



More Choices, Better Access and Higher Quality

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NEWS RELEASE

BROADCASTING COMMISSION INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR ISLAND-WIDE WIRELESS CABLE

The Broadcasting Commission is on course to facilitate more competition in the Jamaican cable market.

The Commission is issuing a "Call for Applications" to companies that want to provide island-wide subscriber television service using wireless technology.

Approval of the new call for STV licence applications was granted by Information Minister, the Hon. Olivia Grange, following recommendations from the Commission and consultation with the Ministry responsible for Telecommunications as well as the Spectrum Management Authority.

Chairman of the Broadcasting Commission, Dr Hopeton Dunn observed that successful applicants would be expected to move quickly to enhance islandwide competition in the cable sector, thereby providing more choice for STV customers all over Jamaica. "As publicly promised, the Commission is opening

up the cable landscape to multi-level competition that will benefit subscribers ” Dr Dunn said.

Applicants for the islandwide wireless licences must demonstrate that they have the financial, technical and management capacity to operate an islandwide service and to start the roll-out of service within six (6) months of grant of a licence.

Details of the “Call for Applications” have been posted on the Commission’s website: www.broadcastingcommission.org, and are available for collection from the Commission’s offices, together with the application packages.

”As part of the strategy of expanding subscriber choice, the Commission is also seeking to facilitate existing zonal licensees who wish to expand their businesses and take account of emerging opportunities in the sector,” Dr Dunn said, as he commented on other developments affecting wider competition in the sector.

Earlier this week, on the recommendation of the Commission, Information Minister Olivia Grange announced that one local cable company, Telstar, had received approval to operate in eleven (11) additional Corporate Area zones that had become available following prior business acquisitions.

At the same time, the Commission has now approved applications from two rural cable companies to sell their businesses. Wilson’s Electronics in Mandeville and North Eastern Satellite Services in St. Mary have received the go ahead to sell their communication and distribution assets to Columbus Communications Jamaica Limited, operating as *Flow*.

In assessing the applications, the Commission noted that five (5) of the six (6) zones affected by these transactions would continue to have at least one alternative cable provider.

Special interim measures have been put into place in the single zone where there will be no option for cable service in the short term. Under these arrangements, customers in the Port Maria zone are entitled to continue receiving the same service for the same prices for the next six (6) months, despite the change of ownership.

Subscribers in the other five (5) zones, will also see no changes in their subscription prices, packages and service arrangements for the next three (3) months.

In addition the Commission is inviting other cable companies interested in expanding their service areas to apply to serve the zones of Mandeville East, Mandeville West, Mandeville North and Mandeville South, in which Wilson's was licensed. A similar call is being made for the Port Maria and Oracabessa zones in which North Eastern Satellite Services operated.

Updated Criteria for Assessing Applications

In moving forward with the revised competitive strategy, the Commission will be applying additional criteria, developed in consultation with the Information Minister, when assessing all future applications from cable companies to sell their businesses.

The additional evaluation criteria, to be issued to all licensees, will now more directly incorporate 'market share' and 'market power' factors from the Fair Competition Act into future determinations.

Cordel Green

Executive Director

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