

Issues and Programs Report Primer for Broadcast Stations



Quarterly Issues/Programs Report (“Quarterly Report”) must be placed in stations’ Online Public Inspection Files.

Content of the Quarterly Report

The FCC requires each broadcast station to air a reasonable amount of programming responsive to significant community needs, issues, and problems as determined by the station. The FCC gives each station the discretion to determine which issues facing the community served by the station are the most significant and how best to respond to them in the station’s overall programming.

To demonstrate a station’s compliance with this public interest obligation, the FCC requires a station to maintain, and upload to the Online Public Inspection File, a Quarterly Report reflecting the station’s most significant programming treatment of community issues. By its use of the term “most significant,” the FCC has noted that stations are not required to report all responsive programming, but only that programming which provides the most significant treatment of the issues identified.

Since program logs are no longer officially mandated by the Commission, the Quarterly Reports may be the most important evidence of a station’s compliance with its public service obligations.

Licensees are encouraged not to “skimp” on the station’s Quarterly Reports, and to err on the side of over inclusiveness. Otherwise, stations risk determination by the FCC that they did not adequately serve the public interest during the license term. Stations should include in the Quarterly Reports as much issue responsive programming as they feel is necessary to demonstrate fully their responsiveness to community needs. Taking extra time to provide a fully complete Quarterly Report will help to reduce risk at license renewal time.

The FCC has placed an increased emphasis on the importance of the Quarterly Reports. For example, the FCC concluded a hearing concerning the license renewal of a noncommercial educational station that, among other things, misrepresented that its public inspection file contained Quarterly Reports when in fact the public inspection file contained only lists of

programming aired on the station without reference to any issues to which the programming was responsive. The FCC granted a short-term renewal of the station's license and also assessed a \$10,000 fine for the violations. The case emphasizes the importance of maintaining complete public inspection files, including timely filing of all Quarterly Reports.

Preparation of the Quarterly Report

The Quarterly Reports are required to be placed in the Online Public Inspection File by January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10 each year for the preceding three-months period.

In preparing this Quarterly Report, stations should keep the following in mind:

- The Quarterly Reports will be very important "evidence" in the station's defense if the station's license renewal is ever contested, so each station should approach the preparation process carefully.
- Stations should maintain some type of routine outreach practice for getting out into the community to talk with various community **leaders** and groups to learn their perceptions of community issues, problems, and needs. The fact that such contacts were made and the information learned from them should be documented and saved. Letters to the station about community issues should be made a part of the station's database.
- There should be some station procedure to organize the information that is gathered and bring it to the attention of programming staff with a goal toward producing and airing programming dealing with the significant community issues. This procedure and its results should be documented and saved. (See Community Issues Ascertainment Survey form)
- Stations should ensure that there is some correlation between the contacts the station has made in the community and the letters received from the public and the issues they have identified in their Quarterly Reports. A station should not overlook significant issues.
- Stations should not specify an issue for which no programming is identified. Conversely, stations should not list programs for which no issue is specified.
- Under its former rules in this area, the FCC required a station to list five to ten issues per Quarterly Report. While that rule has been eliminated, the FCC has indicated that such an amount will likely demonstrate compliance with the station's issue responsive programming obligation. However, the Commission has also indicated that stations may choose to concentrate on fewer than five issues if they cover them in considerable depth in any given quarter. Conversely, the FCC has indicated that broadcasters may address more than ten issues in a given quarter, due perhaps to program length, format, etc.

- The Quarterly Report should reflect a wide variety of subject matters reflecting the station's ongoing ascertainment of community needs and concerns. (*See Community Issues Ascertainment Survey form*)
- Accurate and complete records of which programs were used to respond to the issues should be preserved so that the work required to construct the Quarterly Report is made easier. The data retained should help the station identify the programs that represented the "most significant treatment" of issues, e.g., duration, depth of presentation, frequency of broadcast, etc.
- The listing of "most significant programming treatment" should demonstrate a wide variety in terms of format, duration, source (local is the best), time of day (times of day when the programming was broadcast), and days of the week. Licensees should not overlook syndicated and network programming as ways to respond to issues.
- Stations should prepare each Quarterly Report in time for it to be uploaded to their Online Public Inspection File on or before the due date. If the deadline is not met, stations should give the true date when the document was placed in the Online Public Inspection File and explain its lateness. Stations can no longer avoid untimely filing since each online uploaded files are date stamped.
- Stations should show that their programming commitment covers all three months within each quarterly report.

These are just some of the more significant suggestions that can assist stations in meeting their obligations under the Commission's rules. The requirement to list programs providing the most significant treatment of issues should have the effect of helping management review the adequacy of its overall programming to determine whether the station is addressing issues of community concern in a way that informs and educates the public.

The following is a sample format for a (1) *Quarterly Issues and Programs Report* to assist stations in filling out their Quarterly Reports and an example of a (2) *Community Ascertainment Survey*.



2012
Second Quarter

Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Report Date: July 10, 2012

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Second Quarter Issues/Programs List

Report Date: July 10, 2012

The following is a list of some of the significant issues responded to by KCSG Television, Cedar City, Utah, along with the most significant programming treatment of those issues for the period of April 1, 2012 to April 30, 2012. The listing is by no means exhaustive. The order in which the issues appear does not reflect any priority or significance.

| Issue Description | Program/Segment | Date | Time | Duration | Narrative Program Type & Description |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------|----------|--|
| (1) Virgin River | 7:00PM News | 4/5/12 | 7:00PM | 1:36 | Virgin River revegetation project – Ron Whitehead WCCD director of Virgin restoration & replanting. |
| | 9:00PM News | 4/5/12 | 9:00PM | 1:36 | |
| (2) Family Values | 7:00PM News | 4/9/12 | 7:00PM | 1:25 | Norm Thibault – marriage-family therapist changes in family values builds successful relationships. |
| | 9:00PM News | 4/9/1 | 9:00PM | 1:25 | |
| (3) Marijuana Grows | 7:00PM News | 4/11/12 | 7:00PM | 1:33 | David Moss, Washington County Drug and Gang Task Force commander Cartels growing marijuana on southern Utah forests. |
| | 9:00PM News | 4/11/12 | 9:00PM | 1:33 | |
| (4) Education on Stage | 7:00PM News | 4/16/12 | 7:00PM | 1:56 | Fred Adams, USF annual introduce of theater to high school students. |
| | 9:00PM News | 4/16/12 | 9:00PM | 1:56 | |
| (5) Transportation | 7:00PM News | 4/23/12 | 7:00PM | 1:35 | Progress on the Dixie Drive Interchange, trails feeder roads. |
| | 9:00PM News | 4/23/12 | 9:00PM | 1:35 | |
| (6) Senior Athletes | 7:00PM News | 4/25/12 | 7:00PM | 1:33 | Huntsman World Senior games – Kyle Case, CEO. |
| | 9:00PM News | 4/25/12 | 9:00PM | 1:33 | |
| (7) Recreation | 7:00PM News | 4/26/12 | 7:00PM | 1:56 | Parks and recreation for Cyclists and hikers. Kent Perkins, SG director of Leisure Services. |
| | 9:00PM News | 4/26/12 | 9:00PM | 1:56 | |

Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Report Date: July 10, 2012

The following is a list of some of the significant issues responded to by KCSG Television, Cedar City, Utah, along with the most significant programming treatment of those issues for the period of May 1, 2012 to May 2012. The listing is by no means exhaustive. The order in which the issues appear does not reflect any priority or significance.

| Issue Description | Program/Segment | Date | Time | Duration | Narrative Program Type & Description |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------|--------|----------|---|
| (1) VA Nursing Home | 7:00PM News | 5/3/12 | 7:00PM | 1:49 | Utah Veteran Nursing Home, Ivins. Bill Toole Chair, Veterans Coalition |
| | 9:00PM News | 5/3/12 | 9:00PM | 1:49 | |
| (2) Aviation career | 7:00PM News | 5/7/12 | 7:00PM | 1:56 | Pat Carroll, EAA Pres student education of avionics. |
| | 9:00PM News | 5/7/12 | 9:00PM | 1:56 | |
| (3) Utility Rates | 7:00PM News | 5/10/12 | 7:00PM | 1:27 | Dave Eskell of Rocky Mountain power on new rate increase. |
| | 9:00PM News | 5/10/12 | 9:00PM | 1:27 | |
| (4) Construction | 7:00PM News | 5/14/12 | 7:00PM | 1:27 | SUBA spokes person Carol Sapp, talks about resurgence of building. |
| | 9:00PM News | 5/14/12 | 9:00PM | 1:27 | |
| (5) Vision Dixie | 7:00PM News | 5/17/12 | 7:00PM | 2:35 | Quality of life issues in southern Utah growth. Lin Alder, director of Citizen's for Dixie. |
| | 9:00PM News | 5/17/12 | 9:00PM | 2:35 | |
| (6) Drugs and Gangs | 7:00PM News | 5/21/12 | 7:00PM | 1:27 | David Moss, commander Washington County Drugs and Gang Task Force. |
| | 9:00PM News | 5/21/12 | 9:00PM | 1:27 | |
| (7) Dixie Health Care | 7:00PM News | 5/24/12 | 7:00PM | 1:27 | DRMC excellence award Terri Draper, IHC spokesperson |
| | 9:00PM News | 5/24/12 | 9:00PM | 1:27 | |

Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Report Date: July 10, 2012

The following is a list of some of the significant issues responded to by KCSG Television, Cedar City, Utah, along with the most significant programming treatment of those issues for the period of June 1, 2012 to June 30, 2012. The listing is by no means exhaustive. The order in which the issues appear does not reflect any priority or significance.

| Issue Description | Program/Segment | Date | Time | Duration | Narrative Program Type & Description |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------|----------|--|
| (1) Solar energy | 7:00PM News | 6/6/12 | 7:00PM | 2:05 | City of St. George solar home project. |
| | 9:00PM News | 6/6/12 | 9:00PM | 2:05 | |
| (2) Low Income Housing | 7:00PM News | 6/8/12 | 7:00PM | 1:56 | 5-County Low Income Housing. |
| | 9:00PM News | 6/8/12 | 9:00PM | 1:56 | |
| (3) Recreation | 7:00PM News | 6/12/12 | 7:00PM | 1:48 | SG Leisure Services Kent Perkins, director |
| | 9:00PM News | 6/12/12 | 9:00PM | 1:48 | |
| (4) Water Conservation | 7:00PM News | 6/15/12 | 7:00PM | 1:34 | Washington County Water Conservancy District program. |
| | 9:00PM News | 6/15/12 | 9:00PM | 1:34 | |
| (5) Economic Dev | 7:00PM News | 6/18/12 | 7:00PM | 1:47 | Dan McArthur, SG mayor new businesses coming To St. George industrial park. |
| | 9:00PM News | 6/18/12 | 9:00PM | 1:47 | |
| (6) Health issues | 7:00PM News | 6/21/12 | 7:00PM | 1:28 | Dave Heaton SW Health Community Affairs |
| | 9:00PM News | 6/21/12 | 9:00PM | 1:28 | |
| (7) Prairie dog issues | 7:00PM News | 6/25/12 | 7:00PM | 1:47 | Utah Dept of Wildlife Resources – Prairie dog Take program. |
| | 9:00PM News | 6/25/12 | 9:00PM | 2:35 | |

KCSG TELEVISION COMMUNITY ASCERTAINMENT

Community Concerns, Issues

In order to better understand the needs and concerns of the Southern Utah area, KCSG-TV has developed the following survey. The results of this survey will be incorporated into the FCC required Quarterly Report of Issues and Concerns used to guide programming responsibilities.

We appreciate your time and thank you for sharing your concerns. All information obtained by this form will be kept confidential .

Name: _____ Race: Black____ Caucasian____
Hispanic____ Native American____
Polynesian____

Street Address: _____ Male:____ Female:____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Age: _____

Organizations/Groups in community in which the Interviewee is active:

Single most important problem facing community:

Other problems in the community which need attention:

Most important State Problem or need:

Most important National problem or need:

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____