



**Opening Remarks of Greg Dawson
Vice President of News
Station KNSD NBC 7 San Diego
FCC Field Event: “The Information Needs of Communities”
Arizona State University
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Phoenix, Arizona**

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Good morning. I am Greg Dawson, Vice President of News for Station KNSD, San Diego, which is affiliated with the NBC Television Network and part of the NBC Owned Television Stations Division of NBCUniversal. I'd like to thank the Commission for inviting me to participate in today's field event on the "Information Needs of Communities."

Several years ago, we entered into an informal partnership with a new online non-profit news organization called the Voice of San Diego. The folks who founded Voice of San Diego were smart and passionate. They were experienced journalists. And they had a mission to cover local government with a laser focus.

It was an important area of content for our newsroom as well. But we all know that in television news, we get pulled in many directions, and we often end up serving broadly, but perhaps not as deeply as we might like. So we hoped that, through a cooperative arrangement, Voice of San Diego could contribute to our on-air news programming, enabling us to better serve our audience with more in-depth reporting on our local governments and the people who serve in them.

For its part, the Voice of San Diego was looking to establish its name and credibility. Working with a local television station with a respected news operation was a good way to accomplish that.

Over the years, our relationship has grown, based on trust and a shared set of values concerning transparency and accountability in government and journalistic integrity in newsgathering and reporting. We have experimented with a variety of projects and formats, always with the shared goals of improving our coverage of local issues, holding our public officials accountable, and creating better news consumers.

We now have several established projects underway through which we jointly produce news stories that improve our coverage of important local issues. These cooperative efforts allow us to explore difficult topics in greater depth, such as the city's financial challenges or complex ballot propositions. This in turn helps our audience better understand those issues when they read or hear updates in daily local news coverage.

We also had the goal of developing a sustainable business model for this kind of partnership. To that end, we have been able to find sponsorships for our projects, thereby creating a new – if small – revenue stream to support these joint undertakings.

Our partnership with Voice of San Diego has received a lot of attention – locally and beyond. And, as part of the Comcast/NBCUniversal transaction, NBCUniversal has committed to try to expand these efforts in some of the other major markets served by NBC owned television stations.

In May of this year, we launched an expansive outreach program in our other nine markets, encouraging interested organizations to submit applications to participate in cooperative news partnerships with our owned stations. Our application form emphasized that we were looking for, among other qualifications, local newsgathering capabilities, strong journalistic standards, and the ability to both report on and reflect the incredible diversity of the communities served by our stations.

We spread the word on-air, online, and through direct communication with key organizations, such as Poynter, the Knight Foundation, the Investigative News Network, a number of professional journalism organizations serving diverse constituents, and more. We also issued a press release, which was widely disseminated, that described the initiative and contained links to the sections of the stations' websites where more information and the web-based application form could be obtained. Our stations aired over 1,800 promotional announcements encouraging interested organizations to visit the website and submit an application, and the stations' websites garnered more than 3.8 million impressions.

In response to our broad outreach, we received more than 30 applications from a wide variety of organizations. We then undertook a detailed evaluation process that involved a multi-disciplinary team to identify the top applicants. We are now in the final stages of evaluating the best opportunities in each market. And we are on track for meeting the commitment of establishing four new partnerships within the first year of our new corporate ownership.

I'm proud to be a part of that process. And I'm proud to be here today representing NBCUniversal.

Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.