licensee and other basic facts that identify the station. The next section calls for the summary reporting of overall programming in various categories during the preceding three month period. The following sections ask for more specific information concerning the programming provided in several categories. Following this is a section that asks whether the licensee undertook any efforts to determine the programming needs of its community, designed any programming to address the needs identified and, if so, a description of the steps the licensee took. Next, there is a section on the provision of service for persons with disabilities. It asks for information on closed captioning, voluntary video description efforts, and access to emergency information provided to the disabled.

42. In the *Notice*, we tentatively concluded that the standardized form should ask questions about categories of programs and noted the categories of programs proposed by the Presidential Advisory Committee on the Public Interest Obligations of Digital Broadcasters.¹¹¹ The Committee proposed to include the following categories: local and national news programming, local and national public affairs programming, programming that meets the needs of underserved communities, programming that contributes to political discourse, other local programming that is not otherwise addressed in the form, and PSAs.¹¹² In response to the NPRM, the Public Interest, Public Airwaves Coalition ("PIC") submitted

¹¹⁰ We believe that the Commission has clear legal authority to mandate that stations maintain programming records. See 47 U.S.C. § 303(j); *Office of Communications of United Church of Christ v. FCC*, 779 F.2d 702, 707 (D.C. Cir. 1985) ("There is no question but that the Commission has the statutory authority to require whatever recordkeeping requirements it deems appropriate.").

¹¹¹ *Notice*, at 19824 and n.50.

¹¹² Advisory Committee Report at 104-05, App. A. Historically, the Commission has focused on different programming categories at different times, but has not adopted any exclusive list of program types that might be responsive to the requirement that licensees broadcast programs in the public interest. In 1946, the Commission, in its *Report on Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees* made reference to programming types for notation on station program logs, which were specifically defined, including, for example, "sustaining programs" defined as programs "neither paid for by a sponsor nor interrupted by a spot announcement" in addition to defining local live, network, commercial, etc. This Report, which has become known as the "Blue Book" was issued as an internal Commission document and is available in the Commission's library. In 1949, in its *Report on Editorializing by Broadcast Licensees*, 13 FCC 1246, 1249 (1949), the Commission focused on "news" as well as other "programs devoted to the consideration and discussion of public issues of interest in the community served." Although specifically not intended to be "all-embracing or constant" the Commission in its 1960 *En Banc*

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a proposed standardized form suggesting use of the following categories: local civic programming, local electoral affairs programming, public service announcements, paid public service announcements, and independent programming.¹¹³ Definitions were included with each of these categories, providing, for example, that local civic programming “includes broadcasts of interviews with or statements by elected or appointed officials and relevant policy experts on issues of importance to the community, government meetings, legislative sessions, conferences featuring elected officials, and substantive discussion of civic issues of interest to local communities or groups.”¹¹⁴ In addition, PIC proposed that we collect information regarding independently produced programming, which they defined as “programming produced by an entity not owned or controlled by an owner of a national television network, including ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, and WB. If an owner of a national television network owns or controls more than a one-third financial interest in the program, acts as the distributor of such program in syndication, or owns the copyright in such program, the owner of a national television network will be considered to be the producer of that program for the purposes of this processing guideline.”¹¹⁵

43. Based on the record, we conclude that in order to ensure the maximum benefit from standardizing broadcasters’ disclosure obligations, it is appropriate to list specific programming categories on the form. The Commission has developed a list of categories drawn from the comments filed in this proceeding. We have reviewed the categories and definitions proposed by PIC¹¹⁶ and consider most of them appropriate. For instance, in response to PIC’s proposal that we include a question on the form regarding independently produced programming, we agree that the public would benefit from broadcasters providing information about the amount of programming they air that is not produced by a national television network. As the Supreme Court has recognized, “[s]afeguarding the public’s right to receive a diversity of views and information over the airwaves is ... an integral component of the FCC’s mission.”¹¹⁷ Allowing broadcasters complete discretion to decide what kinds of programming to list in their quarterly forms may result in a broadcaster’s failure to give a complete picture of how they are trying to fulfill their public interest obligations. This can lead to a significant gap between what broadcasters say they are doing and what the public perceives the broadcasters are doing to serve local audiences.¹¹⁸ For example, the broadcaster could simply ignore electoral programming (even if it aired some), leaving members of the public reviewing the report in the dark concerning this aspect of the

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Programming Inquiry, 44 FCC 2303, 2314 (1960), made reference to the following categories: “(1) opportunity for local self-expression, (2) the development and use of local talent, (3) programs for children, (4) religious programs, (5) educational programs, (6) public affairs programs, (7) editorialization by licensees, (8) political broadcasts, (9) agricultural programs, (10) news programs, (11) weather and market reports, (12) sports programs, (13) service to minority groups, (14) entertainment programs.”

¹¹³ See *Notice of Ex Parte Meeting and Attachment*, filed by The Public Interest, Public Airwaves Coalition (May 14, 2004). According to PIC, independent programming is important to further the public interest in diversity of viewpoints and localism. See Letter from James Bachtell, Georgetown University Law Center Institute for Public Representation to Marlene Dortch, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, at attachment (filed Jun. 24, 2004) (citing Alliance for Better Campaigns *et al*, *Public Interest Obligations and the Digital Television Age* (Apr. 7, 2004)).

¹¹⁴ *Id.* Full definitions are listed in Appendix B.

¹¹⁵ *Id.*

¹¹⁶ We received very little other comment on specific programming categories; rather, most commenters focused on the merits, or lack thereof, of specifying categories.

¹¹⁷ *Metro Broadcasting, Inc. v. FCC*, 497 U.S. 547, 567 (1990), overruled in part on other grounds in *Adarand Constructors Inc. v. Peña*, 515 U.S. 200, 227 (1995).

¹¹⁸ See *supra* n.103; *Broadcast Localism*, Report on Broadcast Localism and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 07-218 ¶¶ 31, 34 (rel. Jan. 24, 2008).

broadcaster's service. We emphasize, however, that neither the form nor this *Report and Order* establishes any new programming obligations. Editorial control will remain in the hands of the licensee. All that we require is that broadcasters report the quantities of different types of programming that they choose to air. Accordingly, we reject the claims of some commenters that having to list program types on the standardized form will create program quotas, or result in the Commission selecting licensees' programming for them.¹¹⁹ Moreover, in determining whether a program falls within these categories, the Commission will, as it does in other contexts, generally rely on the good faith judgment of the broadcaster. We believe that this approach appropriately balances the interests of the public in having adequate access to information about how stations are serving their communities with broadcasters' ability to make programming choices.

44. We do not share the concerns of some commenters that the standardized form will discourage broadcaster creativity or result in homogenization of television nonentertainment programming.¹²⁰ Each licensee will remain free to determine how best to address the issues facing its community. We see no reason the standardized form would result in uniform responses by stations. Indeed, the dialog that will result from the enhanced disclosure and standardized reporting form requirements may provide broadcasters with input that stimulates creative responses to community issues rather than homogenizing programming responses. We recognize that the standardized form's requirement that each relevant program or program segment be listed is a change from the current rule that requires only listing of programs that have provided the "most significant treatment" of community issues during the preceding three-month period. We agree with commenters that the current issues/programs lists have not provided an effective means for the public to assess licensees' performance.¹²¹ The requirement to present a comprehensive list of programming in each category, rather than merely samples of programming in each category, will provide the public with a better basis on which to evaluate whether a broadcaster has substantially fulfilled its public interest obligation to provide programming responsive to the needs and interests of its community. The more comprehensive disclosure will also allow the public to participate more effectively in license renewal proceedings. We also note that commenters have discussed a lack of uniformity and consistency in the way that broadcasters maintain their lists, and commented that these practices make any overall assessment extremely difficult.¹²² As such, we believe that the benefits of a standardized form that requires broadcasters to list all relevant programming outweighs the burdens placed upon broadcasters.

2. Identifying Community Issues

45. The standardized form we are adopting asks two fundamental questions with regard to the identification of community issues. First, it asks whether the licensee has undertaken efforts to assess the programming needs of its community. Second, it asks whether the licensee has designed its programming to address those needs. These questions may be answered simply "Yes" or "No." Second, the form will provide space to describe efforts taken in this regard. Critics of the proposals assert that by requiring licensees to report how they determined what issues are facing their communities, we would essentially be re-imposing substantive ascertainment obligations. The requirement we are adopting does not remotely approach re-imposition of the detailed ascertainment obligations the Commission previously eliminated. Unlike prior ascertainment requirements, our standardized form does not mandate the nature, frequency, or methodology to be used by licensees in determining how to assess and meet their

¹¹⁹ See, e.g., Comments of ALTV at 2; Comments of State Broadcasters Association at 9; Comments of NAB at 7.

¹²⁰ Comments of Belo at 4-5; Comments of State Broadcasters Association at 13; Comments of NAB at 10.

¹²¹ Comments of UCC at 3-4; Reply Comments of UCC at 10-11; Comments of PBTv at 4-5.

¹²² *Id.*

communities' needs; identify the community members that must be consulted; require that only certain levels of station employees conduct ascertainment; or even identify the programming needs of particular segments of the community. It is only asking the licensee whether and how it assessed and addressed the community's programming needs.

3. Closed Captioning and Video Description

46. In the *Notice* we tentatively concluded that the standardized disclosure form should include information on broadcasters' provision of video description and closed captioning.¹²³ The standardized form we are adopting today will ask broadcasters whether or not they have met the closed captioning requirements contained in Section 79.1 of the Rules.¹²⁴ Additionally, it will require licensees to provide the number of hours and percentage of various categories of nonexempt video programming that included captioning, and to list programs that were not captioned due to an exemption and the basis for that exemption. Similarly, it will provide space for information on licensees' provision of video description services which make television programming more accessible to members of the audience who are blind or visually impaired.¹²⁵

47. Some commenters assert that this requirement would be of little benefit to individuals with disabilities since it is a retrospective look at what programming was captioned rather than a guide to what upcoming programming would be accessible.¹²⁶ We adopt this requirement not to turn the standard reporting form into a programming guide for persons with disabilities, but in order to allow the public, including the disability community, to meaningfully participate in the licensing process. It will provide a basis upon which both individuals with disabilities and those interested in disability access issues will be able to provide meaningful input on licensee compliance with Section 79.1 of the Rules. Moreover, the form will allow licensees voluntarily providing video description to disclose this means of addressing the needs of their community.

48. Because of the importance the Commission places on the accessibility of emergency information, particularly considering our nation's priority of homeland security, we are including in the Standardized Television Disclosure Form space in which we will require television stations to report on their efforts to make emergency information available to further the protection of life, health, safety, and property as defined in Section 79.2 of the Rules. We are also asking stations to provide information on whether they made the information accessible to persons with disabilities. Our rules currently require stations to make emergency information available to individuals with disabilities through a variety of methods.¹²⁷ We conclude that reporting in the Standardized Television Disclosure Form on the provision of emergency programming to persons with disabilities, the provision of which is already required by our rules, would provide the station's community with valuable public interest information.

¹²³ *Notice*, at 19825.

¹²⁴ 47 C.F.R. § 79.1.

¹²⁵ The Commission's Rules requiring video description of some programming were invalidated by the United States Circuit Court for the District of Columbia Circuit. *MPAA v. FCC*, 309 F.3d 796 (D.C. Cir. 2003). Thus, no licensee is required to provide video description services. To the extent they provide programming with video description voluntarily, they should list it on the form.

¹²⁶ *Id.* See also Reply Comments of State Broadcasters Associations at 7 and Reply Comments of NAB at 13.

¹²⁷ See 47 C.F.R. § 79.2(b).

4. Mechanics of Making the Standardized Form Available

49. The *Notice* tentatively concluded that each licensee must make the form available on a quarterly basis.¹²⁸ We also proposed that television broadcasters retain the standardized form in their public inspection files and on their websites until final action has been taken on the stations' next renewals.¹²⁹ We received little comment on this issue. The comments that did address this issue were uniformly in favor of requiring the form to be updated quarterly.¹³⁰ We will require that the standardized form be updated on a quarterly basis in the same manner as the issues/programs list which it replaces. Also, the standardized public interest forms must be retained by licensees until their next renewal has become final.

50. Although we stated in the *Notice* that we were not inclined to require the electronic filing of the standardized form with the Commission, some commenters urged us to do so. UCC contends that by requiring broadcasters to electronically file the form with the Commission, public interest groups and academics would have easier access to the information of hundreds of broadcasters in one place.¹³¹ Additionally, UCC contends that such filing would enable the Commission to use the aggregate information to monitor trends and determine whether the public interest is being served.¹³² PBTv similarly urges the form be filed with the Commission so that it can be reviewed by the Commission at renewal time.¹³³

51. Our goal in standardizing the form is to help foster communications between the broadcaster and the public it serves.¹³⁴ We agree with UCC that requiring licensees file the form with the Commission will also enable us to use aggregate information to monitor trends in the industry. We also agree that mandatory filing will make the forms more easily accessible by public interest groups and academics. Aggregating this information on the Commission's website substantially decreases the burden on those interested in this information. Instead of searching the websites of all stations, those interested in compiling and comparing the information will find one database much easier to use. We believe this outweighs the burden of submitting a form that is already required to be compiled. Submission of the form does not place a substantial burden on licensees. We will therefore require stations to file electronically with the Commission on a quarterly basis on the 30th day of the succeeding calendar quarter (*i.e.* April 30 for the first quarter report; July 30 for the second quarter report; October 30 for the third quarter report; and January 30 of the succeeding year for the last quarter report).

¹²⁸ The form must be placed in the public inspection file, as well as on the station's website, if it maintains one, as discussed above.

¹²⁹ *Notice*, at 19829. Items required to be maintained in the public inspection file generally must be retained until final action has been taken, although there are exceptions. *See, e.g.*, 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.3526(e)(3), (4), and (5) for examples of exceptions to this rule.

¹³⁰ *See* Comments of CBC at 4; Comments of PBTv at 10; Comments of UCC at 5.

¹³¹ Comments of UCC at 27.

¹³² *Id.*

¹³³ Comments of PBTv at 13.

¹³⁴ *See* ¶12, *supra*.

IV. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A. Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

52. Pursuant to the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended, *see* 5 U.S.C. § 604, the Commission's Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis in this *Report and Order* is attached as Appendix C.

B. Congressional Review Act

53. The Commission will send a copy of this *Report and Order* in a report to be sent to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to the Congressional Review Act, *see* 5 U.S.C. § 801(a)(1)(A).

C. Paperwork Reduction Act Analysis

54. This document contains new and modified information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ("PRA"), Public Law 104-13. It will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB") for review under Section 3507(d) of the PRA. OMB, the general public, and other Federal agencies are invited to comment on the new or modified information collection requirements contained in this proceeding.

55. In addition, we note that pursuant to the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002, Public Law 107-198, *see* 44 U.S.C. § 3506(c)(4), we previously sought specific comment on how the Commission might "further reduce the information collection burden for small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees." In this present document, we have assessed the effects of requiring all television broadcasters to utilize a Standardized Television Disclosure Form for reporting on their public interest programming in lieu of the currently-required issues/programs list. We find that television stations with fewer than 25 employees will have to use the new form but that the economic impact on such businesses, and, indeed, on stations with any number of employees, will be attenuated by reason of the fact that much of the information required for the new standardized form is already required for the issues/programs list it replaces.

D. Additional Information

56. This document is available in alternative formats (computer diskette, large print, audio record, and Braille). Persons with disabilities who need documents in these formats may contact Brian Millin at (202) 418-7426 (voice), (202) 418-7365 (TTY), or via email at bmillin@fcc.gov. For additional information on this proceeding, contact Holly Saurer of the Media Bureau, Policy Division, (202) 418-7283, or via email at holly.saurer@fcc.gov.

V. ORDERING CLAUSES

57. Accordingly, **IT IS ORDERED** that, pursuant to the authority contained in sections 1, 2, 4(i), 303, and 307 of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C §§ 151, 152, 154(i), 303, and 307, this *Report and Order* is **ADOPTED** and Sections 73.1201, 73.3526 and 73.3527 of the Commission's Rules, 47 CFR §§ 73.1201, 73.3526 and 73.3527, **ARE AMENDED** as set forth in Appendix A. Rule Sections 73.3526(e)(11)(i) and 73.3527(e)(8) contain a collection requirement under the PRA and are not effective until after approval by OMB, as discussed in paragraph 60 below.

58. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Reference Information Center, **SHALL SEND** a copy of this *Report and Order*, including the Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

59. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the requirement that stations place their public inspection files on their websites **SHALL BE EFFECTIVE** 60 days after the Commission publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing OMB approval.

60. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the requirement that stations use the Television Standardized Disclosure Form, which is subject to approval by the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”), **SHALL BE EFFECTIVE** 60 days after the Commission publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing OMB approval of the form, or upon the next quarterly reporting date, whichever is later.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary

APPENDIX A

Rules

Part 73 of Title 47 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations is amended to read as follows:

PART 73 – RADIO BROADCAST SERVICES

1. The Authority citation for Part 73 continues to read as follows:

AUTHORITY: 47 U.S.C. 154, 303, 307, and 554.

2. Section 73.1201 is amended by adding § 73.1201(b)(3) as follows:

§ 73.1201 Station identification.

* * * * *

(b) Content.

* * * * *

(3) Twice daily, the station identification for television stations must include a notice of the existence, location and accessibility of the station's public file. The notice must state that the station's public file is available for inspection and that consumers can view it at the station's main studio and on its website. At least one of the announcements must occur between the hours of 6 p.m. and midnight.

3. Section 73.3526 is amended by revising §§ 73.3526(b) and (e)(11)(i) to read as follows:

§ 73.3526 Local public inspection file of commercial stations.

* * * * *

(b) *Location of the file.* The public inspection file shall be located as follows:

(i) A hard copy of the public inspection file shall be maintained at the main studio of the station. An applicant for a new station or change of community shall maintain its file at an accessible place in the proposed community of license or at its proposed main studio.

(ii) A television station licensee or applicant that had a website for its station[s] as of **[insert date of release of this Report and Order]** shall also place the contents of its public inspection file on its website or, if permitted, the website of its state broadcasters association as of 60 days after the Commission publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing OMB approval. A station not having their own website as of November 27, 2007, must place their files on any website they may later create or, if permitted, on the website of its state broadcasters association, by 60 days after the Commission publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing OMB approval or within thirty days of the date it makes the website available to the public, whichever is later. A station that places public inspection files on its state broadcasters association's website must link to that site from its own website. A television licensee or applicant does not have to place on its website any material that is available on another freely accessible

website for which no registration is required as long as it provides a link to that website. This applies, for example, to material that is posted on the FCC's website, such as material required by §§ 73.3526(e)(8) ("The Public and Broadcasting") and 11(iii) ("Children's Television Programming Reports"). A licensee does not have to post letters from the public on the electronic version of its public inspection files but must post on its website e-mails from the public.

* * *

(9)(iii) written communication does not need to be posted to the public file placed on a station's website, but e-mail messages must be placed on the station's website, in addition to being placed in a station's public file at its main studio. The website must also provide notice that a complete set of letters from the public is available at the main studio.

* * *

(11)(i) *TV Standardized Public Interest Reporting Form*. For commercial TV and Class A TV broadcast stations, every three months a completed Standardized Television Disclosure Form with regard to the station's efforts to determine the issues facing its community and the programming aired during the preceding three month period in response to those issues. The form for each calendar quarter is to be filed by the thirtieth day of the succeeding calendar quarter (e.g., January 30 for the quarter October-December, April 30 for the quarter January-March, etc.). The forms described in this paragraph shall be retained in the public inspection file until final action has been taken on the station's next license renewal application.

* * * * *

4. Section 73.3527 is amended by revising §§ 73.3527(b) and (e)(8) to read as follows:

§ 73.3527 Local public inspection file of noncommercial educational stations.

* * * * *

(b) *Location of the file*. The public inspection file shall be located as follows:

(i) A hard copy of the public inspection file shall be maintained at the main studio of the station. An applicant for a new station or change of community shall maintain its file at an accessible place in the proposed community of license or at its proposed main studio.

(ii) A television station licensee or applicant that had a website for its station[s] as of **[insert date of release this Report and Order]**, shall also place the contents of its public inspection file on its website or, if permitted, the website of its state broadcasters association as of 60 days after the Commission publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing OMB approval. A station not having their own website as of November 27, 2007, must place their files on any website they may later create or, if permitted, on the website of its state broadcasters association, by 60 days after the Commission publishes a notice in the Federal Register announcing OMB approval or within thirty days of the date it makes the website available to the public, whichever is later. A station placing its public inspection files on its state broadcasters association's website must link to that site from its own website. A television licensee or applicant does not have to place on its website any material that is available on another freely accessible website for which no registration is required as long as it

provides a link to that website. This applies, for example, to material that is posted on the FCC’s website, such as material required by § 73.3527(e)(7) (“The Public and Broadcasting”).

* * *

- (8) *TV Standardized Public Interest Reporting Form.* For noncommercial educational TV and Class A TV broadcast stations, every three months a completed Standardized Public Interest Reporting Form with regard to the station’s efforts to determine the issues facing its community and the programming aired during the preceding three month period in response to those issues. The form for each calendar quarter is to be filed by the thirtieth day of the succeeding calendar quarter (*e.g.*, January 30 for the quarter October-December, April 30 for the quarter January-March, etc.). The forms described in this paragraph shall be retained in the public inspection file until final action has been taken on the station’s next license renewal application.

* * * * *

APPENDIX B**Standardized Television Disclosure Form**

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

Not approved by OMB
3060-XXXX

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FCC 355**STANDARDIZED TELEVISION DISCLOSURE FORM****GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS****Introduction**

This FCC Form is to be used to provide information on the efforts of commercial and noncommercial educational television broadcast stations to provide programming responsive to issues facing their communities. This is required by Sections 73.3526(e)(11)(i) and 73.3527(e)(8) of the Commission's Rules. See Report and Order in MM Docket No. 00-168 (2007). Licensees are required to include significant treatment of community issues.

Applicable Rules and Regulations

Before this form is prepared, the licensee should review the relevant portions of Sections 73.3526(e)(11)(i) and 73.3527(e)(8) in Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.). Copies of Title 47 may be purchased from the Government Printing Office. Current prices may be obtained from the GPO Customer Service Desk at (202) 512-1803. For payment by credit card, call (202) 518-1800 or 1-866-518-1800, M-F, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST; facsimile orders may be placed by dialing (202) 518-2233, 24 hours a day. Payment by check may be made to the Superintendent of Documents, Attn: New Orders, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Replies to questions on this form and the licensee's statements constitute representations on which the FCC may rely in considering the renewal of the licensee's television broadcast authorization. Thus, time and care should be devoted to all replies, which should reflect accurately the licensee's programming efforts to provide significant treatment of issues facing its community.

Preparation and Retention of Reports

Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. Sections 73.3526(e)(11)(i) and 73.3527(e)(8)(ii) of the Commission's Rules, each television broadcast licensee must prepare a Standardized Television Disclosure Form for each calendar quarter reflecting the community issues to which the station gave significant treatment with programming and the programming that provided this treatment. The licensee must place a copy of each quarterly report in its station's public inspection file by the 30th day of the succeeding calendar quarter (*i.e.*, by April 30 for the first quarterly report; by July 30 for the second quarterly report; by October 30 for the third quarterly report; and by January 30 for the fourth quarterly report). All entries on the report must be typed or legibly printed in ink. The signed original of each report should be retained in the station's non-public files, and a copy placed in the public inspection file and posted on the station's website.

Filing Reports with the Commission

The Standardized Television Disclosure Form 355 must be filed electronically with the Commission on a **quarterly** basis on the following dates: April 30 for the first quarter report; July 30 for the second quarter report; October 30 for the third quarter report; and January 30 of the succeeding year for the last quarter report. FCC Form 355 can be filed electronically over the Internet by accessing the FCC Web site at <http://www.fcc.gov>, selecting Electronic filing from the menu (above the Headlines banner), then selecting the Standardized Television Disclosure Form (FCC Form 355). Follow the instructions on that page for the electronic preparation and filing of the FCC 355 report. No fee is required to file this report.

Incorporation by Reference

Licensees may **NOT** incorporate by reference data, documents, exhibits, or other showings. All applicable items on this form must be answered without reference to a previous filing.

For Assistance

For assistance with preparing this form, contact the Video Division of the Media Bureau at the FCC, Washington, D.C. 20554, Telephone Number (202) 418-1600.

Definitions

For purposes of this Form, please use the following definitions:

Local Civic Affairs Programming: Local civic affairs programming is designed to provide the public with information about local issues. Local civic affairs programming includes, but is not limited to, broadcasts of interviews with or statements by elected or appointed officials and relevant policy experts on issues of importance to the community, government meetings, legislative sessions, conferences featuring elected officials, and substantive discussions of civic issues of interest to local communities or groups.

Local Electoral Affairs Programming: Local electoral affairs programming consists of candidate-centered discourse focusing on the local, state and United States Congressional races for offices to be elected by a constituency within the licensee's broadcast area. Local electoral affairs programming includes broadcasts of candidate debates, interviews, or statements, as well as substantive discussions of ballot measures that will be put before the voters in a forthcoming election.

Primary Channel: The primary channel means the FCC-required free over-the-air programming service which, like its analog predecessor, provides entertainment, sports, local and national news, election results, weather advisories, access for candidates, and public interest programming such as educational programming for children (*see Advanced Television Systems and Their Impact Upon the Existing Television Broadcast Service*, Fifth Report and Order, 12 FCC Rcd 12,809, 12820-22 (1997)).

Public Service Announcements: A public service announcement is any announcement for which no consideration of any sort (including, but not limited to, cash, goods or services, in-kind contributions, endorsements, favorable treatment) is made to the licensee or any organization or entity associated with the licensee and which promotes programs, activities or services of federal, state or local governments or the programs, activities or services of nonprofit organizations.

Paid Public Service Announcements: A paid public service announcement is any announcement where consideration of any sort (including, but not limited to, cash, goods or services, in-kind contributions, endorsements, favorable treatment) is made to the licensee or any organization or entity associated with the licensee but which otherwise meets the definition of a public service announcement.

Independently Produced Programming: Independently produced programming is programming aired during prime-time that is produced by an entity not owned or controlled by an owner of a national television network, including but not limited to ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX. If an owner of a national television network owns or controls more than a one-third financial interest in the program, acts as the distributor of such program in syndication, or owns the copyright in such program, the owner of a national television network will be considered to be the producer of that program.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS ON FCC FORM 355

Question 1. The licensee should provide its current call sign, channel number, and community of license, including city, state, county, and zip code, as set forth in its license authorization. The licensee should also provide its licensee name and ownership information, indicate the station's license renewal expiration date, indicate the call sign used on the preceding Standardized Television Disclosure Form prepared for the station (if different from the current call sign), and check the appropriate box indicating whether it is a network affiliate (if so, identify the affiliated network) or an independent station. In addition, if the licensee has a World Wide Web home page, it should provide the address. The licensee should also provide the stations' facility ID number, contact name and number, and list all non-primary programming streams and the main programming focus.

Question 2(a). List the channel and the average number of hours per week of the types of programming on the primary and all non-primary channels. The types of programming include, but are not limited to, local civic affairs programming, local electoral affairs programming, independently produced programming, and public service announcements, as defined above.

Question 2(b) – (c). List news programs or program segments, both national and local, aired during the quarter that include significant treatment of community issues, and that are not listed elsewhere on the form. Also indicate the date/time aired and the length.

Question 2(d) – (e). For each type of programming, as defined above, list programming and programming segments aired during the quarter that include significant treatment of community issues, and that are not listed elsewhere on the form. Also indicate the date/time aired and the length. Program segments may include, but are not limited to, a feature or story on a local public affairs or news program.

Question 2(f). List independently produced programming aired during the quarter. Also indicate the producer; date and time aired; length; and number of times aired.

Question 2(g). List all locally oriented programming that includes significant treatment of community issues, and that are not listed elsewhere on the form. Also indicate the length and the date/time aired.

Question 2(h). For all public service announcements that include significant treatment of community issues, aired during the quarter from 6am to 12 am, indicate the sponsoring organization; general goal of the PSA; name of the PSA; number of times aired; percentage of times aired during prime time; and the length.

Question 2(i). For all paid public service announcements that include significant treatment of community issues, aired during the quarter from 6am to 12 am, indicate the sponsoring organization; general goal of the PSA; name of the PSA; number of times aired; percentage of times aired during prime time; and the length.

Question 3. Indicate whether the station made any other efforts to serve the needs of its community. If it did, describe those efforts in the space provided.

Question 4(a). Indicate whether the licensee provided closed captioning as required by 47 C.F.R. §79.1. If any programming was not captioned due to an exemption (see 47 C.F.R. §79.1(d)) list the programming and state the basis for the exemption.

Question 4(b). Although Video Description is not required by statute or the Commission's Rules, indicate whether the station voluntarily provided video description services for the vision impaired and, if so, list the total number of hours aired with video description, the type of programming and which channel or program stream contained the description.

Question 5. Indicate whether the station made emergency information available to further protect life, health, safety, and property as defined in 47 C.F.R. 79.2. The Commission's Rules also require that broadcast emergency information be made accessible to persons with disabilities, and this form requires the licensee to indicate that they have met such requirements, pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 79.2.

Signing Block. The Standardized Television Disclosure Form must be signed by a station manager.

FCC NOTICE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT AND THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

The solicitation of personal information requested in this form is authorized by the Communications Act of 1934, as amended. The information contained in this form is chiefly for the use of the broadcaster's community in evaluating the station's performance. The Commission, however, may be called upon to review the information provided in this form to evaluate licensees' performance either in the context of complaints filed during the license term or in its review of petitions to deny or informal objections to renewal applications. In reaching a determination on any such complaint, petition to deny or informal objection, or for law enforcement purposes, it may become necessary to refer personal information contained in this form to another government agency. In addition, all information provided in this form will be available for public inspection. Your response is required to ensure compliance with the public interest standard as contained in the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (47 U.S.C. § 151 *et seq.*).

We have estimated that each response to this collection of information will take __ hours. Our estimate includes the time to read the instructions, look through existing records, gather and maintain the required data, and actually complete and review the form or response. If you have any comments on this estimate, or on how we can improve the collection and reduce the burden it causes you, please write the Federal Communications Commission, AMD-PER, Paperwork Reduction Project (3060-0754), Washington, DC 20554. We will also accept your comments via the Internet if you send them to Judith-B.Herman@fcc.gov. Please DO NOT SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO THIS ADDRESS. Remember - you are not required to respond to a collection of information sponsored by the Federal government, and the government may not conduct or sponsor this collection, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number of if we fail to provide you with this notice. This collection has been assigned an OMB control number of _____ - _____.

THE FOREGOING NOTICE IS REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974, P.L. 93-579, DECEMBER 31, 1974, 5 U.S.C. Section 552a(e)(3), AND THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995, P.L. 104-13, OCTOBER 1, 1995, 44 U.S.C. Section 3507.

Standardized Television Disclosure Form

Report reflects information for quarter ending (mm/dd/yy) _____

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Call Sign	Channel Number	Community of License			
		City	State	County	Zip Code
Legal Name of Licensee					
Network Affiliation:	Nielsen DMA			World Wide Web Home Page Address (If Applicable)	
Publicly held <input type="checkbox"/>					
If no, please state type of ownership.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Noncommercial				
Facility ID Number	Previous Call Sign (If Applicable)		License Renewal Expiration Date (mm/dd/yyyy)		
List names(s) of parent companies or affiliates. For each, state if publicly held and, if not, type of ownership.					
Contact Name and Number					
Was this station transferred or assigned during this quarter? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
List primary and non-primary programming streams and the main programming focus:					
Channel	Main Programming Focus				

--	--

2. PROGRAMMING INFORMATION

a) **Overall Programming:** List the channel and the average number of hours per week of the indicated types of programming on the primary and all non-primary channels.

	Primary ¹³⁵	Non-Primary	Non-Primary	Non-Primary	Non-Primary	Non-Primary
Channel Number						
Total Programming Hours						
High Definition						
National News Programming						
Local News Programming produced by station						
Local News Programming produced by entity other than station (identify entity)						
Local Civic Affairs ¹³⁶						
Local Electoral Affairs ¹³⁷						
Independently Produced						
Other Local Programming						
Public Service Announcements						
Paid Public						

¹³⁵ If station is transmitting an analog signal, and to the extent analog programming stream differs from primary digital stream, please provide analog information on a separate attachment.

¹³⁶ To the extent this programming was carried during national or local news programming, please deduct from number of hours reported for those categories.

¹³⁷ To the extent this programming was carried during national or local news programming, please deduct from number of hours reported for those categories.

Service Announcements						
Closed Captioning						

- b) **National News:** For each program or program segment aired this quarter that is national news, includes significant treatment of community issues and is not listed elsewhere on this form, give the following information.

Title:	
Dates/Times Aired:	Length:
Please indicate which program or segment has: <input type="checkbox"/> Aired on the primary channel. <input type="checkbox"/> Been locally produced. <input type="checkbox"/> Previously aired on this or another station. <input type="checkbox"/> Been part of a regularly scheduled news program. <input type="checkbox"/> Been broadcast for payment or any sort of consideration to the licensee or any related organization or entity.	

- c) **Local News:** For each program or program segment aired this quarter that is local news, includes significant treatment of community issues and is not listed elsewhere on this form, give the following information.

Title:	
Dates/Times Aired:	Length:
Please indicate which program or segment has: <input type="checkbox"/> Aired on the primary channel. <input type="checkbox"/> Been locally produced. <input type="checkbox"/> Previously aired on this or another station. <input type="checkbox"/> Been part of a regularly scheduled news program. <input type="checkbox"/> Been broadcast for payment or any sort of consideration to the licensee or any related organization or entity.	

- d) **Local Civic Affairs Programming:** For each program or program segment aired this quarter that meets the definition of local civic affairs programming, includes significant treatment of community issues, and is not listed elsewhere on this form, give the following information.

Title:	
Dates/Times Aired:	Length:

Please indicate which program or segment has: <input type="checkbox"/> Aired on the primary channel. <input type="checkbox"/> Been locally produced. <input type="checkbox"/> Previously aired on this or another station. <input type="checkbox"/> Been part of a regularly scheduled news program. <input type="checkbox"/> Been broadcast for payment or any sort of consideration to the licensee or any related organization or entity.	

- e) **Local Electoral Affairs Programming:** For each program or program segment aired this quarter that meets the definition of local electoral affairs programming, includes significant treatment of community issues, and is not listed elsewhere on this form, give the following information.

Title:	
Dates/Times Aired:	Length:
Please indicate which program or segment has: <input type="checkbox"/> Aired on the primary channel. <input type="checkbox"/> Been locally produced. <input type="checkbox"/> Previously aired on this or another station. <input type="checkbox"/> Been part of a regularly scheduled news program. <input type="checkbox"/> Been broadcast for payment or any sort of consideration to the licensee or any related organization or entity.	

- f) **Independently Produced Programming:** For each independently produced program that was aired on the primary channel during prime time this quarter, provide the following information.

Title:	Produced by:	
Dates/Times Aired:	Length:	Number of Times Aired:

- g) **Local Programming:** List all locally originated programming that includes significant treatment of community issues and is not listed elsewhere.

Title:	
Length:	Date/Time Aired:
<input type="checkbox"/> check if program was broadcast for consideration of any sort (including, but not limited to, cash, goods or services, in-kind contributions, endorsements, favorable treatment) to the licensee or any related organization or entity.	

- h) Public Service Announcements: Please complete the following information concerning all public service announcements that include significant treatment of community issues aired this quarter during the hours of 6 am-12 am.**

Sponsoring Organization		General Goal of PSA:
Name of PSA:		
No. of Times Aired:	% of times aired during prime time	PSA Length:

- i) Paid Public Service Announcements: Please complete the following information concerning all paid public service announcements that include significant treatment of community issues aired this quarter during the hours of 6 am-12 am.**

Sponsoring Organization		General Goal of PSA:
Name of PSA:		
No. of Times Aired:		PSA Length:

- j) Underserved Communities: List the programs aired that were aimed at serving the needs of underserved communities, *i.e.*, demographic segments of the community of license to whom little or no programming is directed.**

Title:	Underserved Community Served:
Program Type/Format:	
Program Length:	Date/Time Aired:
Describe how programming met the needs of the underserved community:	
<input type="checkbox"/> check if program was broadcast for consideration of any sort (including, but not limited to, cash, goods or services, in-kind contributions, endorsements, favorable treatment) to the licensee or any related organization or entity.	

- k) Religious Programming: Please identify any broadcasts of religious services or other locally produced religious programs that were aired at no charge.**

Title:	
Dates/Times Aired:	Length:

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3. MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

a)	Did the licensee undertake any efforts to determine the programming needs of its community?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
b)	Did the licensee design any programming to address the needs identified in (a), above?	
If yes to (a) and/or (b), please describe the steps the licensee took below.		

4. SERVICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

a)	Closed Captioning: Has the broadcaster met the relevant closed captioning requirements? (See 47 C.F.R. 79.1).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
State the number of hours and percentage of each category of nonexempt video programming.		
	%	Hrs.
New English language programming		
Pre-Rule English language		
New Spanish language programming		
Pre-rule Spanish language programming		
Please list programs that were not captioned due to exemption and state the basis for the exemption.		
b)	Video Description: Did the licensee voluntarily provide video description services for the vision impaired?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If Yes, list the total number of hours with video description, the type of program and which channel contained video description.		

[Empty rectangular box]

5. CURRENT EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- a) Did the licensee broadcast information about a current emergency that was intended to further the protection of life, health, safety, and property as defined in 47 C.F.R. 79.2? Yes No

If yes, list the channels that contained the emergency information and the situation that prompted its use.

[Empty rectangular box for emergency information details]

- b) Was the information in 5(a) accessible to persons with disabilities as required in 47 C.F.R. 79.2? Yes No

If no, list the current emergency that was not accessible to persons with disabilities and the reason it was not accessible.

[Empty rectangular box for accessibility details]

6. LOCAL MARKETING AGREEMENTS, JOINT SALES AGREEMENTS, AND SIMILAR AGREEMENTS

The licensee leases or sells three hours or more per day to an entity other than the licensee pursuant to a local marketing agreement or time brokerage agreement, or has entered into a joint sales or similar agreement

Yes No

If the answer is yes, please explain:

[Empty rectangular box for explanation]

WILLFUL FALSE STATEMENTS MADE ON THIS FORM ARE PUNISHABLE BY FINE AND/OR IMPRISONMENT (U.S. CODE, TITLE 18, SECTION 1001), AND/OR REVOCATION OF ANY STATION LICENSE OR CONSTRUCTION PERMIT (U.S. CODE, TITLE 47, SECTION 312 (a)(1), AND/OR FOREFEITURE (U.S. CODE, TITLE 47, SECTION 503).

I certify that the statements in this application are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and are made in good faith.

Typed or Printed Name of Signatory	Typed or Printed Title of Signatory
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Signature	Date

APPENDIX C

Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

As required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended (RFA),¹³⁸ an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) was incorporated in the Matter of Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations, MM Docket No. 00-168, *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 15 FCC Rcd 19816 (2000) (“*Notice*”).¹³⁹ Prior to issuing that *Notice* we had developed a record in our television public interest obligation proceeding (*Notice of Inquiry in MM Docket No. 99-360*, 14 FCC Rcd 21633 (1999)(“*Notice of Inquiry*”), that indicated that members of the public had encountered difficulties in trying to access information that our current rules require be maintained in stations’ public inspection files. The Commission sought written public comment on the proposals in the *Notice*, including comment on the IRFA. This present Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) conforms to the RFA.¹⁴⁰

I. Need for, and Objectives of, the Adopted Rules

The purpose of this proceeding is to determine whether our current requirements pertaining to television stations’ public inspection files are sufficient to ensure that the public has adequate access to information on how the stations are serving their communities. We tentatively concluded in the *Notice* that our current requirements were not sufficient and that a standardized form to provide information on how stations serve the public interest would be desirable. Additionally, we proposed to enhance the public’s ability to access public interest information by requiring television licensees to make the contents of the public inspection files, including the standardized form, available on their stations’ Internet websites or, alternatively, on that of their state broadcasters association. In this *Report and Order* we adopt a standardized form for the quarterly reporting of programming aired in response to issues facing a station’s community and a requirement that portions of each station’s public inspection file be placed on the Internet.

II. Summary of Significant Issues Raised by Public Comments in Response to the IRFA

As noted, prior to our *Notice* the record in our television public interest obligation proceeding (*Notice of Inquiry, supra*) indicated that members of the public had encountered difficulties in trying to access information that our current rules require be maintained in stations’ public inspection files. Although not submitted in direct response to the IRFA, comments also asserted that the new requirements would be costly. In the *Notice*, which contained an IRFA (15 FCC Rcd at 19835), we tentatively concluded that our current requirements were not sufficient and that a standardized form to provide information on how stations serve the public interest would be desirable. Additionally, we proposed to enhance the public’s ability to access information by requiring television licensees to make the contents of the public inspection files, including the standardized form, available on their stations’ Internet websites or, alternatively, on the website of their state broadcasters association. We received no comments directly in response to the IRFA.

¹³⁸ See 5 U.S.C. § 603. The RFA, *see* 5 U.S.C. §§ 601 – 612, has been amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA), Pub. L. No. 104-121, Title II, 110 Stat. 857 (1996).

¹³⁹ Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations, MM Docket No. 00-168, *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 15 FCC Rcd 19816, 19835-38 (2000) (“*Notice*”).

¹⁴⁰ See 5 U.S.C. § 604.

III. Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Proposed Rules Apply

The RFA directs agencies to provide a description of and, where feasible, an estimate of the number of small entities that will be affected by the rules.¹⁴¹ The RFA generally defines the term "small entity" as having the same meaning as the terms "small business," "small organization," and "small business concern" under section 3 of the Small Business Act.¹⁴² A small business concern is one which: (1) is independently owned and operated; (2) is not dominant in its field of operation; and (3) satisfies any additional criteria established by the SBA.¹⁴³

Nationwide, there are a total of approximately 22.4 million small businesses, according to SBA data.¹⁴⁴ A "small organization" is generally "any not-for-profit enterprise which is independently owned and operated and is not dominant in its field."¹⁴⁵ Nationwide, as of 2002, there were approximately 1.6 million small organizations.¹⁴⁶ The term "small governmental jurisdiction" is defined generally as "governments of cities, towns, townships, villages, school districts, or special districts, with a population of less than fifty thousand."¹⁴⁷ Census Bureau data for 2002 indicate that there were 87,525 local governmental jurisdictions in the United States.¹⁴⁸ We estimate that, of this total, 84,377 entities were "small governmental jurisdictions."¹⁴⁹ Thus, we estimate that most governmental jurisdictions are small.

Television Broadcasting. The Census Bureau defines this category as follows: "This industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in broadcasting images together with sound. These establishments operate television broadcasting studios and facilities for the programming and transmission of programs to the public."¹⁵⁰ The SBA has created a small business size standard for Television Broadcasting entities, which is: such firms having \$13 million or less in annual receipts.¹⁵¹ According to Commission staff review of the BIA Publications, Inc., Master Access Television Analyzer Database as of May 16, 2003, about 814 of the 1,220 commercial television stations in the United States had revenues of \$12 (twelve) million or less. We note, however, that in assessing whether a business concern qualifies as small under the above definition, business (control) affiliations¹⁵² must be included. Our estimate,

¹⁴¹ 5 U.S.C. § 603 (b)(3).

¹⁴² 5 U.S.C. § 601 (3)(1980).

¹⁴³ 5 U.S.C. § 632

¹⁴⁴ See SBA, Programs and Services, SBA Pamphlet No. CO-0028, at page 40 (July 2002).

¹⁴⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 601(4).

¹⁴⁶ Independent Sector, The New Nonprofit Almanac & Desk Reference (2002).

¹⁴⁷ 5 U.S.C. § 601(5).

¹⁴⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2006, Section 8, page 272, Table 415.

¹⁴⁹ We assume that the villages, school districts, and special districts are small, and total 48,558. See U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2006, section 8, page 273, Table 417. For 2002, Census Bureau data indicate that the total number of county, municipal, and township governments nationwide was 38,967, of which 35,819 were small. *Id.*

¹⁵⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2002 NAICS Definitions, "515120 Television Broadcasting" (partial definition); <http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/def/NDEF5151.HTM>.

¹⁵¹ 13 C.F.R. § 121.201, NAICS code 515120.

¹⁵² "Concerns are affiliates of each other when one concern controls or has the power to control the other or a third party or parties controls or has to power to control both." 13 C.F.R. § 21.103(a)(1).

therefore, likely overstates the number of small entities that might be affected by our action, because the revenue figure on which it is based does not include or aggregate revenues from affiliated companies.

In addition, an element of the definition of “small business” is that the entity not be dominant in its field of operation. We are unable at this time to define or quantify the criteria that would establish whether a specific television station is dominant in its field of operation. Accordingly, the estimate of small businesses to which rules may apply do not exclude any television station from the definition of a small business on this basis and are therefore over-inclusive to that extent. Also as noted, an additional element of the definition of “small business” is that the entity must be independently owned and operated. We note that it is difficult at times to assess these criteria in the context of media entities and our estimates of small businesses to which they apply may be over-inclusive to this extent.

There are also 2,117 low power television stations (“LPTV”).¹⁵³ Given the nature of this service, we will presume that all LPTV licensees qualify as small entities under the above SBA small business size standard.

IV. Description of Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Other Compliance Requirements

Television broadcasters that currently maintain a website would be required to place the major portion of their public inspection files on that website or, if permitted, on their state broadcasters association’s website. (A station that places public inspection files on its state broadcasters association’s website must link to that site from its own website.) Broadcast stations would also continue to maintain a hard copy of the public inspection files at their main studios, as is currently required by the Commission’s Rules.

In addition, a standardized public interest reporting form would replace the current issues/programs list for television station licensees. This form would ask for information on the broadcast of a number of types of nonentertainment programming including the date, time, and duration of the programming, the program stream it was broadcast on (in the case of digital television multicasting), whether the program was captioned, and the steps taken by the licensee to acquaint itself with the issues facing its community. (This form will not establish programming guidelines or an ascertainment methodology.)

V. Steps Taken to Minimize Significant Impact on Small Entities and Significant Alternatives Considered

Several steps were taken, in part, to minimize any possible significant impact on small entities. For instance, we determined that only the television broadcasters that currently maintain a website would be required to place the major portion of their public inspection files on that website or, if permitted, on their state broadcasters association’s website. Thus, if television broadcasters do not already maintain a website, they will not be required to create one. It is probable that the smaller the television station entity is, the less likely it is to have a website. In addition, television stations would not be required to place letters from the public on their websites, given the volume of material involved. Stations would also be permitted to link to the Commission’s website rather than place the Commission publication “The Public and Broadcasting” and their quarterly Children’s Television Programming Report (Form 398) on their own website.

¹⁵³ *FCC News Release*, “Broadcast Station Totals as of September 30, 2005.”

VI. Report to Congress

The Commission will send a copy of the *Report and Order*, including this FRFA, in a report to be sent to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to the Congressional Review Act, *see* 5 U.S.C. § 801(a)(1)(A). In addition, the Commission will send a copy of the *Report and Order*, including the FRFA, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration. A copy of the *Report and Order* and FRFA (or summaries thereof) will also be published in the Federal Register. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 604(b).

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

Re: Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations, MM Docket No. 00-168; Extension of the Filing Requirement for Children's Television Programming Report (FCC Form 398) (MB Docket Nos. 00-168 and 00-44)

Today we take steps to highlight the work many broadcasters are doing to serve their community, and shine a light on those who could improve their commitment to localism. Specifically, we require broadcasters to post on the Internet information about how the programming they air serves their local communities. Television stations will file a standardized form on a quarterly basis that specifically details the type of programming that they air and the manner in which they do it. Most broadcasters are proud of the local programming and news they are airing. The forms we require will describe a host of programming information including the local civic affairs, local electoral affairs, public service announcements (whether sponsored or aired for free) and independently produced programming. With a standardized form and public Internet access to it, public and government officials will now be able to engage them directly in a discussion about exactly what local commitments broadcasters are and/or should be fulfilling.

Broadcasters are required to meet the needs and interests of their local audience and the item we adopt today allows the public to better monitor how they are fulfilling this public interest obligation. This public "report card" will shine a bright light on the activities of television stations across the country.

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations & Extension of the Filing Requirement For Children's Television Programming Report (FCC Form 398) (MB Docket Nos. 00-168 and 00-44)

This is a good step forward. While it doesn't deliver the real kind of public interest standards that I think the American people would like to have for those who manage the public's airwaves, it will provide significantly more information to inform us all about what and how broadcasters are doing. So if we ever get serious about having an honest-to-goodness licensing and re-licensing regime around here—and I intend to push hard for that—we will have much better data on which to make those decisions.

For decades, representatives of the public interest community have recognized the importance of requiring enhanced disclosure by broadcasters. Thanks in large part to the pioneering scholarship and advocacy of these tireless individuals, it has been widely accepted for some time that broadcasters have an obligation to give the American people a better picture of how their airwaves are being used. Indeed, by the late 1990s—when President Clinton and Vice President Gore convened the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters—the one mandatory requirement that both industry and public interest representatives could agree upon was enhanced disclosure requirements for broadcasters.

So while today's item is long overdue, it is also enormously welcome. Requiring stations all across the country to post standardized information about programming aired in response to issues facing local communities will be an enormous service to us all. It means that every American citizen will have the tools necessary to see whether or not local broadcasters are living up to their end of the bargain to serve the public interest in return for free use of the people's property.

I fear many of us may be quite troubled by what we learn. To take one example, researchers at the University of Southern California documented several years ago that, in the 30 days before the last Presidential election, only around 8 percent of local newscasts contained any local electoral coverage, including coverage of races for the U.S. House of Representatives. This is a shocking conclusion, with enormous relevance for contemporary policy debates. In order to reach this important conclusion, researchers had to watch over 2,000 hours of newscasts from markets all across the country. Needless to say, few scholars have the resources to conduct this type of study. Today's item, however, will allow researchers to conduct similar analyses in a tiny fraction of the time.

Even more important than the impact on program analysis, today's decision will also empower concerned and politically active citizens to become involved in the fight for a better and more democratic media environment. Every American citizen will be able to look up, on the Internet, the programs aired by his or her local station in the discharge of its public interest obligations. Every citizen will be able to form an independent opinion about whether that station is doing enough to justify the continued use of the public airwaves. And if citizens come to believe that a station is not holding up its end of the bargain, they can petition the FCC not to renew that station's license. Here we come full circle, of course, because that gets us right back to the need to put in place a credible system that makes re-licensing contingent on a station's actual performance in serving the public interest. Our mantra should be: no public interest performance, no license.

So what we do here today will be vindicated by what we do about public interest obligations more expansively. For today, I commend the Chairman for bringing us this important and potentially very

progressive item, and I thank my colleagues for working with me to implement a variety of additional provisions that make it even stronger. Many thanks also to the Bureau for its hard work.

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

Re: Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations, Extension of the Filing Requirement for Children's Television Programming Report (FCC Form 398) (MB Docket Nos. 00-168 and 00-44)

I am pleased to support this long overdue *Report and Order* to standardize and enhance the disclosure of television broadcasters' efforts to serve the viewing public, particularly in the communities that they are licensed to serve. This proceeding, which deals with the reporting and filing requirements of TV broadcasters, was launched in 2000. While this Order is welcomed, I must note that its companion proceeding on the *substantive* public interest obligations of TV broadcasters launched even earlier, in 1999, regrettably still remains unresolved.¹

After more than seven years of ignoring the near unanimous voice of the American people for the Commission to protect their right to a broadcast media that serves their interests, this Commission has finally mustered the courage to complete an important, but much easier, aspect of the public interest equation: the TV broadcasters' obligation to simply disclose and report their programming activities to the public they are entrusted to serve.

Now it is imperative that the Commission turn to the task of clarifying the substantive public interest obligations of broadcasters. The need for such rules is particularly heightened given recent proposals to relax our media ownership rules by facilitating more cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcast outlets in all – not just the top 20 – media markets. I ask my colleagues to commit to releasing an order on the substantive public interest obligations of broadcasters before or along with any action on media ownership.

These concerns notwithstanding, I support this *Order* because the collection and dissemination of programming information can empower the American people to determine systematically the extent to which TV broadcasters provide local and national news, local civic and electoral affairs, independently produced programming, programming targeting underserved communities, and paid and unpaid public service announcements. Providing such information to the American people is an important goal. The American people have a right to know how broadcasters – TV and radio alike – are using the public's airwaves. This is akin to Wall Street investors receiving quarterly reports on their investments. Lest not forget, the American people are the biggest investors in the broadcasting industry.

In today's *Order* we take modest steps, requiring TV broadcasters to file a standardized "issues/programs" list form with the Commission on a quarterly basis and to make their public inspection files available on the Internet. I do not believe the adoption of the standardized disclosure form herein implicates any constitutional protections or encourages homogenization of television programming. The FCC has clear legal authority to require broadcasters to disclose information that they are already required to maintain.²

¹ See *Public Interest Obligations of TV Broadcast Licensees*, Notice of Inquiry, MM Docket No. 99-360, 14 FCC Rcd 21633 (1999). For the public interest obligations of radio broadcast licensees, see *Digital Audio Broadcasting Systems and Their Impact on the Terrestrial Radio Service*, Second Report and Order, First Order on Reconsideration and Second Further Notice on Proposed Rulemaking, (MM Docket No. 99-325, 22 FCC Rcd 10344, 10391 (2007)). The Commission has failed to act on either proceeding.

² See, e.g., 47 C.F.R. § 73.3526(e)(11)(i)(requiring broadcasters to prepare and maintain in a public file a quarterly list of that station's most significant treatment of community issues).

Today's *Order* continues to "provide television broadcasters with increased freedom and flexibility in meeting the continuously changing needs of the communities."³ Broadcasters will continue to be able to diversify their programming, and I strongly encourage them to do so. Additionally, because of the burgeoning use of the Internet by the public and broadcasters, today we enhance the public's ability to access information on a station's performance, while minimizing the costs and burdens placed on each station.

I would like to thank the Office of Communication, Inc., of the United Church of Christ, Alliance for Community Media, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Benton Foundation, National Organization of Women, Consumers Union, Minority Media and Telecommunications Council, National Association of the Deaf, and particularly Angela Campbell, Meredith McGehee, Andy Schwartzman, Mark Lloyd and Charles Benton for their guidance and perseverance.

³ *Revision of Programming and Commercialization Policies, Ascertainment Requirements and Program Log Requirement for Commercial Television Stations*, 98 F.C.C. 2d. 1046, 1107 (1984).

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

Re: Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations, Extension of the Filing Requirement for Children's Television Programming Report (FCC Form 398) (MB Docket Nos. 00-168 and 00-44)

Broadcasters play a vital role in informing, educating, and alerting the public about developments at home and abroad. The importance of their relationship with the American public cannot be overestimated. In order to strengthen this relationship, and ensure that broadcasters are fulfilling their mission, today we adopt an Order that will make broadcasters' operations more transparent, and allow their local viewers to see the educational, instructional, and outreach efforts made by broadcasters every day.

In this online world in which we live, almost every business now posts important product and service information online. Government entities also make consumer information available on the Web, from the local DMV to the U.S. Congress. Producers of news and information should make relevant business details available to their customers as well.

In an effort to achieve this partnership, we first require that a broadcaster's public inspection file be available on the Internet, and accessible to the disabled. We further require that broadcasters adopt a standardized programming report form to replace the current "issues/programs" list.

This Order is not meant to burden broadcasters, but rather to help them inform their audiences about the valuable public interest they serve. By providing standardized data, accessible online, broadcasters make it easy for local residents to understand and appreciate the resources they provide to their communities. For example, broadcasters are required to make emergency information available to persons with disabilities. This Order will allow local residents to go to a station's website and see what that station has done to provide emergency information generally, and what efforts they have undertaken to make emergency information available specifically to persons with disabilities. We hope this will result in increased accountability and information-sharing between broadcasters and the public. It will also ease the Commission's efforts in determining whether a broadcaster is in compliance with Commission policies.

Broadcasters use the public airwaves to keep Americans connected, both in times of joy and in times of crisis. A more transparent operations process will allow the public to take advantage of all the services broadcasters have to offer.

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. MCDOWELL
CONCURRING IN PART, DISSENTING IN PART**

Re: Standardized and Enhanced Disclosure Requirements for Television Broadcast Licensee Public Interest Obligations and Extension of the Filing Requirement for Children's Television Programming Report (FCC Form 398) (MB Docket Nos. 00-168 and 00-44)

In this Order, we require TV stations that have websites to post their public inspection files on their websites and we adopt a standardized form to replace the current "issues/programs list" for quarterly reporting of programming aired in response to issues facing a station's community. We do not alter the substantive public interest obligations of broadcasters; rather, we amend the requirements for reporting on those obligations. Also, we do not require stations that do not have a website to create one.

The purpose of the public inspection file, of course, is to make information available so that the public will be encouraged to have a more active dialogue with their local broadcasters. I am pleased that we are taking action to make the information in a station's public inspection file more accessible and more useful, thus improving communications between broadcasters and their local communities.

I am concerned, however, about the burden that the website posting requirement, along with the 60-day implementation deadline, will have on smaller stations. These stations are already straining their resources to finalize their digital transition plans. Certain aspects of our Order allay some of my concerns, however. For instance, we permit stations to provide links directly to reports and other material available on the FCC's website and other websites to avoid postings of duplicative material. We do not require stations to post letters from the public on their website unless they are comments submitted by email. Lastly, we will entertain waiver requests from broadcasters with only rudimentary websites that they update irregularly, or who would find the requirement unduly burdensome.

However, requiring compliance with additional regulations immediately may overly burden the broadcasters without sufficient corresponding benefits to the local citizens served by the station. Accordingly, I dissent to the 60-day implementation deadline for the required postings. These additional regulations will impose a high initial burden and appreciable cost of converting extensive existing paper files so that they are accessible via the Internet. Such a quick implementation period adds to this burden for smaller stations that are struggling most with how to allocate their resources at this critical time before the digital transition.

I also have significant concerns about the new standardized form we adopt today. The form requires TV stations to file with the Commission disclosures regarding: efforts to ascertain the programming needs of various segments of the community; and a list reporting all programming aired in various categories such as local news, local civic and electoral affairs programming, religious programming, independently produced programming and so forth. Yet, the Commission eliminated ascertainment requirements for television and radio stations in 1984 after a thorough examination of the broadcast market. While today's Order falls short of reinstating the ascertainment procedures discarded by the 1984 Commission, I am concerned that we are heading in the wrong direction. Today's highly competitive video market motivates broadcasters to respond to the interests of their local communities. I question the need for government to foist upon local stations its preferences regarding categories of programming. While we stop short of requiring certain content, we risk treading on the First Amendment rights of broadcasters. The First Amendment applies to them too. This form is government's not-so-subtle attempt to exert pressure on stations to air certain types of content. I cannot aid and abet even a

small step toward such a goal. Accordingly, I also dissent to this part of the Order. But I concur in the remainder of the Order, and thank the Bureau again for their work.