

Silent Status Narrative (Amended 09.16.21)

As a consequence of the FCC's broadcast station repack, WFBI-LD, South East Memphis, Tennessee (Facility ID 23844) was forced off the air (i.e., displaced) on October 23, 2018 by full power station WPXX-TV, Memphis, Tennessee (Facility ID 21726). As noted in WFBI-LD's initial STA Request, October 23, 2018 is the date that WFBI-LD went silent.

WFBI-LD was granted a construction permit on September 27, 2018 whereby WFBI-LD would move to digital Channel 34 (from its previous Channel 33) (see LMS 0000054142). That construction permit was set to expire on September 27, 2021.

On August 11, 2021, WFBI-LD returned to the air. On August 12, 2021, WFBI-LD filed a "License to Cover" the completed move to Channel 34 (see LMS 0000156902) pursuant to its above-referenced CP granted on October 23, 2018 (see LMS 0000054142). On August 23, 2021 the FCC granted WFBI-LD's License to Cover application.

As noted in WFBI-LD's most recent "Request to Extend a Silent Authority" filed on April 15, 2021 (see LMS 0000143490) and granted on April 19, 2021:

A process that would appear simple on its face (i.e., changing from Channel 33 to Channel 34) has been anything but simple. Since WFBI-LD was forced off the air (due to no fault of its own), Flinn has been forced to seek the acquisition of new broadcast equipment for WFBI-LD since the station's old equipment is inadequate for the repack changeover to Channel 34. Flinn initially experienced difficulty obtaining firm quotes and timelines from equipment vendors in light of their other commitments to full power stations working through the various Phases. Thereafter, Flinn's local engineer experienced significant issues with the general contractor chosen to effectuate the repack rebuild (including a diagnosis of cancer). If that wasn't enough, Covid-19 struck.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc with equipment manufacturers and suppliers, shippers and Flinn personnel. Build-out plans (the control of which are substantially in the hands of the equipment manufacturers and technical installers) have to date been thwarted and delayed. On top of that, the broadcast tower on which WFBI-LD is located has been sold and Flinn must co-locate WFBI-LD with another commonly-owned LPTV station (which is also being forced to repack -- i.e., WWWN-LD, which is moving from Channel 46 to Channel 16). The requisite use of a combiner has complicated the WFBI-LD rebuild even more.

In light of the initial contractor issues discussed hereinabove and in a good faith effort to move the rebuild process along, Flinn contracted directly with Rohde & Schwarz, the manufacturer of the equipment that [was] used in connection with the WFBI-LD repack rebuild.

.... In the case at hand, WFBI-LD's silence has been solely the consequence of FCC's transition process and for no other reason.

In sum, unforeseen delays (and a global pandemic) impacted supply chains and massively taxed a very limited subset of equipment vendors, tower climbers, engineers, installers, and general contractors existing in the U.S. to handle both the full and low power television repack. WFBI-LD's periods of silence were directly related to these issues.