

Request for STA to Operate on Interim Facilities – WTOM-TV

WPBN Licensee LLC, licensee of station WTOM-TV, Cheboygan, MI, FIN 21254 (“WTOM”), hereby requests special temporary authority (“STA”), due to circumstances beyond its control, to continue to operate on interim facilities while its permanent facilities are completed, and further requests a waiver of the Commission’s rules to the extent necessary. WTOM was granted STA on October 18, 2019 (LMS File 0000086618) to operate with interim facilities and hereby requests extension of such STA to enable it to continue to operate from interim facilities for a period of 180 days; i.e., from April 18, 2020 until October 15, 2020.

WTOM was assigned to transition from Channel 35 to Channel 16 in Phase 6 of the repack. WTOM’s construction of its permanent facilities has been delayed due to construction and crew delays. As Media Bureau staff is aware, the Station’s engineers, tower crews and transmitter crews have been unable to travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in further delays.

As of this filing the station’s post-repack permanent full power transmitter has been installed; however, the Station’s main transmission line and antenna have yet to be installed. WTOM plans to continue to use its interim equipment to continue operation on its post-repack channel. Because of the time needed to install the new transmission line and antenna, WTOM will not be able to fully complete construction of its permanent post-repack facilities by the expiration date of its current STA, which is April 18, 2020, but the station plans to continue to operate using the interim facilities.

Thus, WTOM respectfully requests an STA to operate on its post-repack channel from interim facilities while construction is completed on its permanent facilities. This request will not impact the repack efforts of other stations because WTOM has transitioned to its post-repack channel. Furthermore, grant of the instant STA request would be in the public interest because it would allow WTOM to continue to broadcast on its post-repack channel without disruption to the overall repack.