



The *Broadcasters' Desktop Resource*

... edited by Barry Mishkind - the Eclectic Engineer

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[Product Showcase](#) ▶

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6/11/10

Is it really time to consider using Channel 5 and 6 for Radio?

FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn put forward the opinion that the FCC ought to give thought to whether it was a good idea to make room for daytime AM, LPFM and other non-commercial stations on television Channels 5 and 6.

Noting that operations have proven to be very inefficient for digital television, Clyburn said "it is to take a serious look at where these services [AM, LPFM, NCE] fit within the overall spectrum plan, and that Channels 5 and 6 may be a good home."

Of course, this is far from a done deal. The comments of one Commissioner do not Policy make. And, there are so many details to be put in place, lest it become little more than an Oklahoma "land rush" that favors only the well-connected or the application factories.

It is worth remembering that many of the changes were the direct results of intense lobbying by some special interests - resulting in direction from Congress that the FCC do certain things - followed by the laws of unintended (or not) consequences. Personally, I am not unconvinced that some of these initially hidden consequences were not in fact "chess moves" intentionally set in motion by some of special interests.

For example, whatever comes should - but will probably not - be carefully constructed. Otherwise the special interests will grab any new bandwidth before local communities and organizations even realize it is there - and the script kiddies and lawyers will work overtime to pervert the intentions of any new Rules.

WILL IT REALLY HELP?

Yes, the AM daytimers (and stations that are "effectively" daytimers) generally are in need of some relief. However, the way the expanded band developed showed how easily those intentions were subverted, with some making millions find a loophole to sell off the first x-band stations.

Another group that desperately needs - and deserves - help is the Native Americans, who are often locked out of being able to provide service to their Nations, due to the number of signals from markets and suburbs that often are quickly rolled out, often preventing any effective coverage to some areas as large as Connecticut.

As the proposals are developed, there will be many attempts to build networks of translators and satellators. These, in general, should be banned, period. Especially with Internet streaming and other modes of distribution coming on line, there is no valid reason to take limited local bandwidth and give it to anyone without a local studio, capable of providing local service, especially in emergencies.

STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TUNNEL

Nevertheless, it is refreshing to see someone at The Portals thinking about giving something to broadcasters, instead of taking it away.

Clearly, there is a long way to go. The instant proposals are just that - proposals. Unless the majority of Commissioners move on them, they will languish on the pile of good intentions. And we can be sure the special interests will add a lot of their desires to the mix.

Some interests seek the return of the Three Year Holding Rule, and the 7-7-7 Rule. Both of these may hold some good, in some fashion, but the changes in society probably mean those Rules hold less value than something encouraging - even mandating - local, **live** operations. That would be counter to everything we have seen in the past 25 years.

As we work our way through this "tunnel" of proposals, let us hope that not only is there light at the end of the tunnel, but that it is not a train headed to run us over!

What is your opinion? Use the "Contact" link at the bottom of this page and let me know.

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Thanks everyone!
Barry

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