



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

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DA 05- 1863
In Reply Refer to:
1800B3-CNZ

North Texas Music Foundation
c/o John Crigler, Esq.
Garvey, Schubert & Barer
1000 Potomac Street, NW
Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20007

Patrick J. Vaughn, Esq.
American Family Association, Inc.
P.O. Drawer 2440
Tupelo, MS 38803

CSSI Non-Profit Educational Broadcasting Corp.
c/o Timothy E. Welch, Esq.
Law Offices of Hill & Welch
1330 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Suite 113
Washington, DC 20036

In Re: NEW (NCE FM), Bluff Dale, TX
Facility ID No. 89699
BPED-19980122MC

NEW (NCE FM), Stephenville, TX
Facility ID No. 91343
BPED-19980730ME

NEW (NCE FM), Stephenville, TX
Facility ID No. 89992
BPED-19980212MA

Applications for NCE FM Construction Permits

Group No. 980119

Dear Counsel:

We have before us Group 980119 – three mutually exclusive applications for permits to construct new noncommercial educational (“NCE”) FM stations serving different communities. In such situations, the rules require the Commission to make a threshold determination as to whether grant of any of the applications would further the fair, efficient, and equitable distribution of radio service among communities.¹ For the reasons below, we determine that North Texas Music Foundation (“NTMF”) is entitled to a decisive Section 307(b) preference.

¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 307(b); 47 C.F.R. § 73.7002(a).

An NCE FM applicant is eligible to receive a Section 307(b) preference if it would provide a first or second reserved channel NCE aural service (in the aggregate) to at least ten percent of the population, provided that this constitutes at least 2,000 people, within the proposed station's 60 dBu contour.² If more than one applicant in a mutually exclusive group qualifies for a preference, we compare first service population coverage totals.³ An applicant will receive a dispositive fair distribution preference by proposing to serve at least 5,000 more potential listeners than the next highest applicant's first service total.⁴ If no applicant is entitled to a first service preference, we will consider combined first and second service population totals and apply the same 5,000 listener threshold.

In the present group, NTMF would serve Stephenville, Texas, American Family Association, Inc. ("AFA") would serve Stephenville, Texas, and CSSI Non-Profit Educational Broadcasting Corporation ("CSSI") would serve Bluff Dale, Texas. Each applicant claims that it would provide a new first or second NCE service to 10 percent of the population, and to at least 2,000 people, within its respective service area, and therefore, that it is eligible for a fair distribution preference.⁵ Each applicant also asserts that it is entitled to a first service preference because its proposed facility would provide a first service to at least 10 percent of the population (and at least 2,000 persons) within its respective 60 dBu contour.⁶ AFA does not qualify for a first service comparative preference, however, because it did not include with its 307(b) showing the number of people it proposes to serve with first service.⁷ Based on the applicants' submissions and calculations, it appears that NTMF qualifies for a comparative preference, because it would provide a new first service to at least 5,000 more persons than the next best applicant. Accordingly, pursuant to Section 73.7004 of the Commission's rules, we identify NTMF as the tentative selectee. Group 980119 thus will not proceed to a point hearing.⁸

² See 47 C.F.R. § 73.7002(b). With respect to population information, applicants were to use the 2000 Census data, if available by June 4, 2001. See "Supplements and Settlements to Pending Closed Groups of Noncommercial Educational Broadcast Applications Due by June 4, 2001," *Public Notice*, 16 FCC Rcd 6893 (MB Mar. 22, 2001). Applicants were also to base their "fair distribution" analysis on the "snap shot" date of June 4, 2001, which is applicable unless the applicant subsequently makes engineering changes that would diminish its comparative position. *Id.* In this case, none of the applicants has made such engineering changes. In addition, each applicant timely supplemented its application with a Section 307(b) showing; each purports to be based on 2000 Census data and a "snap shot" date of June 4, 2001.

³ See 47 C.F.R. § 73.7002(b). See also "Deadline for NCE Settlements and Supplements Extended to July 19, 2001; Date for Calculating Comparative Qualifications Remains June 4, 2001," *Public Notice*, 16 FCC Rcd 10892, 10893 (MB May 24, 2001).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ NTMF's 60 dBu contour encompasses 95,818 people. NTMF's claimed aggregated first and second service is 66,176 people. AFA's 60 dBu contour encompasses 20,943 people. AFA's claimed aggregated first and second service is 20,943 people. CSSI's 60 dBu contour encompasses 71,178 people. CSSI's claimed aggregated first and second service is 48,844 people.

⁶ NTMF claims to provide 47,680 people with new first service. CSSI claims to provide 31,655 people with new first service.

⁷ AFA claims to provide aggregated first and second service to 20,943 people.

⁸ See 47 C.F.R. § 73.7002(b). The Media Bureau has delegated authority to make 307(b) determinations in NCE cases. See *Reexamination of the Comparative Standards for Noncommercial Educational Applicants*, 15 FCC Rcd 7386 (2000), partially reversed on other grounds, *NPR v. FCC*, 254 F.3d 226 (DC Cir. 2001) ("NCE Order"). See also 47 C.F.R. § 0.283. In the *NCE Order*, the Commission concluded that "[i]n examining the fair distribution issues, we will use the general process set forth in the Section of our Competitive Bidding proceeding that addressed Section 307(b) considerations for AM stations." See *NCE Order*, 15 FCC Rcd at 7397 (citing *Comparative Bidding for Commercial Broadcasting and Instructional Television Fixed Services*, 13 FCC Rcd 15920 (1998) (delegating authority to the staff to conduct Section 307(b) analyses with respect to AM applications prior to conducting

Accordingly, it is ordered that the application of North Texas Music Foundation is accepted for filing. It is also ordered that North Texas Music Foundation is TENTATIVELY SELECTED to be awarded a construction permit (File No. BPED-19980730ME) for a new NCE FM station in Stephenville, Texas. Petitions to deny the tentative selectee are due within thirty (30) days following the issuance of a subsequently issued public notice announcing the acceptance and tentative selection of this application.⁹

Sincerely,

Peter H. Doyle
Chief, Audio Division
Media Bureau

auctions of competing applications)). In contrast, the *NCE Order* noted that the point system analysis conducted when Section 307(b) is not determinative is considered a simplified “hearing” for purposes of 47 U.S.C. § 155(c)(1). *See NCE Order*, 15 FCC Rcd at 7420.

⁹ *See* 47 C.F.R. § 73.7004. If any applicant previously raised issues against the tentative selectee, it must refile its objections within this thirty (30) day period.