

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Meridian Communications of Idaho, Inc. re Application for Construction Permit for New Television Station on Channel 20 Idaho Falls, Idaho*

In its denial of the Application for Review filed by News-Press & Gazette Company, the FCC is somewhat constrained by the precedent of the *Spousal Attribution Order* in determining the real-party-in-interest. Based on evolving business arrangements, I believe that agreements such as those between the Rogers family warrant a wider scope of review to better inform our decision-making. Irrespective of any findings related to the real-party-in-interest here, it is crystal clear to me that the real party of concern must be the consumer in the Idaho Falls-Pocatello DMA.

It is long past time for the FCC to begin a proceeding to examine how shared services, local marketing agreements and other such arrangements affect the localism, diversity and competition that must always undergird the public interest. There may be occasions when it is appropriate for two broadcasters to share some expensive resources. But when the click of the remote displays generally the same news on two distinct channels, we have real problem that needs to be addressed. The spectrum belongs to the American people and it is much too valuable to allow companies to do an end-run around our media ownership rules to increase their profit while denying the areas they serve of the news and information they need.