



# NEWS

**Federal Communications Commission**  
**445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.**  
**Washington, D. C. 20554**

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**June 10, 2013**

**NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:**  
**Matthew Berry, 202-418-2005**  
**Email: [Matthew.Berry@fcc.gov](mailto:Matthew.Berry@fcc.gov)**

## **STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI ON WRDN, REEL COUNTRY 1430 AM**

Durand, Wisconsin is a small town of about 1,900 people. Set on the banks of the Chippewa River, Durand is about 200 miles northwest of Madison, 80 miles southeast of Minneapolis, and 30 miles west of Eau Claire, a straight shot along Wisconsin Trunk 85. I've never been to Durand (although I hope to go someday), but I know many towns like it, including the one where I grew up. In places like Durand, a local radio station is an important way—sometimes one of the only ways—for folks to feel like they really are a part of the community.

On May 13, 2013, I had the pleasure of meeting Brian Winnekins of Durand. Brian and his wife Karla own and operate WRDN, Reel Country 1430 AM. Brian talked to me about the invaluable service WRDN provides to people in and around Durand and about some of the problems his station faces.

Brian also gave me a folder full of letters. The first letter described some of his ideas for improving the AM band. The rest of the letters were from citizens of Durand and nearby Arkansaw. They mentioned how grateful they were to Brian and Karla for buying the license to WRDN and bringing it back on the air in 2012, after five years of radio silence. They discussed how much they appreciated having radio coverage of local events like high school sports (WRDN is the home of the Durand Panthers). And several noted that WRDN helped local residents who were elderly or physically impaired stay informed about goings on around town, such as church services and weather updates.

These letters had a strong impact on me. With Brian's permission, and after making redactions of certain personal information, I've posted the letters along with this statement so that you can read them too. It's no secret that I'm a fan of AM radio. And it's no revelation that I'd like the Federal Communications Commission to start an initiative to revitalize the AM band. I hope that the words of these Wisconsinites, along with the everyday hard work of AM operators like Brian and Karla Winnekins, help illustrate why it's important for us to do so. There are so many people in the Durands of America who could benefit from that effort.



Durand Broadcasting, LLC  
114 West Main Street  
Durand, WI 54736

  
[www.reelcountry1430.com](http://www.reelcountry1430.com)  


May 13, 2013

Dear Commissioner Pai,

Thank you for meeting with me and discussing issues facing the AM Radio band. As we discussed, my wife and I are co-owners of WRDN-AM in Durand, WI. Our station serves the County Seats of Pepin, Buffalo and Wabasha Counties with local radio. This station had been effectively off the air for 5 years before we put it back on air in April of 2012. Had my wife and I not purchased the license and put the station back on the air, Durand, Mondovi, Alma would all have NO local radio service. We strive to serve our local community, and I have included some letters from area residents and leaders about why our small AM station is important to the area.

My wife and I would like to personally thank you for your concern about revitalizing the AM Band. Recently at the NAB Conference in Las Vegas, you held a discussion about how to help revitalize the AM Band. There are many different ideas, but many will cost small broadcasters like myself too much money to implement. Here are some of the ideas...

1. Let AM Stations broadcast on FM translators. This has been going on, but only on existing translators. Since there is no available FM translator in Durand, I can't do this unless I purchase one and then "Hop" it--making small moves toward Durand until I can use it. Im not allowed to just move it to Durand all at once. Each one of these "Hops" costs money in engineering and FCC fees and could take years to complete.
2. Digital AM. This is coming from Ibquity Corporation. We would have to pay them for the technology(every year) and would have to totally replace all our transmitting equipment. Since most people don't have radios that receive digital AM, this is not very feasible.
3. Expand the FM band and put AM stations on that new band. Again, radio's can't receive these new frequencies so there would be that time lag, and I would be forced to totally replace all our transmitting and antenna equipment.



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It is my belief, the EASIEST thing the FCC could do is the following:

- A. Start enforcing the part 15 interference rules. TV's, Computer Monitors, florescent lights, overhead electric lines and other consumer products are NOT ALLOWED to cause interference. The FCC has been pretty lax in enforcing that. Want to get rid of all the buzzing, etc..lets clean that up first.
- B. Let the AM broadcasters broadcast again with high bandwidth. Right now the NRCS rule prohibits us from anything over 9khz bandwidth. Factor that with radios that only allow 3khz to be received...and that is why AM sounds like a phone call! AM used to sound MUCH BETTER!!
- C. This will be the most controversial among radio engineers. Get rid of the 1930's rules forcing many AM stations to lower power at night. This rule was started because at night AM can go farther via Skywave. In 1930 it might have been important to have large regional stations serving a large rural area and small stations like us had to "clear the channel", but that is not the case any longer. Our station must lower power at night to "protect" a station in St. Louis, MO. While I like oldies, our biggest complaints are that at night people in Durand can't get us..instead they hear this station in St. Louis. They ask me why, I tell them I have to lower power and they all say..well thats just silly..we don't care about St. Louis and they don't care about us! I believe that all stations should be allowed to be at 2,000 watts, and if they have a higher night power level, thats fine they can keep that. Many radio engineers will say it will cause more interference, but that would only happen in the fringe areas...in our case..areas to our south and for St. Louis areas to their north...but for both of us, those areas are OUT of our local listening area. I wouldn't jam St. Louis, or Mankato, MN or Beaver Dam, WI and they wouldn't jam me because we would all be at a higher power and would cancel each other out outside of our local areas. Again this might be true from a technical standpoint, but in reality our listeners don't care about technicalities..they just know they can't get us, so they don't listen. There are many local stations across the country that would do local sports, etc but figure its not worth it when people can't hear the signal. My suggestion is this..the FCC issue a temporary rule allowing all stations that have low night power, to increase it to their daytime power level to a max of 2,000 watts. Stations that already have a higher power at night can keep it. Do this from September 1-March 31 as a test to see how bad it would really be. Let all the broadcasters know so we can plan on



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having local programming at night(i.e. high schools sports). Im betting that this would work just fine and the FCC could just leave the rule in place. If there is an issue with a station causing unacceptable interference, it would be as simple as having the station then lower power to a point where the interference is gone. By allowing this, it would help small broadcasters without a huge investment, we could use what we are currently using for transmitting equipment, our local listeners would benefit with local programming AND the business sponsors would benefit too! Of course this WON'T help revitalize the AM Band if broadcasters continue to ignore their local communities and only have programming that is cheap and easy to air, but provides nothing to their communities. I'm not sure how the FCC could enforce having stations with "local" programing other than through the public service portion of a broadcast license.

Commissioner Pai, I would like to invite you to visit us in Durand some time and we can show you our station and how we serve our community and what its like to try and receive the station at night. I would also like to thank you again for meeting with me. It is not often that high level Government Officials are willing to take some of their valuable time to meet with the average citizen. Again it is a testimate to your commitment to all broadcasters large and small that you were willing to meet with me. I would also like to say thank you to the rest of the FCC staff that has helped us with license renewal and other questions that we have had. You and your staff are an example of how Government should work! Thanks again! If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email or give me a call.

Sincerely



Brian Winnekins  
Co-Owner  
WRDN  
Durand, WI



May 8, 2013

Dear Commissioner Pai,

My name is Robert Pelke. I own Prime Realty here in Durand, WI. I'm writing this letter on behalf of Karla and Brian Winnekins, owners of our local radio station, WRDN in Durand. I'm a lifelong resident of the Durand area, and I remember when both our radio stations left town about 6 years ago. The prior owner of the stations felt it was more important to serve the city of Menomonie, north of Durand. It was a very huge loss for our community, as we lost any coverage of local news, weather and sports. There were always discussions among area residents about what happened to the radio stations and why did they first move and then go off the air, and how it would be nice if there was a way to get the stations back.

In 2012, I was very excited to learn that Brian and Karla had purchased the license for the AM station here in Durand. I was so happy when the station went back on air in April of 2012, even though it was at a very low power from downtown Durand. I met with Karla and Brian and found out that the reason for the low power was because they were dealing with zoning issues for a new tower in Pepin County. I also learned that the FM station had been moved to Baldwin, WI and was never to return to Durand, and that if Karla and Brian had not purchased the AM license, it would have been very possible that Durand would have lost the AM station too.

Right away, Karla and Brian started making a difference. They had local news and local weather and even local obituaries on air. They broadcasted from our local events like Durand Fun Fest and the Pepin County Fair, all while they both worked a 2<sup>nd</sup> job to keep the station going. They hired a student to help with news and sales, and I was very happy to become a sponsor on the station. When the weather was bad, Brian was on the air telling us about it. In the fall, they were broadcasting our local high school team's sporting events. What a thrill it was for our city to once again enjoy listening to play by play of football, and boys and girls basketball. Our football team went undefeated during the regular season, and residents who could not go to the games were able to hear the exciting play by play, even if we had to also hear a station in St. Louis, MO at the same time. Since the station was at a low power, everyone believed that would change once Karla and Brian had the "big boy tower" working.

This February, Karla and Brian announced they had been able to purchase the old tower south of town and were going to start using it! That meant the coverage would drastically increase and during the day it did. But at night, many can still hear St. Louis. Some nights it is very bad. I asked Brian about this, and he told me that the station had to lower power at night because the station had to "protect" St. Louis. He told me of how many AM stations have had to do that since the 1930's so the bigger stations can keep their large coverage areas. He said he wished the station could just stay at its daytime power, as that would give everyone the opportunity to still listen to the station, but since AM can skip across the atmosphere at night, the FCC prohibited him from being at a higher power. He also told me that the rule really didn't make sense since there was so much new man made interference, that even if he was at the daytime power, he wouldn't affect the St. Louis station.

When Brian told me that he was going to meet you, he asked if I would write a letter of support, and I said yes without hesitation. I totally support what Karla and Brian are doing in Durand and how they have brought local radio back to our community. Brian tells me that you support AM radio and stations like WRDN, and for that I thank you. Brian also told me of his suggestion to help the smaller

stations right now, by letting them stay at their daytime power and trying this as a test this upcoming school year. I totally support this idea, because while I have nothing against St. Louis, their station doesn't care about Durand as well as it shouldn't, but there should be no reason why our station can't stay at its daytime power especially since Brian tells me that St. Louis would still have a higher power than WRDN so the only loss for St. Louis would be places like Durand. I know there are some technical issues, but the reality here is for many of our residents, they can't hear the station very well at night, and that is a shame.

Commissioner Pai, we are very lucky to have our local radio station back, and myself and other residents are very protective of it. Before Karla and Brian put WRDN back on the air I had not listened to AM radio for years! I want to see it succeed just like I believe you do too. Please help our station and other stations like it by allowing this very affordable way to allow the smaller station owners and their communities a chance to succeed with decent night time service. If you would like to talk with me further, please give me a call anytime at [REDACTED] or better yet come to our fine community for a visit! Thank you again for your time reading this and for meeting with Brian.

Sincerely



Robert Pelke  
Prime Realty  
Durand, WI



# DURAND CITY-RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

May 9, 2013

Ajit Pai ~ FCC Commissioner  
Washington D.C.

Commissioner Pai,

I am composing this letter to you to express how important our local radio station, WRDN 1430 AM is to us. We are most fortunate to have a radio station in our small town and we would like to keep it. There are many radio stations that can be reached in Durand, but only one that *really* covers the local events and happenings, WRDN 1430. They cover the Durand High School's sporting events for the seniors who can't drive at night or are "shut-ins."

WRDN has provided us with ways of reaching not only listening audience for the Fire Dept., but also to get things that we wouldn't normally have access too. For example, on May 11, we are celebrating our 125<sup>th</sup> year of service to the Durand area. WRDN was able to bring in a nationally known polka band to perform at our event. This has generated a tremendous amount of excitement not just within the area of Durand but throughout Western Wisconsin, which will only make our event more successful. Without WRDN this would not have been possible. Also, being a local funeral home owner, WRDN provides another outlet for families to let people know that someone they love has died and when the funeral arrangements are.

Having a *local station with local owners*, makes emergency situations or severe weather made known to people at anytime. But at night it can be hard to get information out because AM radio stations have to turn down there power at night. A simple and cost effective solution is to allow the AM radio stations to keep operating at full power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I hope that you are able to see how important our station is to us and that we *want* WRDN to not only stay on the air, but be successful as well.

Regards,

  
James Sedlmayr Fire Fighter/Treasurer  
Durand Fire Department  
104 E. Main St.  
Durand, WI 54736



# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF DURAND

Our Vision: Our children will be respectful, responsible and resourceful.  
Our Mission: To stimulate, facilitate and educate.

604 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue East PO Box 190 Durand, Wisconsin 54736

Greg Doverspike, District Administrator  
Randy Rojnila, Director of Pupil Services



May 9, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Brian Winnekins and WRDN located in Durand, WI. I remember growing up visiting my grandparents, who live about ten miles outside of Durand, and eating breakfast listening to WRDN every morning. I also recall listening to coverage of my cousins from a neighboring district playing in the state softball championships one night past my bedtime. These are memories that I still carry with me over three decades later.

I am now back in the Durand area serving as the Superintendent of Schools for the School District of Durand. This is my third time working in the school system with experience at various levels in the educational field. During each of my first two visits I was involved in athletics serving as a coach and Athletic Director. After returning for a second time after a six year absence I noticed one thing was greatly missing during athletic events. That was coverage from WRDN. During that time span the station closed in Durand.

Upon being hired in Durand this past summer after another four year absence I heard about the radio station being back on the air. Over this year I have heard and seen WRDN at every football game, all road basketball games, and now various spring sports. The coverage of the athletic events is just a small part of the support we have received from Brian and WRDN. WRDN is a resource for us to get out valuable school information and helps us promote our school system. Brian is frequently in school looking to interview someone in the school system to help us promote the great things that we are doing. This is a relationship that has helped us pass a referendum this year and inform the community of the great things happening in the school.

This year at Durand we were very fortunate to have very successful athletic teams. With that success comes many long drives as we progressed through the tournament run. As a result some of our most loyal fans could not make the trek to the far reaches of Wisconsin. They often relied on Brian to provide that visual for the action of our Panthers. It saddened me to hear that Brian was not allowed to run on daytime power during the nights meaning that many in our community had no way to support our local teams due to not being able to get the games at night.

I am asking you, in fact pleading you to please consider allowing a school year test of allowing local AM stations like WRDN to run at daytime power during the night. It is these local AM stations that are the life blood for many people to stay connected to their local teams to listen to their grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbors, and students they have supported during the year. I hope you will consider this request and think about the impact this will have on the small towns across America as we cling on to a small town and school identity.

Sincerely,

Greg Doverspike  
Superintendent

*Junior / Senior High School*  
Bill Clouse, Principal  
604 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue East  
Durand, WI 54736

*Randy Johnson, AD / Dean*  
604 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue East  
Durand, WI 54736

*Arkansaw Elementary*  
Erika Johnson, Principal  
N6290 North H Street  
Arkansaw, WI 54721

*Caddle Woodlawn Early Learning Center*  
Erika Johnson, Principal  
850 Auth Street  
Durand, WI 54736

Rev. Thomas Bryan  
Faith Lutheran Church, Durand WI  
[REDACTED]

Commissioner Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
C/O Mr. Brian Winnekins  
[REDACTED]

May 8, 2013

Dr. Commissioner Pai,

I am the Pastor of a small church in the town of Durand, Wisconsin, which is located just a few miles from the Wisconsin/Minnesota border. The surrounding area is rural, supporting agriculture and recreation. I'm sure you are already aware that communities located in demographic areas such as ours face some unique challenges that differ significantly from those of larger urban areas. One particular challenge that churches face is the ability to continue to include members who have for reasons of age or infirmity become homebound. As you might suspect, these members are often scattered many miles apart, in many directions, and many miles from town.

Through the services provided by our local AM radio station Real Country 1430, we have been able to continue to reach out to these members in a significant way. Thanks to the station's dedication to the community, it assists us in the broadcast of our weekly worship service. This weekly broadcast benefits not only our own members but many other individuals who cannot get to church like they once did.

I write to commend this station to you. Real Country and other stations like it are very important as they add to the stability of our rural communities. I ask that you do what is in your power to assist them as they seek to serve their communities.

Sincerely,

Rev. Thomas Bryan - Pastor - Faith Lutheran Church, Durand, WI

Commissioner Ajit Pai  
C/O Brian Winnekins

Dear Commissioner Pai,

I'm writing as a lifelong resident of the city of Durand. Our small town of 2,000 people has recently been blessed by the rejuvenation of our old radio station, AM 1430 WRDN by Brian and Karla Winnekins. As a student currently pursuing a journalism degree, the hard work and time that the Winnekins spent getting this station back on the air presented a wonderful opportunity for me to learn, but also gave me a unique perspective on exactly what this radio station meant to the community it served.

It didn't take long for the community to realize what a tremendous asset this station was. Even in the first tenuous days of broadcasting, the staff experienced an outpouring of support for our effort and the services that we were providing. Brian said from the very start of his work in Durand that, "If we care about the community, the community will care about us." His passion convinced me to assist him in broadcasting high school sporting events, local happenings, and news that would benefit the citizens of our town, who typically find themselves forgotten in the media coverage originating from far off cities with larger markets. The hometown touch provided by Brian and Karla earned them the respect of all who listened.

One of the greatest services that WRDN has given Durand is the return of its local sports coverage. An aging community, many people within our listening area have difficulty making it to basketball, football, baseball, and softball games but still find themselves caught up in the proud tradition of Panther sports; for these listeners, our broadcasts from games gave them access to something that was previously unattainable. We've experienced a similar response to our weekly church service, which has helped Faith Lutheran Church reach out to older parishioners who can no longer make it to church in person.

For a town like ours, WRDN helped us remember a very important lesson: even though we get drowned out in media coverage from larger news outlets, there is a lot going on in this city that makes a difference. WRDN is a space where we can revel in the happenings of our old town, and remember that we truly do matter. WRDN cares about Durand, and in the short year that she has gotten to know her radio station, Durand has come to care about WRDN.

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with Brian regarding the challenges facing our station. I'd encourage you to listen to what this man, who has done so much for his station and community, has to say.

Sincerely,

Jacob Wrasse  
Durand, Wisconsin

**DIG**  
**Durand Improvement Group**

POB 156  
DURAND, WISCONSIN 54736  
[www.durandimProvementGroup.org](http://www.durandimProvementGroup.org)

May 1, 2013

WRDN Broadcasting

Our rural Wisconsin Community depends on the local area Radio Station for the standard radio venue of music, news, weather, and sports for the obvious reasons. More importantly is the Local Community notifications regarding major weather warnings, calendar of events, school sporting events broadcasts, annual summer and holiday parade broadcasts, and people notices of life celebrations, deaths, and medical illness fund raisers as well as businesses advertising and promotions.

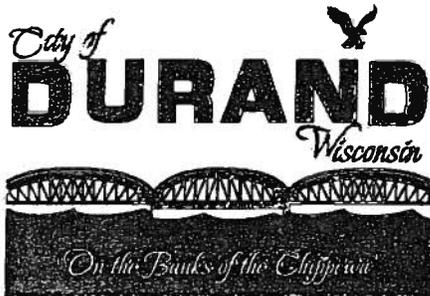
The reduced broadcasting abilities during evening hours when our rural community depends on WRDN to provide the area communication services is of vital importance to our area. There is no other local media provider that covers our location. Seniors, physically impaired, and busy individuals enjoy the opportunity to listen to area sports event in the comforts of their homes, but with reduced night broadcasting capabilities this proves difficult.

The Durand Improvement Group appreciates the excellent community involvement of WRDN Reel County Radio Station, in particular the coverage and coordination of Community Events in our small rural town.

As a longtime resident of Durand, Wisconsin, the ten plus year span when our rural community was without a local radio station prior to the arrival of WRDN -Reel County was challenging for our businesses, school district, and residents. It is grand to have a Radio Station back in our area, and would be stupendous if we could hear the station during evening hours.

*Cheryl Ward Brantner*

Cheryl Ward Brantner  
President of Durand Improvement Group



104 E. Main St  
P.O. Box 202  
Durand WI 54734

May 9, 2013

Julius Genachowski, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As Mayor of the City of Durand, Wisconsin, I am writing in support of the efforts of our local AM radio station, WRDN, as they pursue efforts to have the limits lifted on their ability to transmit at full power at all hours of the day. They are presently limited in the evenings and night, and, therefore, are unable to maintain what I consider to be "programming of interest" for our local community and area.

WRDN is a great community partner, and is extremely effective in getting information out to our community and area. They are, however, particularly limited when they are required to comply with FCC regulations to reduce power during the evenings. This is at a time when the "programming of interest" I mention above includes local news and sporting events.

On behalf of the City of Durand, its City Council, and our residents, we ask your consideration and support for eliminating the limitations not only on WRDN, but on all local AM stations and allow them to stay on the air at full power at all hours. Such action will result in a revival of the AM radio band width, and provide benefits to small communities like Durand, Wisconsin throughout America.

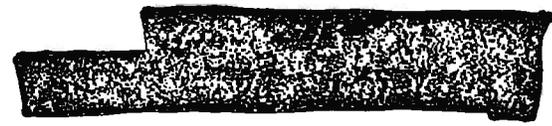
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick J. Milliren".

Patrick J. Milliren, Mayor

***Pastor/Seventy Daniel M. Richardson  
Community of Christ***

***N6256 County Road D  
Arkansaw, WI, 54721***



***May 10, 2013***

***Commissioner Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554***

***Commissioner Pai;***

***It is with my pleasure to write this letter of full support of Reel Country 1430 WRDN.***

***WRDN brings an improved quality of life to the immediate and surrounding area. Information which assists in safety and health issues such as local weather, water over the roads, river levels, emergency fire and police notice assist in improved quality of life made available through WRDN.***

***WRDN also offers support of local schools through broadcasting events, local faith programming, county events, markets, regional formats (including local, state U. S. congressmen and senators) that provide views and information only available as it happens.***

***We had lost WRDN for several years. As a result, a sense of community was partially lost. With the return of WRDN, many rural and small town communities are connected through the services of a local radio station.***

***A twenty hour AM station benefits all who are in community especially that may be more confined.***

***Thank you considering this note.***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Richardson", written over a horizontal line.

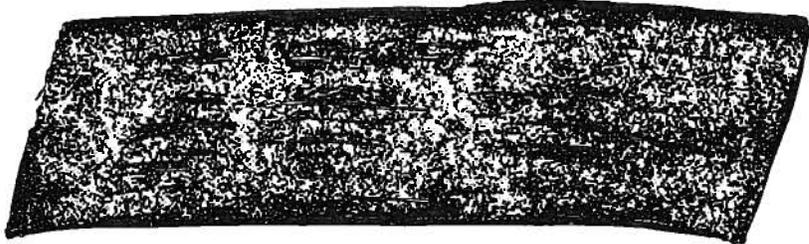
***Pastor Dan Richardson  
Town of Waterville Supervisor  
Board Member Western Wisconsin Cares  
Board Member Pepin County Health Department***

Dear Mr Winnickens,

Thank you for bringing "our" local station back to  
Durand. Is there anyway you can increase your  
power so we can hear it better? The tornado  
season is just about here and I worry that we  
can't hear "our" station very well at night and in  
the southern edge of the County. We need "our" station  
during summer storms. Please see if you can it  
put more power into the signal to better serve  
Cyprian County.

Thank you

Gene K. Wiber and wife



May 11, 2013

WRDN-AM Radio

The importance of 24 hour coverage by radio is for reaching.

Weather conditions, school closing, road detours, and many more important information. For school events happening in the even such as all sports, concerts etc. Large city radio does not cover things happening locally. This is as a residence in a city of 1,931 persons.

As an advertising business local radio is very important to us. Large city radio's cost is extremely high based on coverage which does not help us that much. Local radio is much more reasonable to cover our customers. We have been in a family owned furniture and flooring retail store for 30 years. (Foni's Interiors) as mayor for 15 years here in Durand, WI I can see the great importance for our retail store. Remember we are the midwest class.

Respectfully,

Gerald M. Bauer

P.S. Sorry but computer is broken.