



## Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2004-375

Ottawa, 27 August 2004

### **Standard Radio Inc.**

Dawson Creek, Hudson Hope and Bullhead Mountain, British Columbia

*Application 2003-1568-1*

*Public Hearing in the National Capital Region*

*7 June 2004*

### **CJDC-TV Dawson Creek and its transmitters – Licence renewal**

*The Commission renews the broadcasting licence for the television programming undertaking CJDC-TV Dawson Creek and its transmitters CJDC-TV-1 Hudson Hope and CJDC-TV-2 Bullhead Mountain. The licence term will be seven years, from 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2011.*

### **The application**

1. The Commission received an application by Standard Radio Inc. (Standard) to renew the broadcasting licence for the television programming undertaking CJDC-TV Dawson Creek and its transmitters CJDC-TV-1 Hudson Hope and CJDC-TV-2 Bullhead Mountain. CJDC-TV Dawson Creek is an affiliate of the English-language television network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Standard acquired the assets of the station in 2002,<sup>1</sup> and was issued a new licence to continue its operation, subject to the same terms and conditions that had applied to the licence then in effect. The Commission received two interventions, both of which were in support of CJDC-TV's licence renewal.

### **Local reflection**

2. Under its current licence, Standard is expected to broadcast a weekly average of 8 hours 15 minutes of original local news on CJDC-TV. In its application, Standard proposed to reduce the amount of local programming broadcast on CJDC-TV to a weekly average of 3 hours 30 minutes of original news programming, all of which would be reflective of the community. The licensee indicated that its proposed reduction in the amount of original local programming is necessitated by declining revenues.
3. The Commission considers that the licensee's commitment to broadcast 3 hours 30 minutes of original local news is reasonable, given the size of the market served and the station's financial situation. The Commission notes in this regard that CJDC-TV's revenues have contracted by an average of over 4% per year over the past 5 years. The

<sup>1</sup> Standard acquires the assets of radio stations, radio networks and television stations in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2002-91, 19 April 2002.

Commission is satisfied that CJDC-TV's local programming will meet the demands and reflect the concerns of its local audience, as called for by the Commission in *Building on success - A policy framework for Canadian television*, Public Notice CRTC 1999-97, 11 June 1999 (the television policy). The Commission expects the licensee to adhere to its commitment to broadcast a weekly minimum of 3 hours 30 minutes of original local news throughout the licence term.

#### **Priority programming**

4. The Commission notes the licensee's commitment to broadcast a minimum of 8 hours of priority programming in each broadcast week, averaged over the broadcast year. This programming will originate with the CBC.

#### **Service to persons who are deaf or whose hearing is impaired**

5. In its renewal application, Standard made a commitment to caption a minimum of 90% of the overall programming broadcast by CJDC-TV during the new licence term. The licensee indicated that this commitment would essentially extend to all programming other than its own locally-produced news. CJDC-TV's local news programming, including repeat news broadcasts, would represent approximately 7 hours 45 minutes per week, or approximately 6% of the broadcast week. The Commission notes that virtually all of the programming provided by the CBC network to this station is captioned.
6. In *Licence renewal for CJDC-TV Dawson Creek and its transmitters*, Decision CRTC 95-110, 24 March 1995, the Commission encouraged the licensee to caption all local news programming and at least 90% of all programming during the broadcast day, by 31 August 2002. The Commission is therefore concerned that the licensee has failed to make a commitment in its application to caption all news programming, despite the fact that nine years have elapsed since the Commission encouraged the station to achieve that target. The Commission considers that the licensee must improve its performance in this area, beginning early in the new licence term.
7. Additionally, in the appendix to this decision, the Commission has imposed a **condition of licence** requiring the licensee to provide closed captioning for all news programs and not less than 90% of all programs aired during the broadcast day, beginning not later than 1 September 2009.

#### **Reflection of Canada's diversity**

8. All broadcasting licensees have a responsibility to contribute to the reflection and portrayal of Canada's cultural diversity in furtherance of the policy objectives contained in section 3(1)(d) of the *Broadcasting Act* (the Act). Specifically, broadcasters share responsibility for assisting in the development of a broadcasting system that accurately reflects Canada's ethno-cultural minorities and Aboriginal peoples. Broadcasters must therefore ensure that the portrayal of such groups, through their presence and participation on-screen, is accurate, fair and non-stereotypical.

9. Standard indicated that its corporate policy is to ensure that its programming is accurate, fair and non-stereotypical, and that its employees and programming reflect an equitable representation of cultural and racial minorities and Aboriginal people. Accordingly, the Commission expects CJDC-TV's local programming to reflect the community served by the station, including its minorities.
10. The Commission encourages Standard to develop a corporate diversity plan, in order to allow the licensee to assess its progress towards meeting the objectives flowing from the Act.
11. As noted in *Introduction to Broadcasting Decisions CRTC 2004-6 to 2004-27 renewing the licences of 22 specialty services*, Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-2, 21 January 2004, the Commission considers that the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities is also an important matter. The Commission notes that the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) is developing a plan to examine issues surrounding the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming. The Commission considers that initiatives designed to make programming more reflective and inclusive of Canada's ethno-cultural diversity can, in many cases, be extended or adapted to also ensure fair, balanced and inclusive reflection and representation of persons with disabilities. Accordingly, the Commission expects the licensee to include persons with disabilities in its corporate planning for cultural diversity.

**Service to persons who are blind or whose vision is impaired**

12. Section 3(1)(p) of the Act states that, as part of the broadcasting policy for Canada, "programming accessible by disabled persons should be provided within the Canadian broadcasting system as resources become available for the purpose." Accordingly, the Commission expects all broadcasters to work toward improving the accessibility of their programming for persons who are blind or whose vision is impaired.
13. Greater programming accessibility can be achieved through the provision of audio description<sup>2</sup> and/or of video description.<sup>3</sup> All broadcasters can, and should, provide audio description. The licensee indicated that CJDC-TV will attempt to offer local basic "voice overs" on locally displayed textual and graphic information during the next licence term. The Commission expects the licensee to provide audio description wherever appropriate.
14. The Commission considers that the CBC in the coming years is likely to provide described programming, as the Commission encouraged the CBC to do at the time of its last licence renewal. CJDC-TV, however, does not currently have the capability to make

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<sup>2</sup> Audio description consists of basic voice-over recitations or descriptions of the text or graphic information that is displayed on the screen. Although a measure of sensitivity and creativity on the part of a broadcaster is necessary to ensure the quality and effectiveness of audio description, no special equipment is required.

<sup>3</sup> Video description, or described video, takes the form of a narrative description of a program's key visual elements which permits the audience to create a mental image of what is on the screen. It is generally provided using the secondary audio program (SAP) channel.

this programming accessible to persons in its audience who are blind or whose vision is impaired through use of the Secondary Audio Program Channel (SAP). Accordingly, the Commission expects the licensee, as part of CJDC-TV's normal technical upgrades, to acquire the capability to provide its audience with the video description associated with these programs, using the SAP channel. At the next licence renewal, the Commission intends to ask the licensee to make specific hourly commitments for described programming.

#### **Employment equity and on-air presence**

15. Because this licensee is subject to the *Employment Equity Act* and files reports with the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, its employment equity practices are not examined by the Commission.
16. With respect to on-air presence, the Commission expects the licensee to ensure that its programming is reflective of Canadian society and that members of the four designated groups (women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities) are presented fairly and accurately.

#### **Conclusion**

17. The Commission has reviewed Standard's past performance and its renewal application. The Commission is generally satisfied that, during the current licence term, the licensee has adhered to the requirements of the *Television Broadcasting Regulations, 1987*, and has complied with its conditions of licence and the Commission's expectations.
18. On the basis of its review of the licensee's performance and its licence renewal application, the Commission **renews** the broadcasting licence for CJDC-TV Dawson Creek and its transmitters CJDC-TV-I Hudson Hope and CJDC-TV-2 Bullhead Mountain, from 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2011. The licence will be subject to the conditions specified therein, and to the **conditions** set out in the appendix to this decision.
19. The Commission reminds the licensee that it must fulfil all of the benefits commitments set out in *Standard acquires the assets of radio stations, radio networks and television stations in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2002-91, 19 April 2002, in which the Commission approved the application by Standard to acquire the assets of CJDC-TV Dawson Creek and its transmitters.

Secretary General

*This decision is to be appended to the licence. It is available in alternative format upon request, and may also be examined at the following Internet site: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca>*

## **Appendix to Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2004-375**

### **Conditions of licence**

1. The licensee shall operate this broadcasting undertaking as an affiliate of the English-language television network operated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.
2. The licensee shall provide closed captioning for all news programs and not less than 90% of all programs aired during the broadcast day, beginning not later than 1 September 2009.