

TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WFGX-TV
Location: Fort Walton Beach, FL
Quarter ending: March 31, 2014

ISSUE/description: 6. THE ECONOMY. The continuing effects of the recent recession; effects of sequestration; unemployment; a high level of dependency on the Navy and Tourism; development of new industry such as the extension of Florida casino gambling; and the effect of multiple hurricanes on our local economy.

How Issue was treated (Program, PSA, etc.):

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	01/16/14	09:02PM/3 minutes	News	*

* Tax dollars and tourism. It's a hot-button issue for Escambia County in recent years. Tourism is booming again, and last year the county pulled in more bed tax dollars than were projected, leaving a 2.8 million dollar surplus to be divvied up this year. Thursday night, county commissioners will vote on the best use for those funds. The county commission is a key player in pushing tourism, and they have almost three million dollars in carry-over tourist tax dollars to use. They propose to keep \$250,000 for the board to use at their discretion, put \$300,000 into reserve, and give almost \$575,000 to Arts, Sculpture and Entertainment, a local group planning to put on a ten-day festival during the tourist shoulder season. Cultural tourists have been proven to stay longer and spend more money per visit than all other types of tourists," says David Bear, A.S.E. President. "If we can draw more of those visitors here, especially with an event they are creating during the down season, then that's something that helps drive more of an economic impact using tourism," says Steve Hayes with Visit Pensacola. The rest of the surplus, more than \$1,700,000, will go to Visit Pensacola to promote local tourism on a national level. If the formula keeps working - spending money to make more money - the county could see a surplus again next year. The board will vote on the proposal at Thursday night's regular meeting, with the public invited to attend.

2. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	02/04/14	09:04PM/3 minutes	News	**
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** Keeping you safe doesn't come cheap and government cost cutting can make it harder to fight crime. But in Pensacola, police are putting your money to good use and crime is going down, not up. Pensacola Police Chief Chip Simmons is always looking for ways to be more efficient without sacrificing services. Street-level type enforcement is paying off, with a 14% reduction in crime last year, and violent crime down 18%. The success comes even as PPD's budget remains relatively flat. "Putting as many officers as we can on the street really makes a difference." Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan knows the struggle to meet the demand for public safety. His department looks for grant opportunities and works to dispel misconceptions like the belief that more traffic tickets mean more deputies. One shining example of how local law enforcement is becoming more cooperative and more efficient is the Regional Gun Crimes Task Force, a team of local, state and federal agencies who get guns off our streets by pooling information and resources. The Pensacola Police Department is a good example of how tax dollars used efficiently can benefit the citizens. But when the crime rate goes down, sometimes the budgets will too. And it can be tough to maintain the level of service. It's certainly a situation to keep an eye on and we will.

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3. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	02/05/14	09:04PM/2 minutes	News	***

*** Figuring out how to best use the millions of dollars from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement ... that was the topic of discussion during a public meeting at the Pensacola Bay Center last night. Eleven projects are proposed for Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties. The total cost is about 50-million dollars. The hottest topic of the night was the proposed Fish Hatchery. It's the most expensive project proposed for Escambia County, costing about 18-million dollars. The plan right now is to build the hatchery on Bruce Beach. Its main function will be to breed and release fish into the water, but opinions on the project are still split. "It would be positive for us locally in recovering local fish like red snapper and grouper." "We're concerned about the damage to local fish reefs. We're very interested in recovering back to where we were before." One of the trustees told us they're hoping to draft a final proposal and get projects underway by the summer.

4. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	02/06/14	09:02PM/2 minutes	News	****
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**** A call center that employs more than 100 people in downtown Pensacola is set to shut down soon. Synergy Solutions provides call center services to several businesses. Not all of the workers will lose their jobs, but the closure is still expected to have a substantial impact. Some employees will be relocated or possibly hired by Synergy's clients - companies in retail, health care and financial services. Kathy Karshna, the assistant director of Workforce Escarosa, which offers a number of free services for the unemployed, says she's cautiously optimistic about the job market in our area. "Fortunately, Pensacola is a hub for call centers so that's the good news," Karshna said, "We have Navy Federal that's going to be hiring literally thousands over the next few years. Restaurants nearby say Synergy's presence, and hungry employees, will be missed. "Anytime you lose business in Pensacola, it impacts the whole community," said Carl Broussard, the owner of Cajun Specialty Meats. Synergy is planning to hold a job fair later this month for employees who are getting laid off.

5. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	02/15/14	09:05AM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** A new report from Governor Rick Scott shows Florida broke some tourism records last year. More than 97 million people came to visit the state, up 3.5% from 2012. It's good news for Florida workers because more tourists mean more jobs. Travel-related jobs were up nearly 3% in 2013 with more than a million people working in the industry. Spring Break is about a month away on Pensacola Beach and people are getting ready for another busy season. Tourism was so successful in Escambia County last year, the county has more bed tax revenue than expected, a surplus of \$2.8 million dollars. Some of that money will be used for advertising to attract even more people to Northwest Florida. While last year was record breaking, there is good reason to expect even more this year. The Blue Angels are slated to return for a summer airshow above Pensacola Beach, and that is expected to bring in thousands of people.

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6. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	02/17/14	09:02PM/2 minutes	News	*****

***** Several road improvement projects in the area are stuck in gridlock, with delays costing our area jobs, growth and tax dollars. Larry Newsom/Escambia County Interim Administrator: "You have environmental documents. Then you have to design it based on what you have to mitigate for. Then you have to acquire right of way. Then you build it. That's your four major phases that you look at funding on a major project." Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa County have a slew of road improvement projects needing to be done, but finding the funding can be hard. Local government is now working more closely with the state to get things moving. The federal government has money to help but that help comes with some strings attached. Projects in planning since 2007 or longer are still on hold, meaning more red tape and environmental studies. Improving our roads is about more than an easier trip across town or making it safer for citizens. Northwest Florida is hoping to capitalize on Airbus arriving in Mobile by luring in supporting business. It's critical that we have this infrastructure. Industries need to see that there's a plan in place, and that there is an effort in place to accommodate that need. We want those jobs, and Infrastructure is the foundation of all jobs.

7. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	02/17/14	09:04AM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** It's been a dream for many years; today, it became a reality. Magic Johnson spoke to our community for free. Channel 3's Christina Leavenworth reported that his message was one about healthcare success and motivation, but for Pensacola leaders, their message to him was "invest here". Johnson says a big reason he came here was because of his relationship with a local organization, People for Peace, but it also took some big sponsorships from city leaders to make it happen. Quint and Rishy Studer donated \$25,000 ... they hope he sees the potential in Pensacola and will invest here like he has done in other areas. Studer would not go into the specifics of what they are pitching to him, but one of the ways Magic has invested in other communities is building educational technology centers in the projects. Community leaders hope to continue a relationship with him so one day he will have a role in our community.

8. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	03/07/14	09:06PM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** The Escambia County Commission has pledged eight-million dollars to help lure ST Aerospace to Pensacola. According to the agreement the county will loan the city 3.2 million dollars to be repaid by 2020, and provide a further 4.8 million in direct contributions. The money will come from local option sales tax funds. It will be used to help build an aircraft maintenance and repair facility at Pensacola International Airport. The goal is to lure ST Aerospace and hundreds of jobs to Pensacola. The company, which maintains and modifies airplanes, already employs 1300 people in Mobile. ST Aerospace is holding a job information session in Pensacola March 20th from ten to two, at the Naval Aviation Museum. Company reps will talk about job opportunities and the training needed to qualify.

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9. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	03/07/14	09:08PM/2 minutes	News	*****

***** A local company has received a major statewide award for creating jobs. Fort Walton Machining was honored with the Governor's "Business Ambassador Award". The company manufactures aerospace components, as well as products for other industries. The owner, Tim McDonald, died in 2010 when his vintage T6 airplane crashed into the Gulf of Mexico. His widow Jan decided to move forward with his plan to diversify the company. In less than four years, McDonald and CEO Greg Britton have increased the workforce from 185 to 220. Fort Walton Machining was one of only three companies to receive the Business Ambassador Award.

10. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	03/24/14	09:00PM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** After flying across the country, the Blue Angels are back home at NAS Pensacola and ready to start practicing. Last year, the air show season was barely underway when sequestration grounded the Navy's premier demonstration team. For the past two months, the Blues have been getting their precision flying up to speed. They've done two shows already in California this year, before they returned home this afternoon. With their return home, the excitement for the Blue Angels Air Show in July is already building up. Reporter Jenise Fernandez reported that businesses and hotels are gearing up for Blue Angels Weekend, and are expecting large crowds. Flying high and in perfect unison, the Blue Angels made their grand entrance into NAS Pensacola Monday afternoon. The Blues return has beach business ready to cash in. Rooms are filling up: Margaritaville, booked, The Holiday Inn, booked, Pensacola Beach RV Park, booked, the list goes on. Fans are ready to see their beloved Blues take center stage on July 12th. Businesses on the beach are expecting this year to be record-breaking.

11. Channel 3 News at 9PM On WFGX	03/26/14	09:01PM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** Today marked the Blue Angels first Pensacola practice session since being grounded by sequestration last year. We interviewed some of the 25,000 spectators who came out to the base to watch the Blues fly. All were excited to see the Blues in the sky over Pensacola, and we gave our audience a brief sneak preview of what they will see at the Pensacola Beach Air Show this summer.