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Special Edition

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## SPECIAL EDITION

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### **Editor's Comments**

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In action today, the Federal Communications Commission has denied broadcasters both mandatory cable carriage of their analog- and digital-TV signals during the digital-TV transition as well as the requirement to carry only their primary digital-TV signal – no multicast signals beyond that.

The vote appeared to be on its way to a 5-0 victory for FCC chairman Michael Powell, with Commissioner Kevin Martin dissenting on the multicasting part of the decision. Powell had not yet declared his vote, but the other four said they were voting for it, for various reasons and with various caveats, including the Martin dissent.

The FCC concluded that such carriage was not necessary for the survival of over-the-air TV and was not sufficiently narrowly tailored to justify the mandating of speech.

The FCC, under Michael Powell, has managed to defeat not only multicast must carry but also dual must carry.

If broadcasters wish to survive, they will have to offer compelling content on their virtual channels. Then, and only then, will they be successful in competing in the marketplace. The sad part is that a few will, but many will not.

One can see it now; besides the lower quarter promo inserts we've been inundated with on the networks, we will now have to endure similar distractions flashing such things as "Tonight at 8:00 PM (the fifteenth hundredth rerun of) I Love Lucy on channel 8-3."

John Willkie, an engineer involved in Program System Interface Protocol (PSIP), has suggested that FREE over the air stations can run something like "watch the new channel your cable company doesn't want you to watch." Tacky, but with existing distribution, it will be effective. Or "Ask your cable company why they won't let you watch the new digital channel your neighbors watch for free with rabbit ears."

Editors note: PSIP is the part of digital television that offers a plethora of extras including the ability to get the extra channels along with the main channel that stations may well be offering.

For more,

<http://www.multichannel.com/article/CA502996.html?display=Breaking+News&referral=SUPP>

<http://email.BroadcastingCable.com/cgi-bin2/DM/y/ekre0GeJRg0N8e0CPrS0Ad>

Note: our next regular edition will be out soon.

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