

TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WEAR-TV
Location Pensacola, FL
Quarter ending: March 31, 2007

Issue/description: 1. THE ECONOMY. Unemployment; a high level of dependency on the Navy and Tourism; development of new industry; lack of career opportunities for young people; 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. In Focus	01/07/07	09:00AM/30 minutes	Public Affairs	*

* This week's topic was the moving of Pensacola's Main Street Sewage Plant. Our guests were Dr. Larry Walker of the Emerald Coast Utilities Authority, which operates the plant, and Escambia County Commissioner Mike Whitehead. The plant, built in 1937 only 1 block from Pensacola Bay, was severely damaged in 2004 by Hurricane Ivan, spilling sewage into the surrounding neighborhood. The ECUA board voted to move the plant to a site near the Solutia chemical plant in the central area of the county, but the budget for such a move has ballooned from an original \$165 million to a current \$302 million. FEMA will pay \$149 million for either repairing or moving the plant; the state of Florida will contribute \$24 million; Escambia County will provide \$7 million; and the Community Redevelopment Agency will kick in about \$20 million; leaving about \$102 million to be paid by the ECUA. Whitehead said the county agreed to pay a \$7 million contribution from excess Local Option Sales Tax funds, and expects strong growth in the downtown area following the move. Walker said the ECUA will pass along much of their cost as a rate increase to their residential and business customers.

2. Channel 3 News at 6PM	01/09/07	06:03PM/2 minutes	News	**
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** We reported on state Senator Bill Posey's committee which is reviewing the Senate's reform plan, which takes a hard line on insurance companies including state-run Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. The bill would reduce this coming year's Citizens rate increase by more than 80%. Posey says the entire economy and well-being of the state can collapse if we don't solve the insurance crisis.

3. Channel 3 News at 10PM	01/11/07	10:07PM/2 minutes	News	***
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*** Bill Pearson in our Okaloosa County bureau reported that the Air Force would like to see a stretch of land located between Fort Walton Beach and the Main Gate at Eglin Air Force Base transformed into a large research and education center. In addition to benefiting financially from leasing the land to contractors and universities, base leaders feel it would help strengthen the mission at Eglin. Larry Sassano, President of the Economic Development Council, said the plan has the potential of attracting many high tech companies and universities, linking them with the research technology that's being done at Eglin, thus further strengthening the economy of Northwest Florida for the future. Former Senator Charlie Clary said that it would also provide opportunities for our young people in college that want to grow into this type of work, and provide internships and methods for them to work.

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4. In Focus	01/14/07	09:00AM/30 minutes	Public Affairs	*****

***** This week's topic was the cost of living in Northwest Florida, specifically the Pensacola area. Our guest was Dr. Rick Harper, Director of the HAAS Center for Business Research and Economic Development at the University of West Florida. Currently, the Pensacola MSA is at 93% on the cost-of-living index...below the national average but higher than other Florida communities. Dr. Harper pointed to the sharp run-up in housing prices in all of Florida. In the past 5 years, housing costs in Pensacola have increased 95%, while wages went up only about 30%. In 2004, Hurricane Ivan took 7,000 housing units off the market locally, leading to a major housing shortage. Harper said that wages in our area will rise as employers must pay more to attract workers due to the higher cost-of-living. Lower wage earners who rent will be the most affected by the higher housing costs. There is also a danger of driving businesses away from the area due to the higher cost-of-living.

5. In Focus	01/21/07	09:00AM/30 minutes	Public Affairs	*****
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***** Our guest was newly-elected Escambia County Commissioner Gene Valentino, who won the most closely contested political race in the county's history ... he won by just 6 votes out of more than 8,000 votes cast. He represents District 1, which encompasses the whole of downtown Pensacola. As such, plans for the Maritime Park Project and the relocation of the Main Street Sewage Treatment Plant are critical to the progress in his district. He believes the two projects will greatly improve the attractiveness of the city and the entire county, and should therefore be supported by the entire county and city. The projects' impact on neighboring homes and communities will greatly increase property values, and hence the property taxes in the area. He believes the state needs to modify the property tax system to offset huge increases in values and taxes, noting that the value increases after the recent hurricanes are evidence that temporary surges in values contribute to the problem of affordable housing in the area.

6. Straughn & Company	01/28/07	09:00AM/30 minutes	Public Affairs	*****
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***** This month's topic was a discussion of the high poverty level in Escambia County, and the effort to find the root causes and solutions to the problem by a newly-formed forum, "Bridges Out of Poverty". The forum consists of about 200 local leaders, from businesses, churches and social services organizations. The idea was started by Marcia Nowlin, Escambia School District's Title I Director, who saw firsthand the effects of poverty on children in local schools. Sixty-four percent of school-age children in Escambia County live in poverty...that compares to an overall poverty level of 19%. Blair Anderson of the Gulf Coast African American Chamber of Commerce led the effort to create the forum. These two were guests on our program, along with Jill Hubbs, public television station WSRE-TV's Director of Education Services and Community Outreach; Debbie King, Coordinator of Community Involvement for the Escambia School District; Al Jackson, Community Development Manager for Sun Trust Bank; and Mark Dufva o Catholic Charities.

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7. Channel 3 News at 6PM	02/05/07	06:01PM/3 minutes	News	*****

***** Greg Neumann interviewed Charles Wood, hired by the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce to implement a strategy for a new economy here. For years, the message to industry had been that Pensacola had both labor and business costs that were cheap. That is no longer competitive in the region. Wood says helping local entrepreneurs grow their companies here is the key. He used Avalex as an example: the company started in 2001 with just a handful of employees, and now they have 32, and will be at 40 to 50 in a couple more years. And those high paying jobs will go to local college graduates and retired military members, thus giving the area the ability to retain the talent that is already in the community.

8. Channel 3 News at 10PM	02/28/07	10:03PM/1 minute	News	*****
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***** We reported on efforts by veterans and elected leaders to get a new nursing home for vets built in Escambia County. Ideally, the facility would be located in the Warrington area, near the Navy Hospital. The Federal government would pay 60% of the estimated 30 million dollar construction costs, with the state paying the remainder. Vets say the facility could start with about 70 beds, and generate \$5 million for the local economy, as doctors, nurses, janitorial, kitchen and security staff would need to be hired.

9. In Focus	03/04/07	09:00AM/30 minutes	Public Affairs	*****
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***** Our guest was newly-elected state representative Clay Ford, who won the special election to replace District 3 representative Holly Benson, named by Governor Crist to become the new Director of Business Development for Florida. Ford was a long time member of the Gulf Breeze city council, and head of the Florida Bar Association's special fund for indigent representation. He spoke of the legislature's biggest issue this year – reducing property taxes. He discussed the plan to raise the state Sales Tax to 8.5%, while lowering property taxes ... that way, tourists would pay approximately one-third of the state taxes. He also wants to apply for a waiver from the state to help Gulf Breeze reapply for FEMA funds after hurricanes Ivan and Dennis, because the city missed a deadline that it didn't know about. He also wants to address the problems with the state's distribution of the Communication Services tax; that has created a big budget crunch for Pensacola and other cities.

10. Channel 3 News at 6PM	03/30/06	06:03PM/2 minutes	News	*****
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***** We reported on local commercial fishermen who spoke to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council about their plan to reduce the amount of Red Snapper that can be taken from the Gulf, and their plan to cut the season in half. Destin Mayor Craig Barker said the fishing industry brings about \$200 million to the local economy, and 7000 jobs, and he fears the cuts would have a negative impact on the whole community.