

I am the owner and CEO of 16 radio properties in Central and Northern Minnesota. I left the Twin Cities radio market in 1989 when I purchased my first radio stations: KBUN-AM and KBHP-FM in Bemidji. The company has continued to grow with the addition of two properties in Alexandria, Minnesota (KIKV-FM and KULO-FM), three in Wadena, Minnesota (KWAD-AM, KKWS-FM and KNSP-AM), and six stations in Brainerd (WJJY-FM, KBLB-FM, KUAL-FM, KLIZ AM, KLIZ-FM and KVBR-AM). We have also added two stations in Bemidji: KKZY-FM and KLLZ-FM and currently have an FM under construction.

As an owner and also the general manager of the Bemidji properties, I have seen an increase in radio signals in our markets, especially Bemidji. While the numbers of properties are increasing (via FCC auctions) the revenue base is not keeping pace. Thus, it is essential to cut the cost of operations without sacrificing the quality of programming. With deregulation and technical advances we have been able to maintain stable station monitoring and transmission with voice tracking and remote station operation. Unattended technical operation of stations during part of the day and consolidation of station locations, allows this area and our other companies, to stay on the air.

If we had to maintain a physical presence for each signal based on their city of license, I could not continue broadcasting at the quality level listeners currently enjoy as it would require more money, staff, time and effort than is possible and it would not improve the quality of programming. In fact, it would be detrimental to it. I think you could see a great many stations going dark as a result of requiring a physical presence at remote broadcast sites because of the additional cost involved in doing this.

As you well know our economy is in dire straights. Whether you agree with some economists that we are in a recession, business owners have to cutback on their spending. Businesses are struggling to exist and remain profitable. Adding more expense for operations does not make sense. On the other hand, utilizing our talented announcers for voice tracking for selected air shifts allows us to maintain a high standard of programming with experienced and trained staff who maintain our level of professionalism.

As far as when severe weather is occurring, all of us have systems set in place to cover those rare times. We can extend air shifts or be live, on the air, in short order when the weather turns dangerous and threatening. I think it is unfair to punish thousands of responsible broadcasters for the mistakes made by a few.

All of our stations take great pride in serving their local communities not only with public service endeavors, but local programming such as local news, local fishing and hunting shows, weekday local public service shows, and of course thousands of public service announcements annually. We announce everything from the Boy Scouts pancake breakfast to the Lions Bean Feed. We are involved with our local United Way, MS Society, American Cancer Society, Heart Association, and on

and on. We take an active part in station sponsored fund raising activities from walks and runs, to chili feeds and Ducks Unlimited banquets.

Within our group of 16 stations, six have been recognized by the Minnesota Broadcasters Association with a "Media Best" award in various categories (i.e. best local public service campaign, best locally-produced sports show, best musical program, etc.). In addition three of our stations have received the coveted "Crystal Award" from the National Association of Broadcasters for exemplary public service (KIKV-FM, in Alexandria has been selected one of 40 finalists; WJJY-FM in Brainerd, received the award three times in the past ten years, and KBHP-FM in Bemidji has received four Crystal Awards, one in 1994, 1997, 1999, and 2007. There are only ten stations in the country who annually receive this award.

Our group of stations has been recognized by the National Association of Broadcasters Educational Foundation in their "Service to America" award program, receiving the Radio Partnership Award for our efforts for helping to end child abuse in all of our markets partnering with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota. This is a highly regarded award and is awarded to only ONE radio station in the entire country. In fact we were the FIRST recipient of this award in 1999, and will again receive it this June in Washington, D.C. And, the majority of radio broadcasting companies throughout the United States are as committed as we are to localism and helping their communities every way that they can.

Our communities, like other communities, look FIRST to their local broadcasters, for help with their fund raising events and activities, to provide public education and information about their services or agency, and to get the word out quickly on time-sensitive issues. We serve our local legislators by offering them time on our public service shows year round, and weekly during our legislative session that typically runs from January to May. As local broadcasters, we know our communities needs, we know what issues are important, because we KNOW AND UNDERSTAND OUR COMMUNITY. We are an integral part of it. Management and staff serve on local committees, represent the stations in events, on various boards, volunteer for non-profit groups, etc. etc.

Adding "Advisory Boards" and requiring us to hold ascertainment sessions with our community leaders, would not only waste their time and be redundant, , but require taxing even more our already hard-working staff. While we offer full-service programming we don't have extra bodies to assign to these time-consuming efforts.

I maintain contact with many broadcasters not only in Minnesota but throughout the country, and I know we all share in the belief we do not need to RETURN to additional government regulation to do our jobs and do them well. We are well aware of the responsibilities that are inherent with holding a radio broadcast license, and we take them seriously. We believe we already are serving our communities. We are local, we program local, we live local. Our constituents won't let us forget it,

but more importantly, we can't forget it - we live it. Our listeners as well as listeners everywhere, expect us to deliver local content and we don't disappoint them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lou Buron

Owner/President/CEO

Omni Broadcasting Company