

**Statement of Terri Avery  
Operations Manager/Program Director, WPEG-FM, WBAV-FM, WGIV  
FCC Hearing on Localism, Charlotte, North Carolina  
October 22, 2003**

Good evening. I'm Terri Avery, Operations Manager and Program Director for WBAV-FM 101.9, WPEG-FM 97.9, and WGIV 1600 AM, stations located in Charlotte and owned by Infinity Broadcasting, a division of Viacom.

I'm here tonight to talk about localism and radio, two topics I believe in and have worked in for the last 25 years. I started my radio career in a major market --New York City-- with a medium-sized radio owner doing on-air and serving as music director. I headed south to Dallas, where I worked for ten years as music director, assistant program director and on-air personality for a station owned by a true mom-and-pop outfit. In fact, some 20 years later, that station is still held by the same owner. Then I headed to Houston, to serve as program director for a small group owner. And I worked in the Baltimore and Washington markets for Radio One, and in the smallest market I've been in --Columbus, Georgia-- for another minority-owned broadcaster, Davis Broadcasting. Viacom hired me in 2001. In between some of these jobs, I fanned out to other music- and radio-related fields, including a short stint with a record label and with the National Association of Broadcasters.

Today, Charlotte is my home and I am an active member of the community.

As Operations Manager and Program Director, I am responsible for everything you hear on WPEG, a mainstream urban station, WBAV, an urban/AC station, and WGIV, a gospel station. I have final say over the programming, the music, the on-air talent, the station imaging and the commercial production. As ops manager and program

director, I take input from the music director, the marketing director, the production director, the news and public affairs directors and the on-air personalities at each station. It truly takes a team effort to make our stations sound great.

Let there be no mistake: Our number-one goal is to serve Charlotte, so our listeners and the community dictate what we air. I wouldn't like to have the City of Charlotte, the State of North Carolina or the federal government telling me what songs I have to play on my stations. And I'd especially hate to have Infinity telling me what to play. My three stations, as well as WSSS 95.1 (Adult Contemporary), WNKS 104.7 (Mainstream Top 40), WFNZ 610 AM (sports format) and WSOC (country format), are owned by Infinity. But each one of our stations has its own music director, its own on-air talent and its own staffs who run the station and stand ready to respond to citizen concerns and requests. I can tell you that no one at Infinity has ever dictated to me a play list, or even a song, that must be aired. Viacom hired me because of my experience and know-how in the radio business. No corporate consultants interfere with my decisions; the ratings speak loud and clear. What happens on our station is controlled by us here on the ground, because Infinity knows that serving Charlotte is good business and that no one knows better how to serve this area than those of us who live and work here.

So let me give you a few specifics about how we serve Charlotte and the surrounding communities. WBAV prides itself on being the voice for the African-American community. The station provides live local, state and national news coverage every weekday, beginning at 5 a.m. on the "Front Page with Beatrice Thompson." The hour-long program, which includes a live-interview segment with a local community leader or newsmaker, provides up-to-the-minute coverage of news and information. This

news program is ranked number one in its demographic 25-54 and in the market for its time period. Recent shows have included all-important discussions with former Mecklenburg County Fire Chief and current Local Homeland Security Chief Luther Fincher. Throughout the day, WBAV provides news updates, and we always interrupt regularly scheduled programming for breaking news. On Sundays, we air Beatrice Thompson's "Straight Talk," a one-hour public affairs program featuring live interviews and call-in opportunities for listeners on topics ranging from health care to education to politics. In fact, this past September 7, Bea devoted the complete hour of her program to the two candidates running in the Democratic primary for the Charlotte city council's District 3 seat.

Speaking of Bea, I'd like to take a moment to recognize WBAV's news and public affairs director, who has lived in Charlotte since she was two years old and worked in the TV and radio business in this market –both for commercial and noncommercial stations-- for the last 26 years. She truly personifies a community servant broadcaster. Under Bea's leadership, WBAV's local involvement has included sponsorship of the Mecklenburg County's WalkWest, the largest walkathon in Charlotte's African-American community. This event ties in on-air discussions on health with local health care professionals on Bea's public affairs program. Other community work includes an annual radiothon to send inner city Charlotte children to summer camp and collaboration with the Regional HIV/AIDS Network in which WBAV provides airtime for public service announcements, public affairs programming segments and an information clearinghouse.

WPEG is our mainstream urban-formatted station. Its programming addresses the needs of Charlotte by dealing with topics such as racial issues, health, teen pregnancy, the upcoming November elections and more. These issues are tackled on “Community Focus Live,” a one-hour show hosted by WPEG News Director Sheila Stewart and airing Sundays, as well as during morning drive from 6-10 a.m., on the Breakfast Brothers Morning Show. WPEG breaks into programming with breaking news and emergency information, as it did earlier this year when the entire State of North Carolina suffered through a horrible ice storm and thousands were without power. We aired updates around the clock to let listeners know where they could go for shelter and safety. WPEG recently participated in North Carolina’s first use of the AMBER alert system. In August, a woman was car-jacked with her four-month old baby. An officer from the Charlotte Police Department notified us on the air, and within minutes mother and child were found unharmed.

Localism to us means more than news and public affairs. The ideal extends to our on-air personalities and music. WPEG has a specialty one-hour show each week, “Future Flavas,” which spotlights local talent and new artists in the industry. Local artists featured on the program have included Low Key, Sharrifa and Infinique, which has since signed a record deal with Rico Wade of the Dungeon Family in Atlanta. Each week, the station receives more than 20 CDs from local artists. These CDs are reviewed by a panel of “street team” listeners, who select the best five artists to be showcased on the next “Future Flavas.” In addition to this program WPEG periodically plays the music of local gospel artists on its “Praise and Worship” gospel show, airing from 6-11 a.m. Sundays.

News director Sheila Stewart, who, like Bea, has worked in the business in the Charlotte market for some 10 years, is also here tonight and I'd like to recognize her. Sheila is instrumental in WPEG's community outreach projects, which range from sponsorship of the annual United Negro College Fund Telethon and the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast and co-sponsorship of the annual Juneteenth Festival and the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity convention in Charlotte this summer. More than 25,000 people attended this last event, which included a job fair.

Our on-air personalities also jump in to be part of the community. Our own No-Limit Larry hosted a back-to-school drive for kids this past August, and Janine Davis of the Breakfast Brothers (yes, there is a sister in the group) is active in Girl Talk Foundation, a non-profit group that reaches out to girls in schools with seminars on the topics of abstinence and building self-esteem and image. The Breakfast Brothers also do a series of block parties in low-income neighborhoods, do a reading day at local schools and daycare centers and feed over 200 families for Thanksgiving out of their own pockets.

Our gospel station, WGIV, has been broadcasting for more than 50 years. It provides hourly newsbreaks during the morning drive time program hosted by Sister Altheresa Goode-Howard. Until recently, WGIV aired a daily, one-hour talk show hosted by Bea Thompson. A local public affairs program airs every Sunday. WGIV also does a Family Fun Day in the summertime, where local churches get involved for a day of activities for children, gospel music from local choirs, food and ministering.

In conclusion, our stations would not be where they are without our communities. Community involvement and service is a part of what I expect and look for in our personalities and the events we tie into.

Viacom has allowed me to run WBAV, WPEG and WGIV like hometown, locally owned stations. If we weren't focused on that, we would not be as successful as we are.

Thank you.