

Localism Task Force Public Hearing
San Antonio, Texas – January 28, 2004

Comments of Steve Giust, General Manager, KWEX-TV, San Antonio

Good evening. I'm pleased to participate in tonight's discussion. My name is Steve Giust, and I've been the General Manager of KWEX-TV, Channel 41 here in San Antonio for nearly 12 years. I began my 32-year career in television broadcasting in 1971 at the ABC affiliate in my hometown of El Paso.

KWEX holds the distinction of being the first Spanish-formatted UHF television station in the U.S., having begun operations with a Spanish format in 1961. Today, KWEX continues to serve San Antonio, and especially the significant Hispanic population in our community.

KWEX provides local programming and has always been an active participant in the community. As most of you know, KWEX is also the local affiliate of the Univision Television Network in San Antonio and is in fact a Univision-owned station. KWEX has gone to great lengths over the years to serve the needs of the local Hispanic community, and in that time, we're proud to have become a part of San Antonio.

One of the reasons KWEX has achieved this position is because it provides local programming that is responsive to the residents of San Antonio. In particular, KWEX airs seven hours of local news programming each week, including two daily live newscasts. KWEX's news programs focus on politics, business, weather, traffic, and other events affecting San Antonio. Last year, one of our news anchors, Monica Navarro, who has been with Univision in San Antonio for 21 years, was selected Journalist of the Year by the 2003 Hispanic Media Awards.

KWEX broadcasts weekly community affairs shows such as: "*Desde San Antonio*," which contains in-depth segments on topics such as home ownership, education, arts, nutrition,

and finances, and “*Es Tu Capitolio*,” a show composed of interviews with state and local political leaders addressing topics and laws that concern the community. Beyond its regular newscasts and public affairs programming, KWEX airs literally thousands of public service announcements each year, as well as community calendars to keep the San Antonio community informed about programs, services, and events hosted by local municipal and non-profit organizations. In these ways, KWEX keeps San Antonio residents informed and engaged in politics, public affairs, and local events.

But one of the most important ways that KWEX is able to serve its community and connect with San Antonio residents is through its community outreach efforts. For example, in 2003, the station sponsored the San Antonio Public Library Summer Reading Program, the Annual Conference on Latina Health Issues, and the Day of Scholarships. In addition, KWEX was involved in numerous local events, including clothing drives, voter registration efforts, academic scholarships, health fairs, and a spelling bee with students from over 80 public and private middle and high schools. These events really are among the best opportunities to get involved with the community.

On the programming side, to ensure that the station stays current and understands the community’s concerns, we continuously talk to community leaders and members of the public throughout the year. Even though the FCC eliminated its formal ascertainment requirements in 1984, KWEX continues to conduct formal interviews with both leaders and members of the community to get their input on the needs and interests of San Antonio. On average, KWEX conducts over 80 of these face-to-face interviews each year in an effort to determine the issues and topics most important to the people of San Antonio. We take the feedback from these

interviews, as well as input from other sources, into consideration when making programming decisions for the station.

KWEX values the relationship it has with its community, which is made possible only by providing the local information and assistance that viewers expect from their local broadcast station. In this regard, our continued ability to serve the public as we enter the digital age depends significantly on the FCC adopting cable must-carry requirements for both analog and digital signals during the DTV transition. Without such dual carriage, that important public interest connection between local broadcast stations and their viewers will be severed by cable operators.

Broadcast stations in general, and KWEX in particular, work hard to cultivate a local presence and to serve the needs of their communities. Airing local programming that is unique and tailored to the community helps attract viewers and keeps the local broadcast station from blending into the mosaic of competing channels and media available to the public. KWEX is particularly fortunate to have the support of our owner, Univision, which places great importance on local programming and community outreach, to produce local news and public affairs programming, sponsor community outreach efforts, and maintain our connection to the community. We look forward to continuing to do so in the future.

Thank you.