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MAR - 3 1998

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FCC MAIL ROOM

February 25, 1998

Re: In the Matter of Closed Captioning and Video Description of Video Programming,  
MM DKT. No. 95-176

To Whom it May Concern;

*KENC-TV*

I am Janet E. Berens, a senior at Metropolitan State College and mostly deaf. I am concerned about not being able to understand the television when there is no closed caption. Mostly during the weather on the news and always during a special alert. I am enclosing three letters, two of which I sent and one of which I got a very strange response from. CBS our Denver channel 4 has in the past 6 months to one year has been really bad, bad, bad with captioning of any kind period. I hardly ever watch it for this reason as you can tell by the letters I have sent and the one response I did get which said nothing about the problem or how this person was going to solve the problem, there has been no change. The programming on channel 4 looks like Wheel of Fortune and I as a older college student do not have time to fill in any blanks. I watch the news to keep up with the Colorado weather. You really need to know what is going on. When I lived in Oklahoma for eight years, I did not always have caption TV but the stations made sure at the bottom of the screen what storms were in the area. I live alone so it is very important to me to have everything captioned. This is why I brought a captioned TV, although a lot of the programming is not captioned or as I have mentioned not captioned very well. There are a lot of hearing loss people who need to know why there is a break in of news on a program and without captioning you have no idea of what is going on especially if there is just a blank screen which is usually how a special break in on a program starts. I hope by writing this letter and sending copies of letters I have written you will be able to help. The letter to Ann is Newsbeat: Ann Carnahan of the Rocky Mountain News at 303 892-2333. The other letter is to Channel 4 CBS Denver.

Sincerely,



Janet E. Berens  
3311 So Downing St  
Englewood, Co. 80110  
Relay Colorado 1-800-659-3656  
then 303-789-2508

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Channel Four (4),

11-05-87

MAR - 3 1993

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any of your staff  
were watched your 6:30 PM news  
and some of your later programming  
on a caption machine (TV)? If  
you did you would be unable  
to read very much of it. It has  
terrible, terrible blank spots &  
is a disaster to the hearing  
impaired community of Colorado.

I sometimes get home from  
Metro St. College where I am a  
Senior and watch your 6:00 National  
news which is superior, then comes  
the 6:30 PM local which looks  
like crap or a two year old  
doing it.

The rest of the night's programming  
is bad also.

I have called your T.V. Station  
where I was laughed at. I am  
waiting for your response to this  
letter & if it doesn't improve then  
I will contact the Rocky Mt. News &  
Denver Post & other T.V. Channels  
who do try.

Your Captioning is a fraud &  
you should not be allowed the  
right to put (CC) after any of your program

Sincerely, Janet E. Berens

1.6-80-11

3311 50. Downing St.  
Colorado Springs, CO. 80910

P.O. Box 5012  
Denver, CO 80217  
303 861-4444

Colorado's News Channel



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MAR - 3 1998

FCC MAIL ROOM

December 4, 1997

Mrs. Janet E. Berens  
3311 South Downing  
Englewood, CO 80110

Dear Mrs. Berens:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. We appreciate the time you took to share your views and your information with us.

Hearing from our viewers is important to us. We value the communication. It does help shape our decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Marv Rockford", written in a cursive style.

Marv Rockford

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Dear Ann,  
MAR 23 1998

FCC MAIL ROOM

I would like to complain about the shoddy captions on Channel 4, PBS Local & National. Last Sunday night was a Hallmark presents and the caption was in pieces with blanks & you had to try & fill in the blanks. I had to leave at 9:00 PM to get my teen from his job at Toca Bell & when I came back there was no caption at all!

I am hearing impaired and bought a special TV so I could have caption. These programs are sponsored or captioned by the Dept. of U.S. Education & someone is NOT doing their job. This is a disservice to the Colorado area hearing community & should be checked out by someone such as you.

I seldom watch any Channel 4 programs for this reason. Please help.

Sincerely,

Janet E. Berens

3311 So. Downing St

Englewood, Co. 80110

1-800-659-3656 then 303  
744-3508



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February 23, 1998

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Sacramento, CA 95815  
(916) 921-1045 Voice/TTY  
(916) 921-1177 FAX

SAN JOAQUIN OFFICE  
5651 N. Pershing Ave.,  
Suite B-3  
Stockton, CA 95207  
(209) 474-3088 V/TTY  
(209) 474-1570 FAX

TRI-COUNTY OFFICE  
867 "C" Richland Road  
Yuba City, CA 95991  
(916) 671-2236 TTY  
(916) 671-0811 V/FAX

EMPLOYMENT  
DEVELOPMENT DEPT.  
1880 Sierra Garden Drive  
Roseville, CA 95661  
(916) 774-4035 V/TTY  
(916) 786-6177 FAX

DEPT. OF  
REHABILITATION

Stockton  
(209) 948-7700 V/TTY  
(209) 957-1425 FAX

Modesto  
(209) 576-6220 V/TTY  
(209) 576-6116 FAX

Pleasant Hill  
(510) 602-3953 V  
(510) 689-5623 TTY  
(510) 689-1797 FAX



United Way

NorCal Center on Deafness is a nonprofit community-based agency "of, by, and for" deaf and hard-of-hearing people, serving residents in twenty-four counties of Northeastern California.

Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222  
Washington, D.C. 20554

IN THE MATTER OF CLOSED CAPTIONING AND VIDEO.  
DESCRIPTION OF VIDEO PROGRAMMING, MM Dkt No. 95-176.

Dear Secretary:

NorCal Center on Deafness is a multiservice provider for the deaf and hard of hearing in 24 counties in Northern California. We are one of several such regional agencies, all of which are partially funded by the State. NorCal is now in its twentieth year of operation.

In the matter of real-time closed captioning of emergency video news, NorCal in December 1997 offered comment on this issue. The FCC acknowledged receipt of our contribution with a partial quote of the NorCal letter in paragraph 6, page 4, of its January 21, 1998 "FURTHER NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING." Since that letter is in the FCC's files, our comment at this time may focus only briefly on specific questions posed in the above "FURTHER NOTICE."

1) Our ongoing experience with life-threatening weather and the prospect of El Nino continuing to be a major disrupter of the nation's climate in the foreseeable future causes us to feel strongly that closed captioned emergency programming should be given priority over other programming. But, please, not at the expense of regular program closed captioning that has increased slowly but steadily over the years. The closed captioning of regular programming provides a service for many; they would suffer needlessly were this service reduced.

2) Also, in response to your comment on page 3, closing lines of paragraph 3, that "each video program provider would have the discretion to determine whether to give emergency information priority for captioning relative to other new programming," we do not think it reasonable to give an individual provider discretion in the

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question of prioritizing emergency closed captioning above new programming. This seems akin to giving style precedence over substance in life-threatening situations.

3) Nor, in regard to the question of network revenue, do we feel any provider of TV news should be totally exempt for financial reasons from involvement in closed captioning, unless for mitigating circumstances of short duration. It seems to us that emergency closed captioning would be classified as a public service and that all providers should be accountable to the extent feasible. We would not wish to add to any network's captioning costs, but it doesn't seem reasonable to us that the affluent network should be asked to shoulder all of the cost, while a less prosperous network would be totally exempt. In any TV broadcast region, it is to be expected that one or two networks might, because they are technically more able, provide a lion's share of emergency closed captioning, but it might be unfair to burden them with all of the cost. Might not a consortium of limited scope assess each of the region's networks an affordable fee to help cover the expense of emergency closed captioning? In any event, we do believe the exemptions mentioned in paragraph 13, page 6 (of the FCC Further Notice), might well be suspended for the limited purpose of emergency closed captioning programming.

3) Nor do we believe the deaf and hard of hearing (see paragraph 4, page 3) can be expected to accept, as a means of emergency information delivery, "open visual scrawls, open captioning, slides, or other methods" to a greater degree than these systems are used for the general population. This concept is a backward step; it has no place in the swirl of developing technologies. These methods do not, as you suggest in paragraph 5, page 3, "ensure that all of the details of emergency information programs are fully accessible to" deaf viewers. If such methods were as satisfactory as that, they would eliminate the present practice of information delivery by the spoken word.

4) In a related matter, we refer to paragraph 15, page 7, where the suggestion is made by Californians for Television Access (Cal-TVA) that use be made of a "second text channel" to which a viewer might switch "within ten minutes of airing of an emergency message, to read a typed report of the audio message...". This seems unreal. Aside from the fact that moving, for a time, to a second channel would cause loss, for an equal time, of continued information from the primary channel, this "second channel" concept also seems to lead into a technical dead end. Deaf people naturally have this dream that some day closed captioning will evolve painlessly to the point where all TV offerings will consider the needs of the deaf; each small step should be toward that end. It is hard to fit a separate text channel into the dream.

5) There should be no concern over the limited number of real-time captioners currently available. When the market develops, there will be an unlimited number of courtroom stenotypists ready to sign on. An elaborate setting is not necessary.

The routine handling of West Coast telephone relay calls by telephone relay offices in Missouri or South Dakota or New England should diminish concerns over the handling of TV emergency information by remotely located captioning centers.

Hopefully, we will offer more comment prior to March 27, 1998.

Sincerely ,

*Sheri Farinha Mutti*

Sheri Farinha Mutti (BW)  
Executive Director  
NorCal Center on Deafness

cc: Karen Peltz Strauss