

Request for Special Temporary Authority

Baraboo Broadcasting Corporation (“BBC”) hereby requests Special Temporary Authority (“STA”) for an LPTV Station to operate digitally on Channel 16 at Baraboo, Wisconsin, in lieu of the STA it has had for more than 20 years to operate LPTV Station W43BR, Baraboo, WI. As explained below, W43BR is soon to be displaced. (Presently pending is a request to extend the W43BR STA (LMS File No. 0000111735) which was filed on April 7, 2020. If the request for an STA on Channel 16 is granted, the request to extend the W43BR STA will be moot as soon as BBC can begin operation on Channel 16.)

By way of background, BBC was originally granted an STA on May 29, 1997¹, and that STA has been extended continuously ever since – most recently on April 22, 2019. Over the 20 plus years the STA has been in place, the reason for requesting the STA has remained the same, as explained in the initial STA request filed April 9, 1997:

“At the present time, the Commission is not entertaining applications for new LPTV stations, and it is unknown how long this “freeze” may last. When the Commission begins to accept such applications, BBC intends to file an application seeking a construction permit for [an LPTV station] at Baraboo”

Because W43BR operated pursuant to an STA, it was not able file an application for a construction permit for an in-core channel during the displacement window. Under the FCC’s Incentive Auction procedures, LPTV and TV translator stations may continue operating in the spectrum repurposed for use by new 600 MHz Band licensees unless and until they are notified of displacement. On April 13, 2020, BBC was notified that United States Cellular Operating Company LLC (“U.S. Cellular”), licensee of the 600 MHz F Block in the Baraboo area, will commence operations on or about August 13, 2020, and by that date BBC must either cease operations or reduce power of LPTV Station W43BR in order to eliminate the potential of harmful interference to U.S. Cellular’s facilities.

BBC has determined it can operate on digitally on Channel 16 without harmful interference to other stations.

Grant of this request for an STA to operate on Channel 16 is in the public interest. Such a grant will allow BBC to continue to provide local television service to the residents of Baraboo. Given Baraboo’s distance from the major markets, television stations in those markets simply do not provide coverage of Baraboo’s needs and interests. According to the FCC Reception Maps website, there is NO “strong” over-the-air signal to be received from Madison stations in Baraboo. BBC intends to provide the same local television service for area residents as W43BR provided.

¹ In 1998, due to the loss of its transmitter site, the station filed for modification of the STA. That modification was granted March 18, 1998, and has been extended since that time pursuant to the terms of the FCC grant of March 18, 1998.

Residents of Baraboo have become accustomed to viewing W43BR for more than 20 years. It is a “link to community events” for shut-ins and residents of hospitals and nursing homes and has provided local coverage of tornadoes and catastrophic flooding across Sauk, Juneau, and Adams counties. The local programming carried on W43BR and the will be carried on replacement facility include coverage of the Baraboo City Council meetings (2 to 4 times per month), updates from the Sauk County Public Health Department’s "Safer in Sauk" initiative during the COVID-19 crisis and services from the First Presbyterian Church every Sunday. The station also airs “Into the Outdoors,” a children’s program. Additionally, if the requested STA is granted, BBC plans to start broadcasting "Sauk County News," adding a completely new "news voice" to the region with up to 14 hours of additional local programming per week. Additionally, if the STA is granted, BBC plans to air up to 12 hours per weekend of local sports coverage as soon as local high schools begin paying games again.

The fact W43BR has to vacate Channel 43 in the vicinity of Baraboo should not result in area residents being deprived of the local service BBC has provided and will be able to provide on the requested facility.

For the foregoing reasons, BBC respectfully requests grant of STA to operate its station on Channel 16 at Baraboo, Wisconsin, with the facilities specified in the STA request.