

KORK-TV FACES "CLAIM JUMPERS"

AN OPEN LETTER FROM TV-3



KORK-TV
LAS VEGAS

DEAR FRIENDS:

Las Vegas, Nevada
November 14, 1971

Today KORK-TV, Channel 3, faces "claim jumpers" . . . 18 local residents calling themselves the "Las Vegas Valley Broadcasting Company." This open letter is published to clarify the situation. What these 18 are attempting is to silence KORK-TV, Channel 3, by taking over the license granted us by the Federal Communications Commission. This license is our privilege to telecast . . . and use Channel 3 in this area. Without it, we would have to go off the air, fire our staff, and close our station.

In the settling of the West there were occasions when a pioneering family would settle on a claim, clear the land, plow it, plant seed, build a house and then lose everything to claim jumpers . . . people who seized the fruits of another's labors.

"Claim Jumping" of popular television stations is not new. It has been tried in other cities, almost always against a station which has achieved a position of excellence in the community. Stations poor in programming and unpopular with their viewers are unlikely victims. Although these pirating attempts can be successfully resisted, stations may be forced into years of hearings and the expenditure of thousands of dollars to defend themselves and the public from the take-over attempt. This KORK-TV will do.

We have too many years of painfully-gained experience, too much thought, planning and money invested, and too much consideration for the best interests of the viewing public to give up without a fight which we are confident we will win.

KORK-TV is a pioneer in Nevada television. We began operation in 1955. Our first years were difficult, but it was a challenge we were willing to accept for a better tomorrow, reinforcing our faith by plowing money into improvements we wanted to make. For instance . . .

KORK-TV increased its power, to provide a better picture for its viewers . . . added tower height to reach some who were not able to receive a good picture . . . bought new equipment for color telecasting . . . installed a long-distance microwave relay system to Los Angeles to bring in NBC network shows . . . built its own microwave interconnection with Reno and the state capital in Carson City. Direct service to the citizens of Nevada has been provided through the transmission of news and special events programming. Each gubernatorial inauguration, complete with ceremonies and addresses, has been televised live since the installation of the microwave link. The same treatment has been given the opening of the bi-annual Nevada State Legislative sessions, employing newsmen from the Reno and Las Vegas areas for on-the-scene reports.

Simulcasts of election returns affecting the entire state have been televised on election nights, with integrated reporting teams in Reno and Las Vegas, announcing the returns as soon as they are available, and interviewing both winning and losing candidates for the benefit of audiences in both coverage areas. In primary elections this technique has provided the voters with an opportunity to get an excellent informal look at the winners, who then become candidates in the general election, and in at least one case, has resulted in an impromptu debate between two such candidates, one in each city.

On a daily basis, KORK-TV and Reno maintain communication to arrange the exchange of news stories. Almost every day, film stories of importance to the lives of Nevadans are seen in areas 425 miles apart, and as a result, our residents have been able to know each other and their problems. KORK-TV has made this system available free to the University of Nevada so that it could transmit educational programs between its Reno and Las Vegas campuses. We believe this "Face to Face" communication has been responsible for a new warmth and understanding between Southern and Northern Nevada.

We believe that KORK-TV was the first small market all-color station in the United States; today Las Vegas leads the nation in the percentage of homes with color receivers, due in part, we think, to the high technical and professional level of our color programming and that of our colleagues.

There are other improvements currently underway. Construction has started on our present studio facility that will more than double the space housing our News Department. This additional space will be provided to allow the processing of increased amounts of film, the writing and editing of expanded documentary and public affairs programming.

Is it any wonder then that KORK-TV's license is greedily eyed by "claim jumpers"? The number one station in Nevada. The station which consistently attracts more viewers. The station which has merited and received dozens of citations and awards. Throughout its 16 years of service to the Las Vegas area, the hallmark of CHANNEL 3 and its personnel has been community involvement. We believe that anyone who watches CHANNEL 3 knows this through, for example, the station's news coverage of important local and state matters and its participation in and support of community and charitable projects. We believe that anyone who has actively participated in a school, civic, cultural, charitable, or other local project in Las Vegas during the past 16 years knows that CHANNEL 3 people have also been involved and that CHANNEL 3 is a station that can be counted on.

No, it is no surprise KORK-TV is the intended victim, because, as we have said, it is seldom the failing and unpopular station which "claim jumpers" go after.

What is surprising, however, is that if these 18 individuals are this anxious to own a television station, why did they not take advantage of recent opportunities to buy other Las Vegas area stations when they were available? Apparently, because claim jumpers and claim purchasers are a distinctly different breed.

We have no intention of seeing all of our long efforts wasted. Nor do we plan to relax any of our high standards in both performance and programming while this unpleasant matter is being settled. We will continue the high level of community service, which has characterized our operations since 1955. We will continue to make those technical improvements which will insure all Nevadans the finest in television viewing. This you would expect . . . no less should you accept . . . from KORK-TV.

Very Truly Yours,
KORK-TV

Donald W. Reynolds

Donald W. Reynolds, President

Robert N. Ordonez

Robert N. Ordonez, Vice President
and General Manager