

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSIONFILED/ACCEPTED WASHINGTON, D.C.

In the Matter of:)	Federal Communications Commission Office of the Secretary
First Cullman Broadcasting, Inc.		Office of the Secretary
Cancellation of License of Low Power TV Station WCQT-LP, Cullman, AL)	Facility ID No. 21592
To: Secretary, FCC Attn: Chief, Video Division, Media Bureau		

PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION

First Cullman Broadcasting, Inc. ("First Cullman"), by counsel and pursuant to Section 1.106 of the FCC's Rules, respectfully petitions for reconsideration of the cancellation of its license for Low Power Television Station WCQT-LP, Cullman, Alabama (the "Station" or "WCQT"). The FCC cancelled the WCQT license by letter dated July 25, 2012 pursuant to Section 312(g) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended. For the reasons stated below, reconsideration of this action and reinstatement of the license are warranted under existing precedent with respect to the discretion afforded the FCC by Section 312(g). Reconsideration and reinstatement would directly promote equity and fairness, and serve the public interest, given that: a natural disaster destroyed the Station's tower and facility equipment, forcing WCQT offair; delays resuming service were caused by additional reasons beyond the licensee's control; First Cullman was able to resume service less than one month after the applicable deadline, and remains ready and prepared to restore permanent broadcast operation as of this date; and the Station provides a unique and valuable local broadcast service to its community of license.

¹ 47 U.S.C. §312(g).

Background

in Cullman, Alabama for approximately 18 years. WCQT is the only broadcast television, low power TV, TV translator, or TV booster station licensed to Cullman, a city of approximately 14,800 people in north central Alabama. WCQT has the ability to reach residents throughout Cullman County via over-the-air broadcast and cable. WCQT is a 24/7 broadcast station, and its local programming includes a variety of informational and entertainment programs of interest to the local community, such as "The Morning Show" (a media outlet for local businesses, city and county officials, politicians, churches, charities and other civic organizations, and local residents); "Healthfirst" (featuring the local medical center); "Beyond the Scoreboard," "Cullman Football Review," and "Cullman County Basketball" (local high school sports); "Showcase of Homes" (local real estate); "Cullman County Fair Pageant"; and "Fair Parade."

Natural Disaster and Station Damage. On April 27, 2011, an F4 tornado³ ripped through Cullman, Alabama. The tornado struck and destroyed the WCQT antenna tower, and also destroyed WCQT's antenna, tore off the roof of the Station's studio, and damaged other facility equipment required for broadcast operation. Notably, the April 27, 2011 tornadoes that hit Cullman and other parts of the South were the second deadliest twister outbreak in U.S. history. Cullman was declared a natural disaster area by President Obama and Alabama Governor

² See also Exhibits B and C, including letters of support from U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, Sheriff Mike Rainey, Cullman Regional Medical Center, and Alabama State House Representatives. In fact, on the day of the tornado which destroyed the WCQT tower, the Station served the community by providing information about school closings.

³ The Fujita scale for rating tornado intensity runs from F0 (light damage and winds 40-72 mph) to F5 (incredible damage and winds 261-318 mph). An F4 tornado (devastating damage and winds 207-260 mph) is marked by well-constructed houses being leveled, structures with weak foundations blown some distance, and cars being thrown.

Bentley. Attached at Exhibit D are news stories, FEMA releases, and photographs concerning the tornado in Cullman. As result of the massive and destructive storm, and the resulting destruction of the station tower and equipment, WCQT was knocked off-air.

Efforts to Re-build and Resume Programming and Broadcast Service. First Cullman filed a Request for Silent Special Temporary Authority ("STA") with the FCC in FCC File No. BLSTA-20110929AEX. At that time, First Cullman believed that a new tower would be constructed by December, 2011. First Cullman therefore sought Silent STA until such time as a new WCQT-LP antenna could be mounted on the re-built tower.

As of May 24, 2011, less than one month after the tornado destroyed the WCQT broadcast facilities, First Cullman re-established its programming service to its local community via cable. Although First Cullman was unable to re-build its tower structure and broadcast transmission facility in such a short time and after such devastating damage, it was able to re-establish its local programming for the community by feeding a video/audio signal from a new, temporary location to its local cable company (Charter) via fiber optic cable.

Prior to the tornado, WCQT operated on analog channel 27. In the process of assessing the damage and its repair options, and mindful of the mandated digital transition for low power TV stations, First Cullman determined to restore broadcast service over WCQT with a transitioned digital facility. After an engineering study determined that channel 43 was the best fit for WCQT's digital facility, First Cullman prepared and submitted a digital displacement construction permit application by August 26, 2011, in FCC File No. BDISDTL-20110826ADA. The FCC granted the channel 43 digital displacement permit on October 31, 2011, with an expiration date of September 1, 2015.

After receiving the FCC authorization for the digital channel 43 facility, First Cullman placed its orders for a channel 43 digital antenna and transmitter equipment on January 5, 2012. In First Cullman's experience, the January 5, 2012 antenna and transmitter orders should have provided ample time for delivery and installation as needed to restore broadcast service over WCQT prior to April 27, 2012. In fact, First Cullman was informed by Linear Industries, from whom the new transmitter was ordered, that it would arrive within one and one-half months.⁴

However, the antenna was not delivered on site until April 12, 2012. In addition, due to the lack of tower crew availability (despite inquiries with multiple companies), First Cullman was unable to arrange for the antenna to be installed on the new tower before May 1, 2012.

Moreover, the new WCQT transmitter did not arrive on site for installation until July 16, 2012.

Due to the delay, First Cullman also requested a borrowed transmitter as an interim measure, but that equipment was not received until May 25, 2012. First Cullman was therefore able to resume broadcast service over the Station on May 25, 2012 – for the first since the tornado damage of April 27, 2011 – in accordance with its digital displacement construction permit.

License Cancellation. By letter dated July 25, 2012, and pursuant to Section 312(g) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, the FCC cancelled the WCQT license and deleted the station call sign because FCC records indicated that the station had been silent since April 27, 2011. After receipt of the FCC's July 25, 2012 letter cancelling the Station license, and following consultation with its technical consultant, First Cullman ceased operation of WCQT, and the station remains silent as of this date. First Cullman regrets its failure to file a notification with the Commission of the May 25, 2012 resumption of service and to complete the submission of a license to cover application which it had prepared in July, 2012 for the digital

⁴ See also Exhibit E, letter from Linear Industries, LLC.

modifications,⁵ but respectfully requests the FCC's indulgence and submits that the operation nonetheless serves to demonstrate its on-going efforts and ability to restore broadcast service shortly after the one-year off-air deadline, which as explained below supports the reinstatement of the license under relevant FCC precedent. Moreover, concurrent with this Petition for Reconsideration submission, First Cullman has now re-filed its license to cover application for the digital LPTV facility (in FCC File No. BLDTL-20120823ABG), and is submitting a request for STA to allow it re-commence operation pursuant to the Station's digital displacement permit.

Request for Reconsideration of License Cancellation

Section 312(g) of the Communications Acts provides that:

If any broadcast station fails to transmit for any consecutive 12-month period, then the station license granted for the operation of that broadcast station expires at the end of that period, notwithstanding any provision, term, or condition of the license to the contrary, expect that the Commission may extend or reinstate such station license...for any...reason to promote equity and fairness.⁶

Although First Cullman acknowledges that it was unable to transmit broadcast signals over the WCQT-LP facility for nearly 13 months – from the date of the April 27, 2011 tornado that destroyed its tower, equipment and studio until the delivery of the transmitter on May 25, 2012 – reinstatement of the license is warranted pursuant to Commission precedent concerning its exercise of the discretion afforded by Section 312(g). Specifically, First Cullman submits that reinstatement is justified due to (1) the fact that a natural disaster beyond the licensee's control directly caused the station to go off-air and prevented a timely restoration of service; (2) First

⁵ First Cullman's technical consultant prepared and submitted a Form 347 license to cover application for WCQT's digital channel 43 facilities on July 23, 2012 in FCC File No. 20120723AFP. However, due to confusion over the application filing fee requirements and a delinquent debt listing (which is now resolved), the associated application filing fee was not submitted within 14 days, and the application was never made available for Media Bureau processing.

⁶ 47 U.S.C. §312(g) (emphasis added).

Cullman took multiple steps to timely complete the re-construction of the station tower and facility, but faced FCC digital permit processing and equipment delivery and installation delays beyond its control that pushed the completion date beyond the 12-month mark; (3) First Cullman was able to re-commence broadcast service over WCQT less than one month after the one-year anniversary of the original off-air date, and remains ready to permanently resume broadcast service as of this date; (4) First Cullman restored programming service to the public over the Station via cable within one month of the original off-air date; and (5) WCQT provides a valuable and unique local television service to residents of Cullman, Alabama, including cultural, informational, public affairs and entertainment programming of importance to the community.

Notably, "[i]n the past, the Commission has exercised its [312(g)] discretion in cases involving natural disasters or other compelling circumstances outside of the licensee's control which forced cessation of station operations." For instance, in *V.I. Stereo Communications Corp.* 8, the Commission exercised the discretion afforded by Section 312(g) to reinstate an FM broadcast license after a hurricane had completely destroyed the station's tower. Due to the hurricane, and additional storm related damage, the Commission found that "the station's extended silence is understandable." The factual circumstances for WCQT are remarkably similar, in that a natural disaster (tornado) beyond First Cullman's control also toppled its station's tower, resulting in an understandably extended broadcast silence, such that a reinstatement of license would now promote fairness and equity. In addition, in multiple other

⁷ ETC Communications, Inc., 25 FCC Rcd 10686, DA 10-1457 (Aug. 9, 2010), citing V.I. Stereo Communications Corp., 21 FCC Rcd 14259 (2006).

^{8 21} FCC Rcd 14259 (2006).

⁹ Id.

cases, the FCC has deemed to exercise its discretion under Section 312(g) to reinstate broadcast licenses after off-air periods of 14 to 15 months where the silent status was caused by a tower collapse or other reasons beyond the licensee's control.¹⁰

The Commission has also explained that Section 312(g) provides for "automatic termination of inactive licenses so that scarce broadcast spectrum does not lie fallow and unavailable to others capable of instituting and maintaining service to the public." No such concerns exist here. First Cullman stands ready, willing, and able to re-commence broadcast service over WCQT, and can do so within minutes of the receipt of FCC authorization.

Moreover, the station was only silent for less than one month beyond the one-year period, First Cullman was able to promptly re-commence local programming services via cable (within one month of the original off-air date), and the licensee has made on-going efforts to secure and install replacement equipment to promptly restore broadcast operation (despite additional digital authorization processing and manufacturer delivery delays, as well as tower crew availability issues, which were beyond its control).

In addition to the fact that existing precedent supports the notion that the natural disaster resulting in WCOT's extended off-air status justifies discretionary reconsideration of its license

¹⁰ In *John L. White*, 48 CR 974, 24 FCC Rcd 12541, DA 09-2202 (Oct. 9. 2009), the FCC exercised the discretion afforded under Section 312(g) of the Rules where a broadcast station "was either silent or engaging in unauthorized operation for nearly *14 months*" following "severe storms that cause damage to the station equipment, particularly its tower, which collapsed" (emphasis added). *See also Mark Chapman, Court-Appointed Agent, Re: DWRSM(AM), Sumiton, AL*, 22 FCC Rcd 6578, DA 07-1553 (Mar. 30, 2007), in which the FCC exercised the discretion afforded under Section 312(g) of the Rules to reinstate the license for an AM station which had been off air for a period of at least *15 months* due to circumstances beyond licensee's control. *See also Harry C. Martin, Esq., Re: W230BX(FX), Montauk, NY*, 23 FCC Rcd 15012, DA 08-2308 (Oct. 17, 2008).

¹¹ Family Life Ministries, Inc., In Re: D245AV, Northeast, Pennsylvania, 23 FCC Rcd 15395, DA 08-2361 (Oct. 28, 2008), citing 1998 Biennial Review – Streamlining of Mass Media Applications, Rules and Processes, Report and Order, 13 FCC Rcd 23056, 23093 (1998), recon. granted in part, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 15 FCC Rcd 17525 (1999).

cancellation, in order to promote fairness and equity, the public interest will be well served by reinstatement for other reasons. As noted above, WCQT provides a valuable and unique low power TV service to Cullman and the surrounding areas, including locally-produced public affairs, informational, and entertainment programming of significance to the community.

The facts underlying this Petition not only coincide directly with those of prior cases in which the FCC has found that exercise of its 312(g) discretion is warranted, but are also readily distinguishable from those in which the exercise of such discretion was declined. As noted, WCQT needed less than one additional month to get back on-air, after having been knocked offair due to a natural disaster. By contrast, the FCC has found that the exercise of its discretion to reinstate a license is not warranted where stations have been taken off air for other reasons within the control of the licensee, and where the silent status extended for much longer periods.

For instance, the FCC has determined to not exercise the discretion afforded under 312(g) where: a station was taken off-air for more than three years and remained off-air due to a business decision on the part of the licensee; 12 a station was silent for more than 18 months, with no explanation of failure to resume broadcast operations; 13 a station was taken off-air and remained silent for more than two years; 14 a station was silent for longer than five years, with no claim that natural disasters or other compelling circumstances forced cessation of operations; 15 a station "was either silent or engaging in unauthorized operation" for nearly four

¹² Mr. Zacarias Serrato, In re KHOS(AM), Sonora, Texas, 20 FCC RCD 17232, DA 05-2919 (Nov. 4, 2005) (license renewal application dismissed and reinstatement of license denied).

¹³ Dan J. Alpert, Esq., In re DKXXA(AM) (formerly KTOD(AM)), Conway, AR, 21 FCC Rcd 689, DA 06-203 (Jan. 31, 2006) (request for reinstatement of license denied).

¹⁴ In re: K211CY, Spearfish, South Dakota, 21 FCC Rcd 7743. DA-1331 (July 12, 2006).

¹⁵ Kirby Young Full Armor Ministries, Inc., In re: DWEEP(AM), Virginia, Minnesota, 23 FCC Rcd 35, DA 08-17 (Jan. 3, 2008) (denying petition for reconsideration of termination of authority to operate).

years; 16 and a licensee chose "an unsuitable and/or uneconomic site" and then failed to timely find a replacement site. 17 WCQT's circumstances could hardly be more different. WCQT was off-air for 13 months – just weeks beyond the proscribed 12 month period – and was silent not due to a business or economic decision but rather exactly the type of "act of God…not within a licensee's control" which would warrant the exercise of discretion under 312(g). 18

Similarly, in additional cases, the FCC has found that the exercise of its 312(g) discretion is not warranted where: the licensee has failed to demonstrate "natural disasters or other compelling circumstances which forced the station to cease operations" but "[i]stead... made a business decision" based on financial considerations; ¹⁹ a station was "either silent or operating with noncompliant facilities for more than three years"; ²⁰ and a station was "voluntarily taken off the air more than two years ago" in an "avoidable cessation of station operations." ²¹ Once again, these situations are inapposite to that of WCQT, given that First Cullman estimates that it has spent at least \$72,000 in equipment and engineering costs in order to get the station back on air as soon as possible, was able to do so within 13 months of the original off-air date caused by a natural disaster, and remains willing and able to resume service today upon a grant of FCC authorization.

¹⁶ Erwin G. Krasnow, Esq., In re: KRAM(AM), West Klamath, Oregon, 25 FCC Rcd 1842, DA 10-308 (Feb. 24, 2010).

¹⁷ Family Life Ministries, Inc., In Re: D245AV, Northeast, Pennsylvania, 23 FCC Rcd 15395, DA 08-2361 (Oct. 28, 2008) (denying petition for reconsideration).

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ ETC Communications, Inc., 25 FCC Rcd 10686, DA 10-1457 (Aug. 9, 2010).

²⁰ Davina Sashkin, Esq., In re: DWHNY(AM), McComb, Mississippi, 27 FCC Rcd 2920, DA 12-463 (March 26, 2012) (finding that exercise of discretion under Section 312(g) is not warranted).

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, First Cullman respectfully requests reconsideration of the FCC's cancellation of the WCQT license, and seeks reinstatement of the license. Although the Station was forced off-air for more than 12 months, the silent status was caused by a natural disaster beyond its control that destroyed the Station's tower and equipment. First Cullman worked diligently to restore service over the Station, quickly resuming local programming service via cable, and seeking FCC authorization and then replacement equipment for restoring over-the-air broadcasts via a digital LPTV facility. Delays concerning the delivery of the equipment pushed the restoration of service approximately four weeks beyond the 12-month deadline. However, under Section 312(g), the FCC is afforded discretion to reinstate licenses and has traditionally done so in precisely these situations, where a natural disaster beyond the licensee's control knocked the station off-air. First Cullman has demonstrated its on-going commitment to make use of its broadcast license to provide a meaningful local service to its community of license, and stands ready to re-commence service within minutes of its receipt of FCC authorization.

> Respectfully submitted, FIRST CULLMAN BROADCASTING, INC.

By: Rampenh
Barry S. Persh

Its Attorney

DOW LOHNES PLLC

1200 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036-6802 (202) 776-2000 August 24, 2012

^{...}continued

²¹ John Wells King, Esq., Re: K225AG(FX), Dodge City, KS, 25 FCC Rcd 12812, DA 10-1718 (Sept. 10, 2010).

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Barry Persh, hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing "Petition for Reconsideration" was served on August 24, 2012, by first class mail, hand delivery, or e-mail to:

Hossein Hashemzadeh*
Deputy Chief, Video Division, Media Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554
Hossein.Hashemzadeh@fcc.gov

Banyleyh

* Via e-mail

EXHIBIT A July 25, 2012 FCC Letter



Federal Communications Commission Washington, D.C. 20554

July 25, 2012

First Cullman Broadcasting, Inc. P.O. Box 1792 Cullman, AL 35055

Re:

WCQT-LP, Cullman, AL BLSTA-20110929AEX Facility ID No. 21592

Dear Licensee:

This is with respect to station WCQT-LP, Cullman, Alabama. Section 312(g) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, provides that:

If a broadcasting station fails to transmit broadcast signals for any consecutive 12-month period, then the station license granted for the operation of that broadcast station expires at the end of that period, notwithstanding any provision, term or condition of the license to the contrary

Commission records indicate that WCQT-LP has been silent since April 27, 2011.² Accordingly, the license for WCQT-LP IS HEREBY CANCELLED and the call sign IS DELETED. In addition, the above-referenced STA request is HEREBY DISMISSED.

Sincerely,

Hossein Hashemzadeh Deputy Chief, Video Division Media Bureau

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 312(g).

² FCC File No. BLSTA-20110929AEX

EXHIBIT BSummary of Local Programming by WCQT-LP

Local Programming

First Cullman Broadcasting, INC. WCQT TV27

"The Morning Show"

Serves as a media outlet for local businesses, city and county officials, politicians, churches, charities and other civic organizations, as well as local residents

"Healthfirst"

Features our local medical center "Cullman Regional Medical Center". Any information CRMC needs to get to community can be done through this 30 minute program.

"Beyond the Scoreboard"

Features highlights each Friday night of local high school football games

"Cullman Football Review"

Cullman High School Football Coach Mark Britton reviews the past weeks Cullman High football game

"Cullman County Basketball"

Features Cullman County Basketball including County Tournament

"Cullman County Fair Pageant"

Features the local fair pageant

"Fair Parade"

Features fair parade

"Showcase of Homes"

Features local real estate in the Cullman area.

Several other show feature businesses and local residents.

We at TV 27 always take pride in covering local events and happenings.

EXHIBIT C

Letters of Support for Reinstatement of WCQT-LP License

Robert B. Aderholt, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th District, Alabama Mike Rainey, Office of the Sheriff, Cullman County, Alabama Jeremy H. Oden, Alabama House of Representatives Mac Buttram, Alabama House of Representatives Maria Stanford, Cullman Regional Medical Center Director of Marketing & Community Service

ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

4TH DISTRICT, ALABAMA

1433 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Telephone: (202) 225–4876

WEB PAGE: www.house.gov/aderholt



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

RANKING MEMBER, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

The 111th Congress

H.S. House of Representatives

August 16, 2012

Mr. Julius Genachowski Federal Communication Commission 445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554-0005

Dear Mr. Genachowski:

I am writing on behalf of my constituents who have been operating a local TV station as First Cullman Broadcasting located in Cullman, Alabama.

This area of my district was devastated by an F4 tornado on April 27, 2011. This natural disaster completely destroyed the tower and antenna of WCQT TV 27 as well as their studio. After this destruction, their station was moved to a temporary location where after three weeks they were able to get back to serving the community through the local cable company.

They received a notice dated July 25, 2012 advising that their license had been cancelled because the station was silent beyond the 12 month period allowed. This situation was a result of the difficulty they experienced in obtaining the necessary equipment to get back on the air but was accomplished May 25, 2012. This station provides a much needed service to this community as well as provides several jobs.

Any favorable consideration you may be able to extend in reinstating their license will certainly be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Aderholt Member of Congress

RA:es

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

1910 Beech Avenue, S.E. Cullman, Alabama 35055



Telephone (256) 734-0342 Jail Division (256) 735-2400 FAX (256) 737-9868

August 16, 2012

FCC

Washington, D.C.

Dear FCC:

I am writing on behalf of WCQT TV 27 located in Cullman, AL. Due to circumstances beyond TV 27's control their broadcast license has been suspended. In April 2011 tornadoes devastated cities and counties across our state. The tornado that hit Cullman completely destroyed WCQT's tower and antenna causing their station to have to temporarily relocate.

Since 1993, WCQT TV 27 has been an important asset to the Cullman Community, providing our citizens with valuable information, assistance and employment. They offer our citizens family oriented services that are educational, charitable, religious, literary and entertaining. I respectfully request that the FCC consider the reinstatement of WCQT's license and allow them to continue serving our community.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Mike Rainey



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ALABAMA STATE HOUSE **MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130**

DISTRICT NO. 11 BLOUNT, CULLMAN, AND MORGAN COUNTIES

JEREMY H. ODEN

POST OFFICE BOX 9 EVA, ALABAMA 35621 OFFICE 256/734-4236 FAX 256/739-9119 MONTGOMERY 334/242-7722 COMMITTEES:

EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SALARIES AND BENEFITS SUBCOMMITTEE COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT JOINT BUDGET INTERIM COMMITTEE NATIONAL/REGIONAL COMMITTEES: **ENERGY COUNCIL** NCSL-EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Date: 8-16-12

FCC

Washington, D.C.

Dear FCC:

I am writing on behalf of WCQT TV 27 located in Cullman, AL.

Due to extended time off the air TV 27 has recently had their broadcast license suspended. The tornado that struck Cullman in April of 2011 was the reason that WCQT became silent. The tornado completely destroyed WCQT's tower and antenna.

I realize that TV 27 remained silent past the time they were given, however, I would like to point out some things for your consideration. After the tornado destroyed their tower and hit their station WCQT was dislocated to a temporary location. It took them only three weeks to get back to serving the community through what was then Windjammer Cable (later to be bought out by Charter Cable). The station under consideration is a viable and important part of the Cullman Community. FEMA was on the station's Morning Show three weeks after the tornado struck Cullman allowing them to give valuable information and help to the community. They are one of the only sources of news and local coverage for Cullman and are greatly needed by our community.

On Behalf of the Cullman area I sincerely ask for your reconsideration to allow First Cullman Broadcasting to continue to operate and serve this community. Not only will WCQT be missed by the people, but also several jobs are at stake. WCQT is a prosperous business with several full-time and part-time employees.

Due to the tremendous damage caused by the tornadoes, which were beyond WCQT's control, I truly hope that FCC would consider reinstating their license and allow them to carry on their purpose of serving our community.

Sincerely,

Jeremy H.



ALABAMA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 S. UNION STREET, MONTGOMERY ALABAMA 36130

REP. MAC BUTTRAM
DISTRICT NO. 12
1718 RIDGE AVENUE NW
CULLMAN, ALABAMA 35055

STATE HOUSE: 334-242-7775 DISTRICT: 256-297-2286 EMAIL: mac.buttram@alhouse.gov

August 17, 2012

Federal Communications Commission 445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554

To Whom It May Concern:

Recently, I learned that the license for our local television station *First Cullman Broadcasting WCQT* was revoked by the FCC. Had it not been for a natural disaster, the station would have remained on air without a delay of its programming.

On April 27th 2011, an EF4 tornado came through Cullman County destroying the tower for TV 27 and its ability to broadcast over the air. The storms tore the roof off the studio causing damage to station equipment as well. Before the storm, WCQT was carried over the air on Analog Channel 27 and that signal was picked up by the local cable company and delivered to the public on Cable Channel 22.

Within three weeks of that devastating tornado, WCQT established a temporary location. Using a fiber optic cable WCQT began to feed a video/audio signal to the local cable company. This allowed the station to continue to provide service to the community of license, as licensed by the FCC. The station was granted a Right to Remain Silent by the FCC, so they would be able to continue day-to-day operation during the recovery.

Beginning September 1st 2015, Low-Power Analog will be obsolete according to federal standards. Because of this, the decision was made to come back as a digital broadcaster and on January 5th, 2012 an order was placed for a new transmitter for Channel 43. According to the company building the transmitter, it was to be delivered within a month and a half.

That timeframe would have allowed the station to begin broadcasting well before the permit's April 27th 2012 deadline. However, the company building the transmitter experienced delays so it was not installed and operational until nearly a month after the *FCC Right to Remain Silent* deadline. The Channel 43 transmitter arrived on site May 25th, 2012, and was installed and on the air the same day.

WCQT is a 24/7 over-the-air broadcast station which has served Cullman County for several years as a source for local information about local happenings. Each weekday the station provides a local "Morning Show," which serves a media outlet for local businesses, city and

residents. The station also produces a variety of other shows on a weekly basis geared toward the county officials, politicians, churches, charities and other civic organizations, as well as local local community.

WCQT (Channel 43) is the only locally (Cullman) based, broadcast station that has the ability to provide programming to the community of license for the entire time the transmitter was off the reach residents all over Cullman County by an Over-the-Air broadcast and by Cable. We know that in cases of severe weather, a local media source such as this can save lives. In fact, on the closings. Via the local cable provider, First Cullman Broadcasting WCQT TV 27 continued to day of the tornado the station served the community by scrolling information about school

The station provides jobs for 4 full-time employees and 11 part-time employees. For the sake of these employees, their families and the people of Cullman County, I would like to request that the FCC reinstate the license for WCQT (digital Channel 43).

First Cullman Broadcasting WCQT TV 27 (Channel 43) is a valuable asset to our local community.

Thank you for your consideration. If you need further information, please contact me.

Sincerely

Mac Buttraffi



1912 Alabama Highway 157 P.O. Box 1108 • Cullman, AL 35056-1108 256/737-2000 www.crmchospital.com

August 16, 2012

Federal Communication Commission 445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing today to ask you to reconsider your decision to revoke the license of Cullman's local Television station WCQT. On April 27, 2011 our community was struck by a devastating tornado that hit our city central. Unfortunately in the path of destruction was the tower for WCQT-TV as well as their station — which can be seen toppling down via YouTube videos, captured by other regional media outlets. Luckily, our community was spared any serious deaths during the destruction, but we are still repairing the damage caused to numerous businesses, churches and homes. Despite the tower loss by WCQT, they were able to get an alternate location set-up and begin broadcasting information to the local community within three weeks of the storm via Windjammer Cable. Something that was extremely valuable to all local subscribers.

Prior to the storm and even since the devastation, Cullman Regional Medical Center has invested in a local program called *HealthFirst* on WCQT which shares information on new physicians, services and healthy living information to our community. CRMC also utilizes the station's Morning Program to share information about health observances, healthy lifestyle tips and much more. Through WCQT, we are able to showcase community outreach programs, local sporting events, local fundraisers, local religious worship services and so much more. The station is vital to communicating with our community and without it we would be without coverage of many health topics concerning our citizens.

We ask that you strongly consider reinstating the license of WCQT so they can continue to serve our community as they have for so many years. Feel free to contact us if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Maria Stanford,

CRMC Director of Marketing & Community Service

Maria Stanford

EXHIBIT D

News stories, photographs, and FEMA releases regarding April 27, 2011 tornado/natural disaster in Cullman, Alabama



President Declares Emergency For Alabama

Release Date: April 27, 2011 Release Number: HQ-11-041

» More Information on Alabama Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Straight-line Winds

» En Español

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced that federal disaster aid has been made available to Alabama to supplement the state and local response efforts in the area struck by storms, tornadoes, and straight-line winds beginning on April 27, 2011, and continuing.

The President's action authorizes the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to coordinate all disaster relief efforts which have the purpose of alleviating the hardship and suffering caused by the emergency on the local population, and to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures, authorized under Title V of the Stafford Act, to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, and to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in all 67 counties of the state of Alabama.

Specifically, FEMA is authorized to identify, mobilize, and provide at its discretion, equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency. Emergency protective measures, limited to direct Federal assistance, will be provided at 75 percent federal funding.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Joe M. Girot has been named as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Girot said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Follow FEMA online at http://blog.fema.gov, www.twitter.com/fema, www.facebook.com/fema, and www.youtube.com/fema. Also, follow Administrator Craig Fugate's activities at www.twitter.com/craigatfema. The social media links provided are for reference only.

FEMA does not endorse any non-government websites, companies or applications.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to,

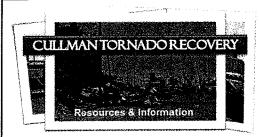
recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Make City of Cullman Your Homepage | Add City of Cullman to

www.cullmancity.org







Downtown Cullman was badly damaged by a tornado on 4/27/2011, as were areas throughout the county. Cullman, along with other cities and counties across the State of Alabama, has been declared a natural disaster area by President Obama and Governor Bentley.

The final total of damaged residences from the tornado that hit downtown

78) 0:00



区 Tracking the Tornadoes' Paths

Cullman is 910, and the number of damaged businesses is 98. (This count does not include damage outside the city limits or by the other storms that came through the area through Alabama on the same day.) The National Weather Service has rated the tornado that damaged downtown Cullman an EF4 tornado, capable of sustained 175 mph winds. The path this one tornado took was 38 miles long through Cullman County.













UP-TO-THE-MINUTE INFORMATION

Due to the popularity of social media sites, and the ease of using social media to update the public on quickly-changing information, we are now posting facebo regular updates to our Facebook and Twitter accounts.





Posts at this point are primarily covering tornado recovery efforts. But we will also notify the public of meetings and other information through these sites.

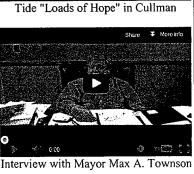
If you do not have a Facebook or Twitter account and need information, please email us or call us at (256) 775-7109 and we'll be happy to answer any questions.



NEW! Extension of deadline for applying for Operation Clean Sweep: July 29, 2011, at 4 p.m. Right-of-entry forms and checklist forms can be picked up at Cullman City Hall. ROE forms must be completed, signed, and witnessed. Checklists must be completed and signed by the property owner and initialed where required. Property owners must also provide insurance information for the property and a copy of the deed containing the legal description of the property. Contact Jerry Freeman at ifreeman@cullmancity.org or 256-775-7134 for more information.

NEW! Extension of deadline for pushing debris to right-of-way: July 29, 2011.

Crisis counseling available to assist tornado survivors. 1-800-367-0955. View flyer for more information.



Cullman: Coming Back Stronger

8/21/2012

of homeowner's insurance.

國 CULLMAN DAMAGE OVERVIEW MAP: May

27, 2011 Cullman city residents in designated areas can sign up to have debris from their private residential property. This updated map shows areas in the City of Cullman designated as eligible for Operation Clean Sweep at this time. Other areas may be added to the map. To find out the requirements contact Jerry Freeman at 256-775-7134 or ifreeman@cullmancity.org. Or visit his office at City Hall (8 am-4 pm). To expedite the process, bring a copy of your deed and proof

型 <u>URGENT: Deadlines to apply for federal disaster assistance are approaching.</u>

Letter from Building Inspector Rick Fulmer on Debris

Contractors are required to have a contractor's license, Cullman business license, and liability insurance.

MESSAGE FROM FEMA: Some are receiving letters that they are ineligible to be considered for FEMA assistance. We urge you not to be discouraged or give up if you receive such a letter. These letters are often due to the fact the an insurance settlement has not occurred or information is missing from your file. Visit the Disaster Recovery Center at the Civic Center or call 1-800-621-FEMA for an explanation. www.disasterassistance.gov

Z

Letter from Building Inspector Rick Fulmer on Debris

Contact the City of Cullman Business License Department to verify that the contractor you're hiring is fully licensed and insured. Using an unlicensed contractor can result in work being stopped by the Building Inspection Department.

Improperly installed generators are a danger to those working on restoring electrical power. Make sure your main breaker is off and your generator is grounded.

If the conduit/weather head to your home has been damaged, you should contact your electrician to make the necessary repairs on the private owner side.

Those with damaged properties should take photos to help document losses for the insurance company and for FEMA.

You must register with FEMA within 60 days of disaster declaration. FEMA representatives will have on FEMA shirts and photo ID badges.

FEMA officials are going door-to-door and have a mobile unit set up at the Cullman Civic Center. You can also call FEMA at 1-800-621-3362 or visit www.DisasterRelief.org to register for assistance.

T.

FEMA May Need More Information

Z

Press Release: Cullman Casting Corporation Makes Donation to the City





Interview with Police Chief Culpepper



Interview with City School Superintendent Dr. Harris



Interview with FEMA Public Information Officer Nate Custer



Interview with Cullman Red Cross Executive Director Bates



Cullman Mayor Gives Tornado Update Briefing

Press Release: Donation to United Way

Press Release: Luyben & Boike Donate Refrigerators

FEMA Assistance Flyer in English & Spanish

FEMA NEWS RELEASE

D<u>FEMA FLYER</u>

Information on Disaster Unemployment Assistance

SBA Disaster Loan Fact Sheet

SBA Press Release: Read to Assist

USDA-FSA Disaster Assistance

Connecting Alabama - Special Storm Edition

Information for Tenants/Renters

Disaster Food Assistance

VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS

CullmanRelief.org

United Way of Cullman County

Red Cross, Cullman Chapter

Good Samaritan Health Clinic

Cullman Caring for Kids

Cullman Parks & Recreation

OTHER RESOURCES

Cullman County EMA Web Site Cullman County EMA FB Page

Cullman Police Department

Cullman County Sheriff's

Department Cullman Power Board

Cullman Electric Cooperative Web The Cullman Times FB Page

Cullman Electric Cooperative FB Page Page

Cullman-Jefferson Gas City of Hanceville

Cullman County School Board

Wallace State Community College Web Site

Wallace State Community College FB

The Cullman Times Web Site

Cullman Life Web Site
Cullman Life FB Page Contact Information for City

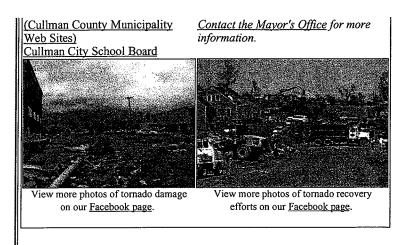
Departments



Mayor Townson Gives Tornado Briefing



Cullman Tornado Aerial Damage Video



517279

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PHYSICAL ADDRESS 204 2nd Avenue NE Cullman, AL 35055 PHONE: (256) 739-1212 EMAIL: cityhall@cullmancity.org www.cullmancity.org MAILING ADDRESS P.O. Box 278 Cullman, AL 35056-0278



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Cullman releases official tornado disater information

By: City of Cullman official release | Dothan Eagle Published: April 29, 2011

>>> 0 Comments | Post a Comment

The City of Cullman has been devastated, but we are staying organized daily and we will persevere through this disaster. Our focus is on recovery, restoration & rebuilding. We appreciate your patience, prayers, and continued efforts to move our community forward.

Cullman has been declared a National Disaster Area by the President, Governor, and the Mayor.

Water Supply

- In <u>Cullman City</u> and <u>Cullman County</u> is operational
- The <u>Treatment Plant</u> is running on generator power
- Contrary to rumors, water supply is under control and sufficient
- Water is safe and service will not be interrupted
- Please do not fill up sinks, tubs, etc this puts a strain on system

Electricity

- All four TVA Transmission lines are down coming into Cullman
- 4,000 workers in field working to restore power
- There is no time frame for service to be restored
- Unprecedented set of damage circumstances
- If the conduit / weather head to your home/business has been damaged, you should contact your
 electrician to make the necessary repairs on the private owner side.

Shelters & Help

- Cullman Civic Center American Red Cross is set up with food
- Hanceville Recreation Center
- ServPro will be set up at the intersection of Hwy 31 and Hwy 278 with water and ice
- <u>Cullman High School</u> <u>Staging Station</u> for Volunteer Coordination, Ice, Water
- <u>DayStar Church</u> at Good Hope meals, water

Cullman County Extension Service has set up a Free Charging station at United Way (Train Depot)

- Charge cell phones, medical equipment, any essential communication devices
- Wireless Internet Access
- Free international calls via Skype

Other

- NO CURFEW in downtown Cullman, only place this applies is in barricaded areas.
- ALL workers (contractors, volunteers, etc) must visit <u>City Hall</u> to obtain pass and business license to enter barricaded areas.
- Cullman is currently under a NO BURN ORDER
- Do not pile debris in the road, do not block sidewalks and streets
- For the General Public needing to dispose of spoiled refrigerated items, there will be two roll-off dumpsters set up on the north side of <u>Depot Park</u>.

Phone Numbers

- EMA 256.739.5410
- Food
- Housing
- Ice
- Business / homeowners should call <u>FEMA</u> at 800.621.3362 for financial help, home repair, grants, temporary housing, etc.

HUFF GREEN

Alabama Tornado PHOTOS: Aftermath Of Massive 2011 Storm

The Huffington Post First Posted: 04/28/11 12:11 PM ET Updated: 06/28/11 06:12 AM ET share this story

2,386 people recommend this.

935
380
108

Dozens of tornadoes devastated the South in a <u>massive storm system</u> that has reduced neighborhoods to rubble and killed at least 337 people across 7 states, the AP reports.

The twister outbreak is the second deadliest in U.S. history. The largest death toll ever was on March 18, 1925, when 747 people were killed from storms in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana.

Preliminary government estimates say that there were <u>more tornadoes in a single day</u> during the outbreak than ever recorded in history. Of the 312 twisters that were spawned, 226 occurred within a 24-hour period.

Countless videos have surfaced of the disasters, including a harrowing look at a <u>massive tornado in Tuscaloosa</u>, Alabama and an up-close encounter with a <u>twister in Philadelphia, Missouri</u>.

The photos below show the aftermath of the <u>destructive storms</u> in Alabama, which has been hit the hardest by the deadly tornado outbreak, as well as other states across the South.

<u>CLICK HERE</u> to see how you can help relief efforts across the South. (This post has been updated to reflect the increased death toll.)

Tornadoes and Storms Tear Through South; at Least 292 Dead

By LEEZEL TANGLAO and BEN FORER April 28, 2011—

abcnews.go.com

Twisters Knock Out Nuke Plants, Leave 1M Without Power, Thousands Homeless

The death toll approached 300 tonight from the tornadoes and thunderstorms that tore through the South Wednesday night and early today.

NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, estimated there were 173 tornadoes Wednesday, a new record for a single storm system in modern times.

President Obama called the loss of life "heartbreaking," and promised those affected by the storms the full support of the federal government.

"We can't control when or where a terrible storm may strike, but we can control how we respond to it," Obama said during a press conference today at the White House. "I want every American that's been affected by this disaster to know the federal government will do everything we can to help you recover and we will stand with you as you rebuild."

The twisters rampaged through cities like Tuscaloosa, Ala., forced a pair of nuclear plants to go off line, left thousands homeless and more than a million people without power.

NOAA said it was the worst tornado outbreak since 1974, when storms killed 315 people. The deadliest tornado outbreak on record was on March 18, 1925, when 695 people died.

"In a matter of hours, these deadly tornadoes ... took mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors, even entire communities," Obama said.

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal toured the tornado area this morning and said, "It's hard to imagine nature can be this devastating."

The governor said it was a remarkably wide swath of twisters and noted there were multiple tornadoes in some areas.

The majority of the deaths reported so far have been in Alabama, where at least 195 people were killed. Mississippi recorded 32 fatalities, Tennessee had 33, Georgia at least 10, and Virginia had eight.

Hundreds more were injured. Of the 134 patients brought to the University of Alabama hospital in Birmingham, 40 were major trauma injuries, the hospital said.

Loring Rue, M.D., chief of trauma surgery at UAB Hospital, said 134 patients came through the E.R.; 40 were major trauma injuries and 23 were admitted to intensive care units. In addition, 10 surgical procedures were performed.

"The injuries were remarkable," Rue said, adding that people who were in the comfort of their homes when the tornado struck were brought in with injuries doctors normally see in high-speed motor-vehicle accidents

Greg Carbin, warning coordination meteorologist at the National Weather Service, said the area can expect mild weather for the next few days but he could not predict whether more killer tornadoes were on their way.

"May is usually the most active tornado month," Carbin said. "Will it maintain the activity of April? We just cannot say."

President Obama called Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley to express condolences over the deaths in his state and the White House announced that the president will stop in Alabama Friday to tour the wreckage while on his way to Cape Canaveral for the launch of the space shuttle Endeavour.

Possibly the hardest-hit area was Tuscaloosa, where at least 32 people died. Early estimates indicated that the tornado that hit Tuscaloosa could have been on the ground for 176 miles, with winds between 167 and 200 mph.

The city was stunned by the devastation that not only hit homes and commercial areas, but also destroyed much of the city's public works infrastructure -- including the city's emergency management administration headquarters.

"We are critically short of men, material and equipment," Mayor Walter Maddox said at a news conference today.

The mayor asked people to stay off the streets and conserve water, and for gawkers to stay away. He said "sightseers" are only getting in the way of emergency crews.

"This is going to be a very, very long process" of cleaning up and rebuilding, he said. "During this time we ask for patience and we ask for prayers."

About 2,000 Alabama National guard soldiers have been activated to help with search and rescue.

"There is some massive devastation out there," Gov. Bentley said. "We have some people that are hurting."

Two nuclear power plants in Browns Ferry, Ala., had to be shut down after the storm damaged its transmission system. Emergency generators kicked in to cool down the reactors safely.

In Ringgold, Ga., near the Tennessee border, officials shut down major roads leading into the city because of what Catoosa County Sheriff Phil Summers said was "downed power lines, broken gas lines and looting."

"There are lots of spectators and we are not allowing access inside of Ringgold at this time," the sheriff said.

Summers said he saw the tornado in the air just before it touched down.

"It was something that I've never seen before except on TV. And like they say, there's a moment of silence and then you see the devastation," he said.

The sheriff said the tornado was in Ringgold for about five minutes and it continued into Tennessee. Five people died and police are looking for others whose homes were so badly damaged that "only

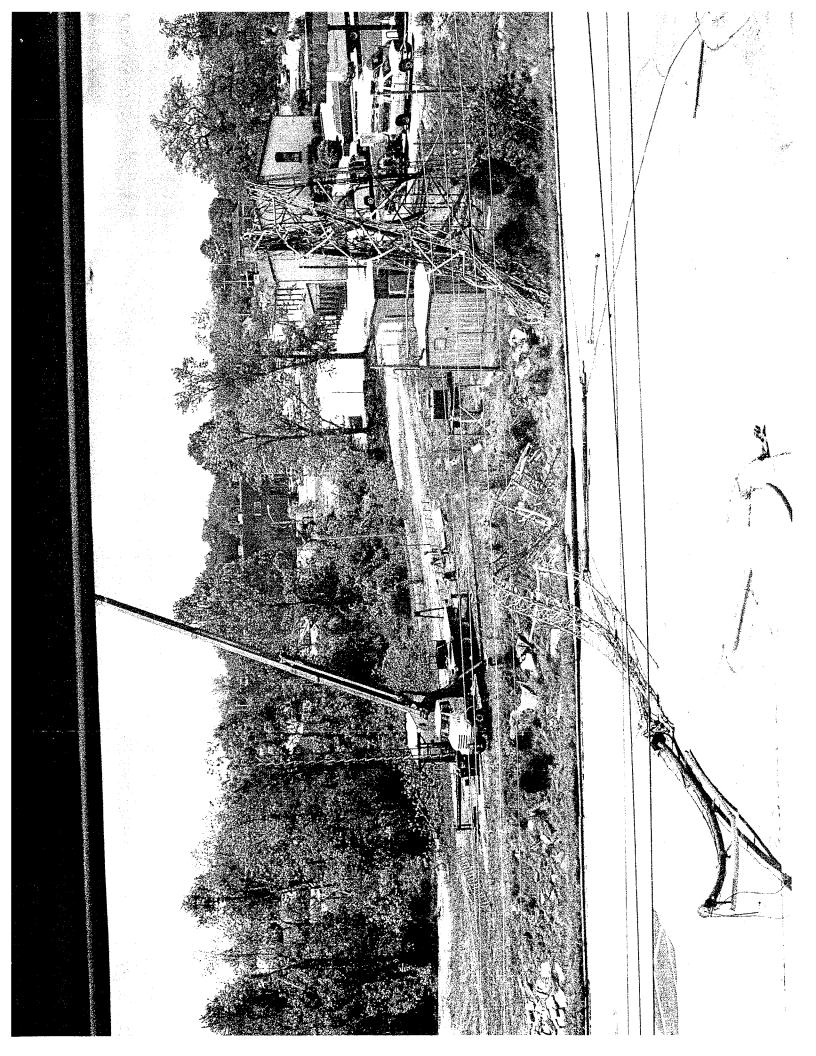
foundations are left," Summer said.

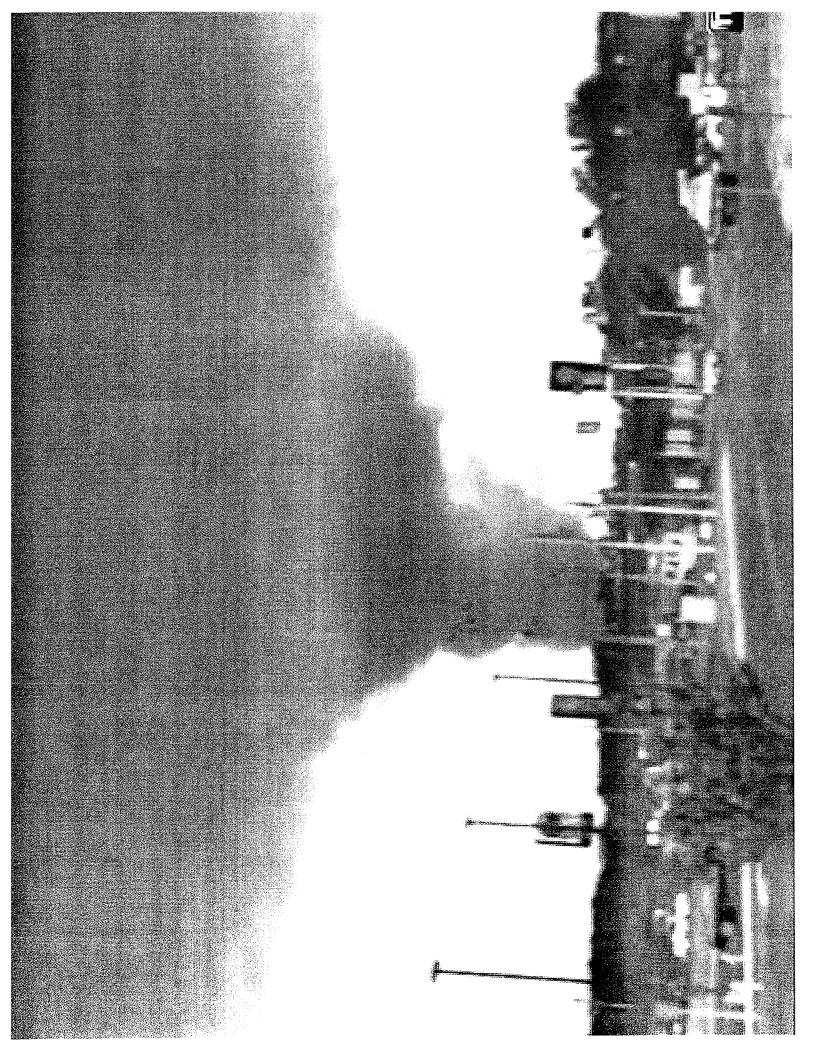
Christopher England at the University of Alabama ran up to the roof of his building to videotape a devastating tornado as it hit Tuscaloosa.

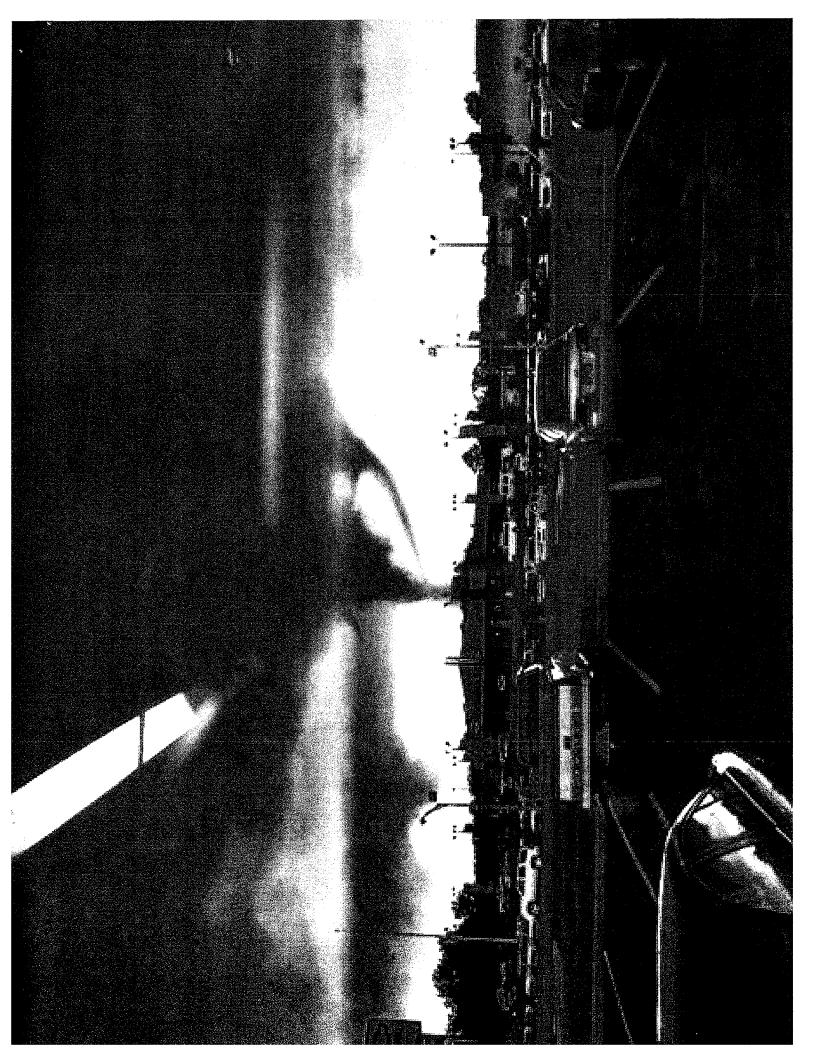
"We just saw this massive huge mile wide tornado and we didn't know where it was going. We didn't know if it was coming towards us or away from us or what," he said.

One of the victims was an off-duty police officer in northern Mississippi who died while shielding his daughter from a falling tree on a camping trip. She wasn't hurt.

ABC News Radio, Michael S. James, Mike Marusarz, Jessica Hopper and the Associated Press contributed to this report.







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FEMA and Federal Partners Continue Supportin...

FEMA and Federal Partners Continue Supporting Recovery Efforts in Southeast

Release date: APRIL 30, 2011

Release Number: HQ-11-49

WASHINGTON--Since the deadly tornadoes first struck parts of the country earlier this week, the federal government has been in constant contact with all of the impacted states as they responded to and began recovery efforts from these devastating storms.

Yesterday, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate joined the President and the First Lady in Alabama to tour damaged areas and to meet with Governor Robert Bentley and other state and local officials and families affected by the devastation. FEMA's Deputy Administrator Rich Serino was on the ground with Georgia Governor Nathan Deal on Thursday, and was in Mississippi with Governor Haley Barbour yesterday.

Tomorrow, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, Administrator Fugate, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Small Business Administration Administrator Karen Mills will join state and local officials on the ground in Alabama and Mississippi to survey the damage and recovery efforts underway. More details on that trip will be released today.

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"Our top priority is to support the states and communities affected by this as recovery efforts are underway," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "We will continue to work with our federal, state, local and private sector partners -- as well as the American public -- to support the affected families, neighborhoods and communities as they work to rebuild and recover, for as long as it takes."

Since the immediate impact of the storms, the President, Secretary Napolitano, and Administrator Fugate, have been in constant contact with the governors of all the impacted states to ensure they have the support they need.

At the request of the respective states, FEMA currently has personnel on the ground in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Kentucky and Tennessee, and commodities strategically pre-positioned in the region.

Additional information on the coordination efforts of FEMA and its federal partners, updated as of 12 PM EDT today, can be found below:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- Two Incident Management Teams are in Alabama, one team is in Mississippi, one team is in Georgia, and two
 teams have been deployed to Mississippi and Kentucky respectively, to assist in coordination efforts as the states
 continue to respond and begin to recover from this devastating storm outbreak.
- FEMA liaison officers are in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Kentucky and Tennessee.
- An Incident Support Base has been established in Maxwell, Alabama to move supplies such as water, infant t...

Last Updated: July 16, 2012 - 18:46

State or Region: Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama

Related Disaster:

Georgia Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds, and Associated Flooding, Mississippi Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds, and Associated Flooding, Alabama Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds, and Flooding and Alabama Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Straight-line Winds





EXHIBIT E
Letter from Linear Industries



www.linear-tv.com

Wednesday, August 22, 2012

To:

WCQT-TV CH27 and Windell Wood; Market Engineer; WCQT

From:

Linear Industries Inc

Re:

WCQT UHF transmitter order and subsequent delivery

To Whom It May Concern,

WCQT, in an attempt to get their signal back on the air as a result of their tower being taken down in a storm on April 27th 2011, ordered their replacement transmitter from Linear Industries on January, 5 2012. The transmitter was subsequently delivered-commissioned on July 16th.

The transmitter order was delayed at no fault of WCQT due to circumstances inherent in transmitter orders that sometimes can take up to 6 to 7 months to fulfill.

Best Regards,

Linear Industries Inc, LLC

EXHIBIT F Declaration of WCQT-LP Station Manager

DECLARATION Page 1 of 1

- I, Michael Hutchens, hereby declare as follows:
- 1. I am the Station Manager of First Cullman Broadcasting Inc.'s Low Power TV Station WCQT-LP, Cullman, Alabama. This Declaration is provided in reliance on my own personal knowledge of the station's operations.
- 2. I have reviewed the forgoing Petition for Reconsideration of the cancellation of the WCQT-LP license. The facts set forth in the forgoing Petition for Reconsideration are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on August 23, 2012.

Muchael Hutcher