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Gray promotes ownership diversity with TV spin-offs

By [dseyler](#) on Aug, 28 2014 with [Comments 0](#)



The brokerage arm of the Minority Media and Telecommunications

Counsel was engaged by Gray Television to find socially disadvantaged and qualified buyers for a number of television stations that Gray might otherwise have had to surrender to the FCC. Gray and MMTC now report the fruition of this effort.

Gray opted over the summer to disband SSAs for the stations, and to abandon their option to purchase them, instead moving programming they were running to split streams on their O&O channels.

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler took to his bully pulpit to applaud the deal. He stated, "We applaud the commitment of MMTC and Gray Television to find buyers for each of the six Gray stations that would increase diversity of ownership and programming in each of these markets. Such actions demonstrate how our rules can actively promote both competition and diversity, keep stations on the air, and serve the public interest."

Added MMTC President and CEO David Honig, "These transactions are a prime example of a corporation 'doing good and doing well' at the same time. Gray has shown how a corporation can deploy its assets creatively for the great benefit of the industry and the public."

Terms of the deals were not revealed. RBR-TVBR will be on the lookout for prices and other conditions and pass them along when available.

From Gray Television, here are the details of the spin-offs:

In Fargo, North Dakota, Major Market Broadcasting, Inc. (MMB) will acquire KXJB-TV. MMB is a content creation and distribution company specializing in reaching niche markets; it owns and/or operates KAXT-CA in San Francisco and KRJK-LP in Chicago. Both of these stations, as well as other affiliates, broadcast programming from MMB's Diya TV, America's first South Asian broadcast television network. MMB President and 2013 NAB Broadcast Leadership fellow Ravi Kapur stated: "Gray's leadership to actively seek out diverse candidates to acquire their former SSA stations should be commended. We are humbled by this exciting opportunity to expand our reach in local over-the-air broadcasting."

In Grand Junction, Colorado, Gray agreed to transfer KJCT-TV to husband and wife Jeff Chang and Gabriela Gomez-Chang. Chang currently owns and operates full power and low power television stations in Los Angeles and San Francisco through Chang Media Group. "We're excited about this unique opportunity in the Grand Junction-Montrose market," said Mr. Chang. "We hope the local communities will enjoy the new programming we'll be adding to the market," he explained. Chang said their plans include adding programming aimed towards the market's growing Hispanic population. Mrs. Gomez-Chang added, "We're grateful that both Excalibur and Gray Television presented this opportunity for minorities and women to expand their broadcast ownership. This truly benefits the industry."

In the remaining markets, Legacy Broadcasting, LLC, will acquire KHAS-TV, Hastings/Lincoln, Nebraska; KAQY-TV, Monroe, Louisiana; KNDX-TV, Bismarck, North Dakota; and KXND-TV, Minot, North Dakota. Legacy is a new company formed, owned and controlled by two experienced female broadcasters. Managing Member and President, Sherry C. Nelson, has had a thirty-year career in broadcasting including on-air reporting, sales, and management. She has served as the General Manager of a group of television stations in the Mississippi Delta for ten years, and she is a 2012 graduate of the NAB's Broadcast Leadership Training Program. She will be joined in owning these stations by her adult daughter, Sara Jane Ingram, whose broadcast experience includes sales, digital, and management for television stations in the Raleigh-Durham and Jackson, Mississippi, television markets.

Completing the Legacy team is another veteran broadcaster, Charles M. Harker, who owns and operates Commonwealth Broadcasting Corp. Legacy plans to support the communities in these markets through diverse, family friendly programming and community service. Legacy Broadcasting President Sherry Nelson stated, "For our company, this is the opportunity of a lifetime. It speaks so well of our industry that women like my daughter and me can break through the glass ceiling and build new programming services for television viewers."

RBR-TVBR observation: The lack of minority and female licensees is a difficult and thorny problem. It will take a lot of effort to bring the numbers up by so much as a percentage point, and parity with population share is a distant and likely unattainable goal.

But this is an excellent step forward. We will be glad to see the coming incentive auction turmoil result in more positive moves such as this, and we wish the new owners all the best as they begin their journey as local television station licensees.

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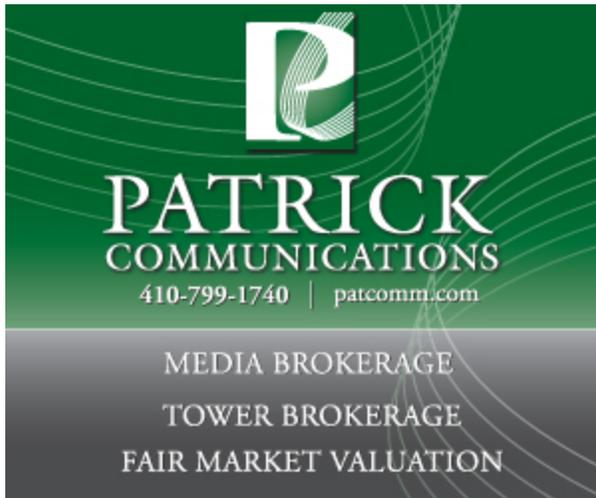
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