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From: Eric Frick [REDACTED]
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To: Consultations
Subject: Consultations

Please consider my thoughts on the Consultation regarding The Future of Local Television Broadcasting.

Every Cable/Fiber provider should be required to **ASSIST** in producing/providing quality local content for it's subscribers.

Local content must include, News, Weather, Sports, Talk Shows and provide public access to locals creating suitable content.

Cayman 27 should be controlled by a consortium made up of representatives from ICTA, the various Cable Providers and Cayman 27.

Every Provider should pay a per subscriber fee to fund the operation of Cayman 27.

Cayman 27's assets currently owned by Weststar should be gradually, over the years, bought by the other providers until everyone owns an equitable share.

Here's why I believe this is the best way forward.

The Cayman market is too small to sustain 5 TV stations. If each provider were required to provide local content similar to what Cayman 27 provides daily, they would simply go out of business. The cost of doing business is simply too high. Some Providers would actually prefer this to happen. Less competition means more money. That of course, would not be good for Cayman. We need competition in our Cable providers, however we also need local programming as well.

It costs millions of dollars a year to run Cayman 27. Cayman 27 currently employs many people in 5 departments. News, Master Control, Production, Sales and Engineering. A large portion of them are Caymanians. Weststar probably loses up to 1.5 million every year to provide quality local programming. I'm almost certain Weststar will not continue to sustain this loss in the face of 4 competitors who don't have to deal with providing such content. No sane company would.

So...Force them all to deal with it...Together!

There are approximately 15,000 available households in Cayman for the providers to fight over. The 1.5 million dollar loss could be paid for by each provider based on how many subscribers they have. Each provider would pay the same amount per subscriber, which creates an equitable playing field.

The more subscribers you have (or the more successful you are) the more you pay to provide local content.

I'm sure the Providers are open to this deal. If ICTA can get them to agree to fund Cayman 27 collectively, you can save quality local content (probably create even more and better programming in the future) and provide Caymanians with much needed competition in our cable options.

If ICTA does not require all the providers to assist with providing/producing local programming as a consortium, I'm certain Cayman 27 will be shut down entirely and there will be no local programming at all, save for the Government Channel. Why lose 1.5 million a year? It makes no good business sense.

If ICTA forces every provider to produce local content on the par with Cayman 27, Lime is the only one with the pockets to fund such a venture. The others will simply go out of business.

If ICTA forces the providers to provide a watered down version of Cayman 27, then that's what the community will get. Bad TV. Cayman 27 would lose even more advertising dollars to the other companies and be forced to cut down programming to the bare minimum as well. Local programming would be a laughing stock here in the Cayman Islands.

ICTA may also consider helping out with this dilemma as well by cutting its 6% take off the top to 5% or even 4%...all in the name of saving local TV.

There are no good solutions, but I believe the best one is to convince the cable providers to form a consortium funding Cayman 27...then everyone wins, including the Cayman people.