

REMARKS OF JOHN B. FREEMAN, Jr.  
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January 28, 2004  
FCC Hearing on Broadcast Localism  
San Antonio, Texas  
SDF, 328 Congress Street, Opelousas, Louisiana 70570

Good evening Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission (French). My name is John B. Freeman Jr. I am the Chief Operations Officer for Southern Development Foundation. The organization's mission is to work with low and moderate income people to improve their social, economic, cultural and spiritual conditions. Southern Development Foundation was founded by Fr. A. J. McKnight, who was active in the civil rights and cooperative movements. He solicited me to design and build the first LPFM radio station in Opelousas, Louisiana. Opelousas is a community of approximately twenty thousand citizens of which 65% are African American.

I am a retired telecommunications Network Manager. From a pragmatic perspective, I have sufficient expertise to comment on Information Technology's influences.

Information Technology is so enormously powerful and profound that we are changed by every encounter with its influences. Such encounters with IT is staggering. The dialog I wish to discuss is not who or what entities will control that source of power, but rather how that powerful influence can be incorporated into our communities - allowing them to become a participator in this transforming evolution.

Broadcast localism is a family member of IT, and my reductionism concludes that it is not apart from the IT spectrum. I was disappointed to learn that limitations were placed on the execution and expansion of LPFM licensing in our country. The MITRE evaluations of LPFMs are a welcoming introduction for congress to lift imposed restrictions on LPFMs licensing. I employ the commission to petition congress to lift the restrictions on LPFM. The conclusive findings of the MITRE testing revealed that "LPFMs cause no *interference* to full power stations." An additional down side to the expansion of broadcast localisms are the

increasing amounts of translators that can be used for LPFMs utilization. Translators or repeaters run at two-and-a-half times the power of an LPFM, and are technically identical to stations like KOCZ, however, *they do not create original programming*. Additionally, the concentration of *translators* into the hands of a sophisticated few can harm any future attempts to provide purposeful broadcast localism.

Opelousas is the birthplace of Zydeco Music. Zydeco Music is a French, Cajun, Creole and African influenced composition sung in Creole and English. The Governor of Louisiana declared Opelousas as the Zydeco Capital of the World. Several musicians have won Grammy awards for their Zydeco recordings. Given all these recognitions and cultural significance, the full power stations would occasionally allow the music to be played for only a couple of hours on the weekend. I have personally experienced how difficult it was - and possibly still is - for the young unsophisticated recording artist to get their music or other programs played on full powered stations in their community.

At KOCZ we develop programs we believe are in line with the values of the community. One of KOCZ's recent highlights was to interview Mr. Herbert Richard, the first African American ever to register and vote in St. Landry Parish. Our office manager, Mona Kennerson, encourages our volunteers by stating her famous phrase, "KOCZ is an originator not a duplicator." This statement implies that the existence of our LPFM station has measurably influenced the full power station localism initiative.

That observation has caused me to believe that LPFMs are the balance for broadcast localism influences into the IT world.

Finally, I support free market, competitiveness and creativity. I believe it is the backbone of capitalism. Many in the free market believe that we all should be able to compete on "a level playing field." Some in the free market cry foul at any sight of competition imploring commissioners like the FCC to spend our tax money on research that actually stifles competitiveness and public access. I suggest that their complaints be accompanied by scientific evaluations at their own expense and reserve our tax dollars for validated investigations. I also believe that the Public has a right to be a participator and observer in the new wave of broadcast

localism. So, I appeal to you Mr. Chairman and members of the commission to evaluate our concerns and allow our communities to participate *fully and locally* in the creation of broadcast localism. Thank you for having this hearing and allowing us to address this concern.