The FCC could modify the current rules to allow companies to remain consolidated in one location. However, community service or programming rules should be strengthened and enforced. If an owner is going to scoop up a license for a frequency the FCC has designated for a particular city, then the owner should have to show that, despite where the studio is located, that community is truly served with either facilities and staff, or at least LOCAL progamming; if not both, then one or the other.

Right now, it appears that a frequency allocated to a city by the FCC is merely
being scooped up in order to allow an owner to "get on the air" and cover a larger city nearby.
I have had executives tell me they have bought a license merely as a bargaining chip for future negotiations in the market or other markets; a commodity to swap, sell and trade. In the interim the station spews forth canned music and sometimes no commercials or public service announcements because owners can get away with it and the FCC requires the transmitter to be on the air or the license is forfeited.

Licenses are a limited commodity.
There are only so many of them. Owners claim diversity of media no longer makes it necessary to consider that fact.
However, for the very reason that licenses are limited, that fact MUST be considered.
While almost anyone can put together an internet broadcast station (witness the public radio station situation in Salt Lake)
or a satellite network (assuming they have the money), or start a newspaper, one usually cannot get a broadcasting license without buying one from the current owner. FCC approval is usually all but automatic after that. In a given market, no willing seller means no license for a buyer. The "diversity" argument can be turned around on them too. If all I want is "more music, less talk"
I can get that with an Ipod or CD.

Owners claim it is not economical to have studios and staff in each market. That is true, if they are not going to spend any

time or effort to attract local advertisers.

I started in radio while in high school in the mid 60s at KBUH in Brigham City. KBUH was a low power, sunrise-sunset station which signed on at sunrise and signed off at sunset and was limited to 250 watts under terms of our license in order to prevent interference with a station in Mexico. Owner Wade Ebeling covered Brigham City and Tremonton and attracted advertisers from both cities, as well as a few from Ogden who knew if you wanted to get to Brigham listeners you bought SOME advertising on KBUH.

Wade made enough to pay his staff and made it economical to stay in business, AND we served both communities; both because it was REQUIRED by the FCC and the community and advertisers supported us too.

If owners want consolidation only to MAXIMIZE profits, then the current system is the way to go.
However, as the writer of another opinion pointed out elsewhere, citizens own the airwaves and aren't obligated to provide profits to consolidators especially when those community citizens get little or nothing in return. I would add that by REGULATION stations are obligated to operate in the community interest ... or at least that's the way it USED to be. The FCC and the owners seem to have switched to a belief that the licensees own the airwaves, instead of being "custodians."
If broadcasters arent able to make as much money as they want in a given market, then maybe they should follow economic reality and get out of the business or sell to owners who DO want to serve a community and are willing to make a little less money at the same time. That's what the general public does when buying stocks or selling any particular item or service; if they aren't happy with the returns on their investment, they get out and do something else. No other business, outside of utilities, gets a "guaranteed rate of return" on an investment. Broadcasters shouldn't expect one either.

Now, if owners were allowed to continue consolidating studios in one location, but were required to show coverage of a market

through news and public affairs broadcasts and similar services, but not a 24 hour presence, then both owners and communities could get what they want and deserve.

It would require, though, DOCUMENTED concern for the community the license is allocated to.
In the case of news coverage, perhaps a news bureau or a certain pattern of broadcasts or attention paid to THAT community.
At least KSL makes a half hearted attempt to serve Provo by putting a news bureau there, although I suspect that was more of a PR effort to impress listeners and the competition than a true effort to cover or serve Provo listeners. At Jacor and Clear Channel in Salt Lake
where I was assistant news director, we did the same thing by putting a desk and equipment at the state capitol and daily filed stories from our "bureau at the state capitol."

If a community of license, such as Midvale, which KSL on paper is licensed to, were a true "suburb" of the larger city, such as Salt Lake, then I would not require KSL to have studios and staffing IN Midvale and Salt Lake both.

However, where we have station studios in Salt Lake, claiming to "serve" Ogden and Provo, or "all of Northern Utah," or stations in Ogden and Provo who are merely trying to siphon off Salt Lake listeners (which, in reality, is an effort doomed to fail; that's consistently shown in ratings) then those owners should be required to show they are equally serving the community or put facilities and staff there.

We have had licenses FCC allocated to Brigham City and Tremonton which owners have bought or acquired, yet they haven't even made a pretense of serving those communities. They may have stuck a transmitter in the area, but that is the only "presence" they have had in those areas and is probably the minimum FCC requirement. When it comes time for the hourly station ID, they mention the city,
but that's the last you hear about that city for the next hour. We have owners who consistently apply for increases in power. Why?

Not to better serve the city, or begin to serve the city, they are licensed to. The reason is to get a stronger signal into Salt Lake and surrounding areas, in a belief that they can siphon off listeners from the big market Salt Lake stations and increase their own ratings. You see the ratings like the rest of us.
That doesn't happen. If it was a realistic expectation, then I would expect to see Ken Frandsen up in Logan request a 50,000 watt power level so that he could try and draw listeners from Salt Lake. It's not economical or realistic.

There is MORE than enough advertising revenue in Provo and Ogden for a truly local radio station in those cities to survive and thrive if owners didnt try to take the easy way out.
Communities rally around and support their sports teams and stadiums and are proud to promote them to the rest of the state and world.
They would do so with a true local station, I believe.