

A SURVEY OF LOCAL NEWS OPERATIONS IN
SELECTED KANSAS SINGLE MARKET AM RADIO STATIONS

by

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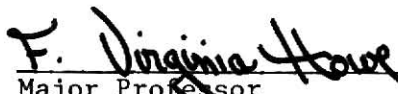
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INTRODUCTION

In 1897, the developmental period of radio, inventors thought of the new wireless invention as a device for point-to-point communication. Broadcasting, which is radio transmission to the general public, had not been developed, but news of special events was transmitted by wireless to newspapers. In 1898, a description of the Kingston Regatta, a sailboat race, was transmitted by wireless to the Dublin Daily Express and the outcome of the race was in print before the sailboats returned to port.

Charles D. Harrold initiated a College of Engineering in San Jose, California, in 1909 and was known to have broadcast news bulletins and music to a faithful following within nearby areas as early as 1910. In 1912, news by wireless became the focus of attention when the Titanic struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank. News of the sinking and lists of survivors were transmitted by wireless to a shore station manned by a young telegrapher, David Sarnoff, operating at the Wanamaker Store in New York City.

As radio broadcasting developed, stations such as KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, made history. KDKA broadcast the 1920 election returns of the Harding-Cox presidential race and followed up with broadcasts of special events. Other stations started to broadcast special events such as political conventions, races, sports, speeches by political figures and religious services. National interest in radio was growing rapidly.

Such journalists as H. V. Kaltenborn, Herschell Hart, and others came to radio via newspaper-owned radio stations. Early newspaper-owned radio stations were not conceived as news stations, but as a promotional device for the newspapers. "Teasers" would be broadcast to get the audience to read the newspaper for the full story. Yet, newspaper ownership of radio gave it a foothold in news broadcasting.

In 1927 the National Broadcasting Company was established, and later the same year, the Columbia Broadcasting System was formed. These networks, composed of affiliated stations, provided entertainment and special events to a growing radio audience. Musical programs, comedians, and drama were the staples of the networks.

As early as 1933 some stations couldn't buy news from the wire services if they were not newspaper-owned because the newspapers were prohibiting news services to radio stations. At that time the NBC and CBS networks started to gather their own news which touched off the radio-press news war. An agreement was reached between the newspapermen and broadcasters which created the Press-Radio Bureau which went into operation in 1934.

The Bureau was to supply broadcasters with bulletins no longer than 30 words in length and just enough to make up two five-minute newscasts a day. The first newscast would be in the morning after the morning newspaper edition was published, and the second newscast would be in the evening after the evening newspaper edition was published. Because of this limitation placed on the Press-Radio Bureau, other competing news services supplied additional news sources.

Newspapermen disliked this competition and attacked them, but these news services survived and the wire services, feeling the effects of this competition, were forced to sell news to radio stations and the networks.

Trouble was brewing in Europe and the networks were set to cover the events leading up to a declaration by the United States to enter World War II. H. V. Kaltenborn, a world traveler and experienced commentator, was in Europe when Hitler declared war on Poland. The networks began to think more about news. The American public wanted news of the war and the NBC and CBS networks provided it. Between 1941 and 1945 network radio news programs increased 300 percent. Radio news was being developed technically, and was quickly becoming an integral part of American society.

After the war, news listening dropped off on a large scale. Networks reduced their newscasts because there was not enough news to broadcast. Radio programming was in a transition stage after the war because of television's rapid development. The networks started to pour profits from radio networks into television programming and talent.

In the late 1940s, the "disc-jockey" came into radio playing music interspersed with short news items, because this was a low cost form of broadcasting which kept many radio stations alive. The wire services provided the necessary news so the announcer could just "rip-and-read." This type of programming permitted radio stations to be more self reliant rather than having the former need for network affiliation.

In the 1960s, the radio broadcasting business was more stable because it had turned to serve the local community and the local

community provided its financial support. Radio had become a companion to many people, a personal form of communication. The one-to-one concept gave radio a new start to provide people with musical entertainment, news of the community and the world, farm news, gardening tips, and women's news.

Kansas Radio Today

Radio in Kansas is an important medium to rural as well as urban dwellers. Kansas is an agricultural state boasting of 82,056 square miles of land with a population of 2,249,071 people. In some areas of Kansas, the local AM radio station is the primary source of news, weather, sports, and entertainment.

Yet, little has been done in investigating what single market AM radio stations in Kansas are doing with local news. These stations, which are for the most part located in rural Kansas, use low power with smaller coverage areas compared to their metropolitan counterparts. Radio stations in metropolitan areas of Kansas are more listened to because of their larger metropolitan area which reaches more people, and where in most instances a good measure of news is made.

But what is the single market AM radio station in Kansas doing to inform the public it serves, and what are the views of station managers towards local news coverage?

Because of the lack of research of Kansas single market AM radio stations, answers to these salient questions are important in understanding news broadcasting in single market AM radio stations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Introduction

This review of literature spans the last thirty-five years with the major emphasis placed within the last twenty years. The research cited was selected for its relevance to local news on small market radio stations.

David Dary, an associate professor of Journalism at Kansas University wrote about a mythical town named Centerville:

The city of Centerville has some 30 thousand residents. Another thousand live in the surrounding rural areas. These people derive their income from two hundred retail businesses, some industry, the payroll of a small college, and considerable agriculture.

Centerville also has two radio stations--both 500 watt daytime operations, broadcasting from six o'clock in the morning to sunset, seven days a week. Both stations are independent; each must produce nearly all of the programs it broadcasts. The stations depend almost entirely on local advertising revenue. They employ announcers or "disc-jockeys" of similar ability and both follow a similar music format which is interspersed with periodic news programs.

Although the two stations would appear similar, one station has more listeners and is making more money and doing a greater public service for the community than the other. The reason is LOCAL NEWS. Station X has a small, but efficient news operation. It gathers and reports local news and directly competes with the daily Centerville newspaper. Station Y makes little effort to cover local news. Its news programs are made up almost entirely with material from a leased teletype news service which is not local in nature and which is all too often read "cold" by the announcers with little interest in news.

Even though Centerville is a mythical community, the story is not. In many American cities and towns, local news has made the difference between success and failure for a local radio station. Far too many stations rely entirely on their wire service teletype for news. Too few stations employ individuals to gather, write, and broadcast LOCAL news.

Often, radio station managers contend that it is too costly. Many feel they adequately fulfill their public service requirements by having their announcers simply 'rip and read' the news wire. Still other managers--although will not admit it--simply do not understand what is necessary to build a successful and profitable radio news operation.

A 'good' local news operation can cost money, but more often than not, there is a lack of knowledge and experience--instead of money--which holds back the station's local news efforts. Unlike most newspapers where the publisher and editors are experienced newsmen, most radio station managers are not. A clear majority of the nation's small and medium-sized radio station owners and managers have climbed the ranks of sales and program positions. Few have climbed to the top as news men.¹

The point of Dary's story is that a strong news operation makes a successful station as indicated by the Early-Bird Workshop sponsored by the National Association of Broadcasters' in 1970.

National Association of Broadcasters'
Early-Bird Workshop of 1970

The idea of strong local news coverage was discussed by a National Association of Broadcasters' early-bird workshop in Chicago, Illinois, in April, 1970. Dick Petrik, news director of KOEL-AM, Oelwein, Iowa said:

If you are manager of a small radio station and you claim you cannot afford to hire a full-time news director, or even two newsmen, then I think you're wrong. You are not only missing a golden opportunity to make some revenue for the station, but more important, you are missing cultivating a very loyal legitimate audience, one which will stick through some less desirable programming until a newscast comes up.²

¹David Dary, Radio News Handbook, (Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: Tab Books, 1970), pp. 5-6.

²"How to Build Up Local News Teams," Broadcasting, 30 April 1970.

At the same workshop, James Caldwell of WAVE-AM, Louisville, Kentucky, stressed the importance of top management supporting the news department, because of the importance of radio news which provides the news most people need and revenue for the whole station.³

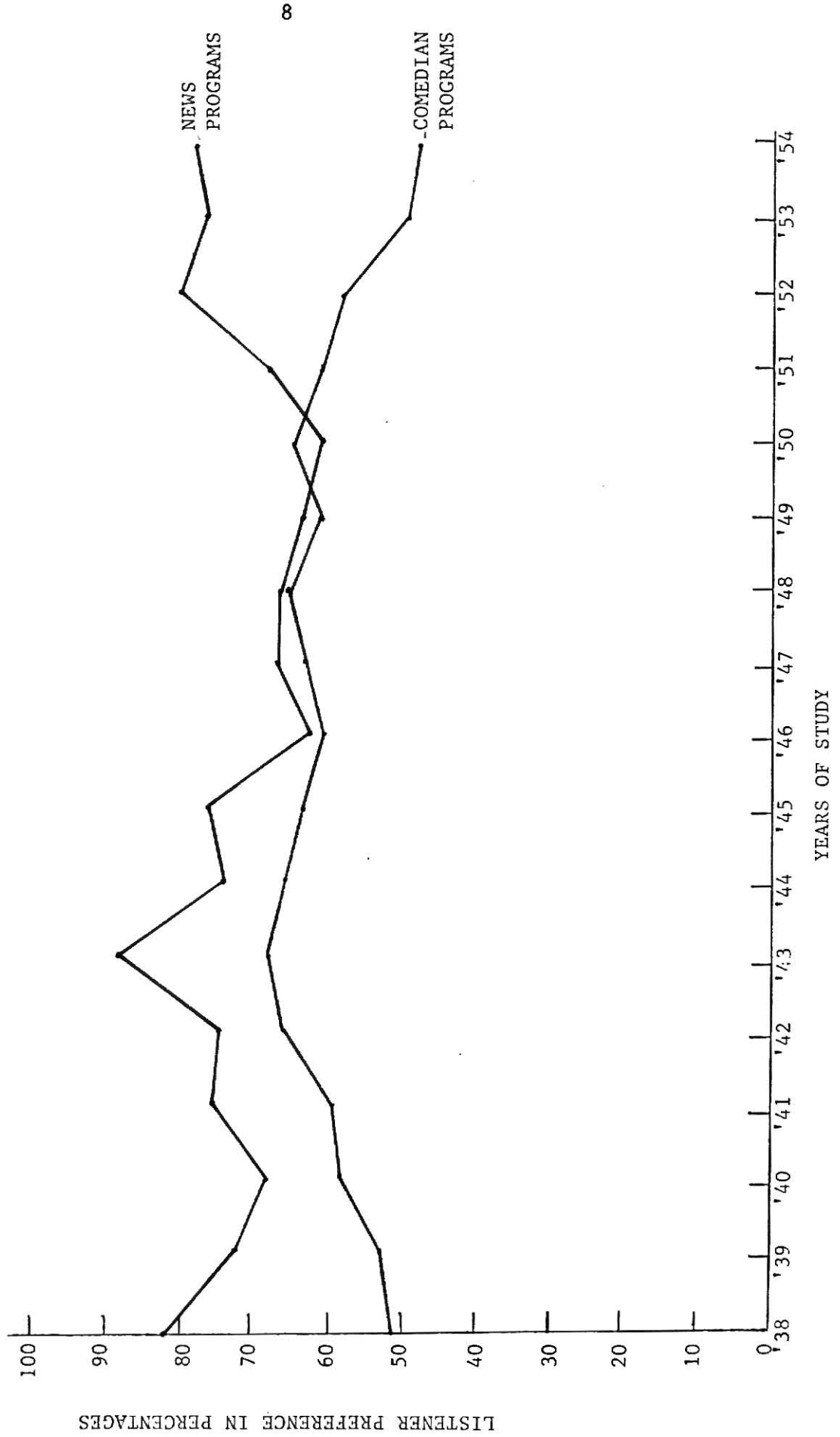
The Whan Audience Studies

Some of the most important audience research in Kansas was done by Forrest L. Whan when he was at the University of Wichita and at Kansas State University. Whan's research spanned from the late 1930s to the early 1950s and dealt with questions concerning radio set ownership, radio station preferences, shares of the audience, composition of the night-time audience, the use of radio in television equipped homes (this questions was added when television was introduced in the late 1940s), types of programs best liked, and economic facts about Kansas families. The Whan audience studies used large interview samples in order to make Kansas county area figures more meaningful and to guarantee the reliability of the studies. The last study in 1954 used a sample of 6,887 Kansas families of which more than 90 percent were reached. According to the 1950 census figures this response meant that one home in every eighty-three homes was reached in the area covered. In all years between 1938 and 1954, except 1950, Kansans preferred news programs to that of any other type of program. Graph 1 plots percentages from Whan's research, showing the relation-

³ Ibid.

GRAPH 1

LISTENER PREFERENCE BETWEEN NEWS PROGRAMS AND COMEDIAN PROGRAMS
PLOTTED FROM DR. WHAN'S KANSAS AUDIENCE STUDIES
1938 to 1954



ship between news and comedy programs.⁴ In all years studied, the stations which served the Kansas population with news were by far the most listened to.

The Schramm and Huffer Study

A listener study of the total population of a small Iowa town, was conducted in 1946 by Wilbur Schramm and Ray Huffer. The researchers tried to interview everyone in the town, about 510 people, which included both children and adults. Eighty-four percent of the town was interviewed, the remaining 6 percent were either ill or did not cooperate. Twenty-five percent of the town's population said they did not listen to radio news and 24 percent said they were habitual listeners to radio news. Sixty-two percent of the population were in favor of more local news than state, national, or international news.⁵

The Haskins Study

A general survey of forty-nine Georgia radio stations in counties with less than fifty-thousand people was conducted in 1951 by Jack

⁴This information taken from Forrest L. Whan's and H. B. Summer's Studies of the Kansas Radio Audience. Studies used were conducted in 1941, 1942 (Summers and Whan), 1943, 1944, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 (Whan). Summers and Whan collaborated in these studies. Summers at Kansas State Agricultural College and Whan at the University of Wichita. Whan later taught at Kansas State Agricultural College, and later added television to the study.

⁵Wilbur Schramm, Ray Huffer, "What Radio News Means to Middleville," Journalism Quarterly 23:2 (June, 1946):174.

Haskins, a graduate student at Emory University, to measure broadcast performance versus certain programming standards and listener preferences. Haskins found that the average small market radio station broadcasted daily a total of two hours and twenty minutes of all types of news. On the average, only thirteen minutes were devoted to local news daily, and almost all stations (97 percent) reported broadcasting local news every day. Thirty-four percent of the Georgia radio stations used a local weekly newspaper as their principal source of local news and 28 percent of the stations used a local daily newspaper as the principal source of local news.⁶ Over half of the forty-nine Georgia radio stations used a newspaper as a source for local news.

The Trader Study

In 1959, Barry C. Trader conducted a study in Denver, Colorado of attitudes towards radio news. He sent a mail questionnaire to one thousand residents selected at random from the city directory. Respondents answered questions in the following areas: 1) What do people think of radio news? 2) Do people listen to radio news? 3) Do people like the form of radio news? and 4) Do people like the type of news that is being presented? The questionnaire data indicated that the Denver listeners preferred local news over all other types of news. Morning was the most popular time for people to listen to radio news and the length of the newscast preferred was fifteen minutes. Ninety-six percent of the

⁶ Jack B. Haskins, "Local Broadcasting Practices in Hometown Radio Stations," Journalism Quarterly 29 (Fall, 1952):434-435.

respondents indicated they listened to radio news.⁷ Trader concluded that:

Improvement may be indicated, and certain changes be suggested, but the importance of radio news as a part of the daily lives of a substantial segment of the Denver population is clearly demonstrated.⁸

The Nestvold Study

A national survey of co-owned newspapers and radio stations conducted in 1964 by Karl Nestvold, an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Oregon, is important to this study because some towns in Kansas have both media owned by the same person. Nestvold conducted a mail survey of 234 radio stations under common ownership with one or more daily newspapers to find the extent of cooperation between co-owned media in the same town. He found that many radio news editors were concerned about the relationship between co-owned radio stations and newspapers.⁹ One news director commented:

Usually the radio station's news suffers when owned by a newspaper. Radio's ability to cover news first always has irked newspaper people. If the paper can, it will hold a story until the paper is out...The newspaper ownership does have its advantages as well as disadvantages. Our station receives material a radio station our size could never afford to cover.¹⁰

The study found the radio stations phoned news stories to the newspaper a little more often than the reverse of a newspaper phoning

⁷Barry C. Trader, "Listening Attitudes Toward Radio News in the Denver Area," Journal of Broadcasting 6 (Winter 1961/Fall 1962):150.

⁸Ibid., p. 152.

⁹Karl J. Nestvold, "Local News Cooperation Between Co-Owned Newspapers and Radio Stations," Journal of Broadcasting 9:2 (Spring 1965):156.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 152.

news stories to the radio station. The study concluded:

In general, the survey indicated there is a greater amount of local news cooperation between sister newspapers and radio stations in small communities and/or on situations where the news staff of the radio station are limited. This would seem to indicate that in such a case, the newspaper does not fear the radio station as a news competitor, and, as a result has no qualms about providing local news for the radio station.¹¹

The Ohlmeir Study

Graduate research conducted by Billy Ohlmeir at Kansas State University in 1964 and 1965 pertaining to editorial practices of 199 selected multi-market radio stations in Kansas, Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming lent some perspective to the subject.¹² All fifty-six commercial AM radio stations in Kansas were included in the survey whether or not they were multi-market or single market stations. Along with a letter of explanation of the study, a self-addressed-stamped post card was sent to these selected stations with three questions: (1) Does your station editorialize? (2) How often, and (3) Would the station participate further and in depth? Of the 150 answering the post card, six refused to participate. The 144 respondents who filled in the post card were sent an additional questionnaire. One questionnaire was sent to stations that did editorialize; and a different one to stations which did not editorialize. The study found that most stations did editorialize, but on an irregular

¹¹ Ibid., p. 156.

¹² Billy Joe Ohlmeir, "Study of the Editorial Practices of a Number of Midwest Commercial AM Radio Stations in the United States," (Masters thesis, Kansas State University, 1965).

basis. Most editorials were independent of regularly scheduled newscasts and were on local issues and personalities. The study noted that in larger markets the station manager or station owner did not exercise as much control over editorial policy as did smaller station managers or station owners. Nine out of ten stations believed editorials helped to improve the image of the radio station and one-fifth of the stations reported a loss of revenue caused by editorials. Ohlmeir thought that Section 315 of the Communication Act of 1934 was not a big factor that influenced the stations decision whether or not to editorialize.

The Ketchersid Study

A thesis written by Robert Ketchersid in 1965 at Ohio State University dealt with local news coverage by radio stations in cities with populations between fifteen thousand and twenty-five thousand in every state except Delaware, Hawaii, and Rhode Island.¹³ Ketchersid found 144 stations that qualified for the study. A questionnaire concerning news staff, news gathering, and news budgets was sent to one-third of the possible stations in each state. (Ketchersid did not reveal his method of how he selected one-third of the possible stations in each state, but he mentioned he did this to keep the study manageable.) The respondents totaled 29 percent (117 stations) of the total 414 stations. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to forty-one stations

¹³Robert Max Kerchersid, "Local News Coverage by Radio Stations in Cities with Population Between 15,000 and 25,000," (Masters thesis, The Ohio State University, 1965).

whose news directors said it would be profitable to increase their news budget. This questionnaire dealt with how the money would be spent.

Twenty-seven of the stations in the Ketchersid study had no full-time newsman and forty-seven stations had only one full-time newsman. Ninety-six of the stations had a news director; thirty news directors had a college education; twenty-six of them in journalism. Four stations used stringers ranging from four stringers to fifteen stringers at any one station. Ninety-five of the respondents indicated sponsors were not hard to obtain for newscasts, but fifty-eight of the ninety-five indicated it would not be profitable to spend more on the local news operation. Expenditures for local news operations ranged from nothing to \$26,520 per year.

Fifty-three percent of the stations had a newscast on the half-hour, and news was scheduled only once an hour on 39 percent of the stations. Sixty-four percent of the respondents indicated early morning was the best time for local news. Sixty percent of the stations said they included local news in every hourly newscasts. Stations obtained local news by reporters (84 percent), publicity releases (79 percent), telephone tips from listeners (74 percent), and news from the local paper (19 percent). Some stations used announcements of community events as the most used local news items. Auto accidents made up the biggest share of local news followed by local political news, police news, and fire news. All stations used telephone recordings and 32 percent used two-way radios, 14 percent had no portable tape recorders, and 34 percent had only one portable tape recorder. Only 29 percent of the ninety-nine respondents who indicated using tape recorders used them on a regular basis.

Forty-one news directors were asked how they would spend more money if the money was available. Of the twenty-four news directors responding, all said they would increase their news staff with men of journalistic abilities and radio talent. Twelve news directors indicated a college degree was an important qualification, seven preferred bachelors degree in journalism, and one preferred a masters degree in journalism. Some news directors wanted experienced men rather than untested college graduates. The amount of money to make these staff additions ranged from \$5,000 to \$30,000 for the first year. This included additional equipment for the news operation.

Ketchersid concluded:

A man who has spent four years in college preparing to be a journalist can hardly afford to work for low wages many small-town stations are paying now. This forces the trained and experienced newsmen to go where the pay is better, usually to larger cities. All too often the small-town station is forced to turn to the boy just out of high school willing to work for a dollar and a quarter an hour.¹⁴

Ketchersid added:

An increase in air time for news might be a good place to start for the small-town station interested in improving its local news coverage. Listener acceptance of added news time should be the cue to begin pumping more money into the news department.¹⁵

The Bohn and Clark Study

A national survey of 303 newspaper editors and radio station managers was conducted in communities with ten thousand people or less in 1968 by Thomas Bohn and Robert Clark, assistant professors of speech

¹⁴Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 36-37.

at the University of Massachusetts.¹⁶ The researchers sampled newspaper editors and radio station managers by questionnaire and supplemented the national survey by additional personal interviews of editors and station managers in twenty-one communities in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. Newspaper editors and radio station managers were asked questions related to themselves and to what degree they viewed themselves as locally oriented. The study focused on the self-concept differences between radio station managers and newspaper editors; and the effects of self-concepts and personalities on the small local radio station.

The study found most radio station managers ranged from 25 to 65 years of age, Republican, mostly Protestant, male and married with children. The study disclosed a dual purpose between local news and selling advertisements and station managers stressed the importance of local news. They stated:

You have to have local news and local features...I couldn't care less about national news...Local news is the basis of our station...We give the people of this community things they wouldn't hear on any other station...Local news is the life-blood of this station.¹⁷

One station manager in the study said that one of the main reasons for carrying local news is that it sells the station's product (air time). Local news, to this station manager, drew an audience which brings in advertisers who buy air time.

¹⁶Thomas W. Bohn, Robert L. Clark, "Small Market Media Managers: A Profile," Journal of Broadcasting 16:2 (Spring 1972):206.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 212.

The Dary Study

David Dary, an associate professor of journalism at Kansas University conducted a survey of Kansas commercial AM radio stations.¹⁸ He administered a four-page questionnaire to twenty-five station managers who attended the Kansas Association of Radio Broadcasters annual convention at Topeka, Kansas, in early May, 1970. Questionnaires were then mailed to station managers who did not attend the KAB convention. Dary did not include educational stations, FM stations and the Kansas City metropolitan area (both Kansas and Missouri) stations in his survey. He stated that the educational stations were not competing directly with the commercial stations; the FM stations were not informational outlets, many just duplicating their sister AM stations, and the Kansas City Metropolitan area stations should be studied separately.

Dary's purpose was to determine the importance of local news and to reveal practices used in the stations news operations. The study also dealt with the attitudes of station managers towards news and hiring practices in radio news. Dary's survey was broken down into two areas: (1) multi-market stations, and (2) single market stations.

Of the thirty-three single market AM radio stations in Kansas, twenty-four responded to Dary's questionnaire. Nineteen of the twenty-four stations reported that they did employ a full-time news director. Eighteen stations reported having one full-time reporter, and not one

¹⁸David Dary, "Kansas Radio News Survey," (Unpublished, School of Journalism, Kansas University, Spring, 1970), p. 1.

of the twenty-four stations reported having more than one full-time news reporter. Seven stations reported having anywhere from one to four part-time news reporters. Eighteen stations reported not employing news stringers. The largest number of stringers at the remaining six stations was twelve; all were paid by the story. One station indicated using the same stringers as the local newspaper used. Four stations reported that they wanted to add a full-time news reporter, but fifteen stations said they did not anticipate adding personnel to their news operations.

Two stations subscribed to United Press International wire service, and twenty-one subscribed to the Associated Press. One station (KNBI, Norton) reported no wire service. Four stations said they edited 100 percent of the wire copy and five admitted they only edited 5 percent of the wire copy. One station reported rewriting 40 percent of its wire copy; one station reported 30 percent; nine stations reported 10 percent; six stations reported 5 percent, and seven stations reported not rewriting any wire copy. Three stations subscribed to an audio news service and four stations out of the twenty-four carried a network; two stations were affiliated with NBC, one station with ABC, and a fourth station with Mutual.

All twenty-four stations reported covering local news on a daily basis. Twenty stations reported their news gathering methods were similar to the large metropolitan stations using regular news rounds and telephone beats. All stations used recordings in news programs and eleven stations reported using two-way mobile radio for news gathering and reporting from the scene. Three stations had news story exchange agreements with a newspaper.

Sixteen stations broadcast one or more news programs per day containing only local news and the remaining eight stations did not include local news in their programming. One station reported that 80 percent of its news programming was local news originating from the station's coverage area.

Dary asked what educational qualifications were needed to work in radio news. Station managers replied:

...Enthusiasm...brains and common sense...two years experience plus news judgement...experience-ability to write and read... education and writing...good English and knowledge...journalism degree...previous experience...the same as any other 'air' person.¹⁹

The Schroeder Study

A thesis written in 1972 by Raymond Schroeder at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was concerned with the preparation of editorials by radio and television stations and the content of these editorials.²⁰ Schroeder sent a post card questionnaire, composed of five questions, to all 235 Illinois AM and FM radio and television station managers. The respondents were then divided into three categories: AM stations, FM stations, and TV stations.

Of 122 AM stations in Illinois, ninety-six stations responded to the survey representing a 78.7 percent return. Twenty-eight percent replied they never editorialized, 20 percent editorialized as the situation arose, and another 20 percent editorialized one to three

¹⁹Ibid., p. 7.

²⁰Raymond Earnest Schroeder, "Editorializing By Commercial Broadcasting Stations in Illinois," (Masters thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1972).

times a week. Sixty-two percent of the respondents said the general managers delivered the editorial statements; 46 percent said the general manager determined the topic of the editorials; and 45 percent of the general managers wrote the editorials. Thirty-eight percent of the editorials were specified to be on local, national and other topics. The role of the news directors was not included in the survey.

Schroder concluded:

It is also encouraging that such a significant percentage of the stations in Illinois comment on local issues. Editorials can be most effective only when they deal with issues which are relevant to the audience. Far too many stations have been known to air editorials on issues which have little relevance to their audience, and therefore, have little chance of offending any of the audience. Unfortunately, those same editorials have even less of a chance of helping the public. The assortment of the topics of editorial comments returned by Illinois broadcasters surveyed in this study reflect what appears to be a positive²¹ attempt to deal with the issues of real local importance.

The Buckelew Study

A study conducted by James Buckelew, a professor of journalism at San Diego State University, discovered that radio news editors were not entirely happy with the wire services and quite a few radio news editors depended on their reporters.²² The study revealed how radio news editors of various market sizes viewed their role as news "gatekeepers." Buckelew used thirty-three radio news editors who worked for twenty-nine radio stations located in markets composed of two large markets, two medium markets, and seven small markets.

²¹ Ibid., 48-49.

²² James K. Buckelew, "The Radio News Gatekeeper and His Sources," Journalism Quarterly 51 (Winter 1974):606.

Buckelew admitted to arbitrarily defining these market sizes, but said he paid attention to figures from industry publications on market sizes and ranks. He visited each station to determine the use of news materials from various news sources by the radio editors. The study reported that small markets used more news from field reporters than the medium and large market radio stations, and small market stations depended on telephone originated stories; newspaper originated stories, and they depended less on the wire services than did the large and medium markets. Buckelew concluded there were three types of news operations; the rip-and-read, rewritten copies of the wire service enhanced by a local angle, and news services as a background information source.

In the next chapter, the study will proceed to probe the single market, commercial AM radio stations in Kansas.

PROBLEM

The research problem is concerned with the status of local news operations in thirty-three selected single market commercial AM radio stations located in Kansas.

The investigator proposes to study and describe local news operations of Kansas community AM radio stations in 1976, and to report how station managers rate the performance of their stations news operation. The study will include station personnel and news staff; reporting and editing practices; news, public affairs, and editorial programming; physical equipment used by the station; and sales in relation to newscasts.

The study is limited to single market commercial AM radio stations in Kansas communities with populations below fifty thousand people. This focus on the small market AM radio stations is intended to gather data in an area neglected in research. An early broadcast researcher, Forest L. Whan, Ph.D., former professor at Wichita State University and Kansas State University; and a Kansas University associate professor, David Dary, have done significant investigation concerning Kansas radio, but neither one has concentrated specifically on the smaller stations. Dr. Whan, whose research was conducted from 1938 to 1954, dealt with audience preferences of stations and programs. Dr. Whan's research design used a uniform method, employing the personal interview and diary techniques. Whan's 1954 study used 739 diaries kept by Kansas families and 6,772 Kansans were interviewed personally.

David Dary researched single market and multi-market Kansas radio stations in 1970 using mail questionnaires and reporting the findings in an unpublished paper. Dary covered the areas of local news reporting, editing practices, equipment and career opportunities. Dary's research did not go as far as this proposed study to include the programming of news, public affairs and editorials, sales in relationship to newscasts, and specifically researching the smaller stations in Kansas based on their transmitting power.

METHODOLOGY

The study has three objectives: (1) to describe local news operations in thirty-three single market AM radio stations; (2) to summarize the problems cited by station managers regarding local news operations; and (3) to learn how station managers rate their local news operation.

The Universe

The criteria for selecting the universe of commercial AM radio stations are: (1) a station must be the only commercial AM radio station in a Kansas community, and (2) the community to which the station is licensed must have a population below fifty-thousand people. There are thirty-three commercial AM radio stations in Kansas which meet these two requirements. Table 1 lists the communities, their populations, their stations' call letters, operating frequency, daytime transmitting power and the nighttime transmitting power for those stations in the survey which remain on the air after sunset. Map 1 illustrates the location and population of the thirty-three communities in the study.

The Instrument

The basic tool of the study is a seven-page telephone questionnaire, with twenty-five questions and follow-up questions, designed to obtain the necessary information from the station managers. (See Appendix A

TABLE 1

THE THIRTY-THREE SELECTED COMMUNITIES, THEIR POPULATION, THEIR STATIONS' CALL LETTERS, DAYTIME TRANSMITTING POWER AND NIGHTTIME TRANSMITTING POWER FOR STATIONS WHICH REMAIN ON THE "AIR" AFTER SUNSET, AND THEIR OPERATING FREQUENCY

City	City Population*	Station Call**	Transmitting Power in Watts**		Frequency in Kilohertz**
			Day	Night	
1. Abilene	6,661	KABI	250		1,560
2. Arkansas City	13,700	KSOK	1,000	100	1,280
3. Atchison	12,565	KARE	1,000	1,000	1,470
4. Chanute	10,341	KKOY	1,000		1,460
5. Coffeyville	15,116	KGGF	10,000	5,000	690
6. Colby	4,658	KXXX	5,000		790
7. Concordia	7,221	KNCK	500		1,390
8. El Dorado	12,308	KOYY	500		1,360
9. Emporia	23,327	KVOE	1,000	250	1,400
10. Fort Scott	8,967	KMDO	500		1,600
11. Goodland	5,510	KLOE	1,000		730
12. Great Bend	16,133	KVGB	5,000	5,000	1,590
13. Hays	15,396	KAYS	1,000	250	1,400
14. Independence	10,347	KIND	250		1,010
15. Iola	6,493	KIKS	500		1,370
16. Junction City	19,018	KJCK	1,000		1,420
17. Larned	4,567	KANS	1,000		1,510

TABLE 1--Continued

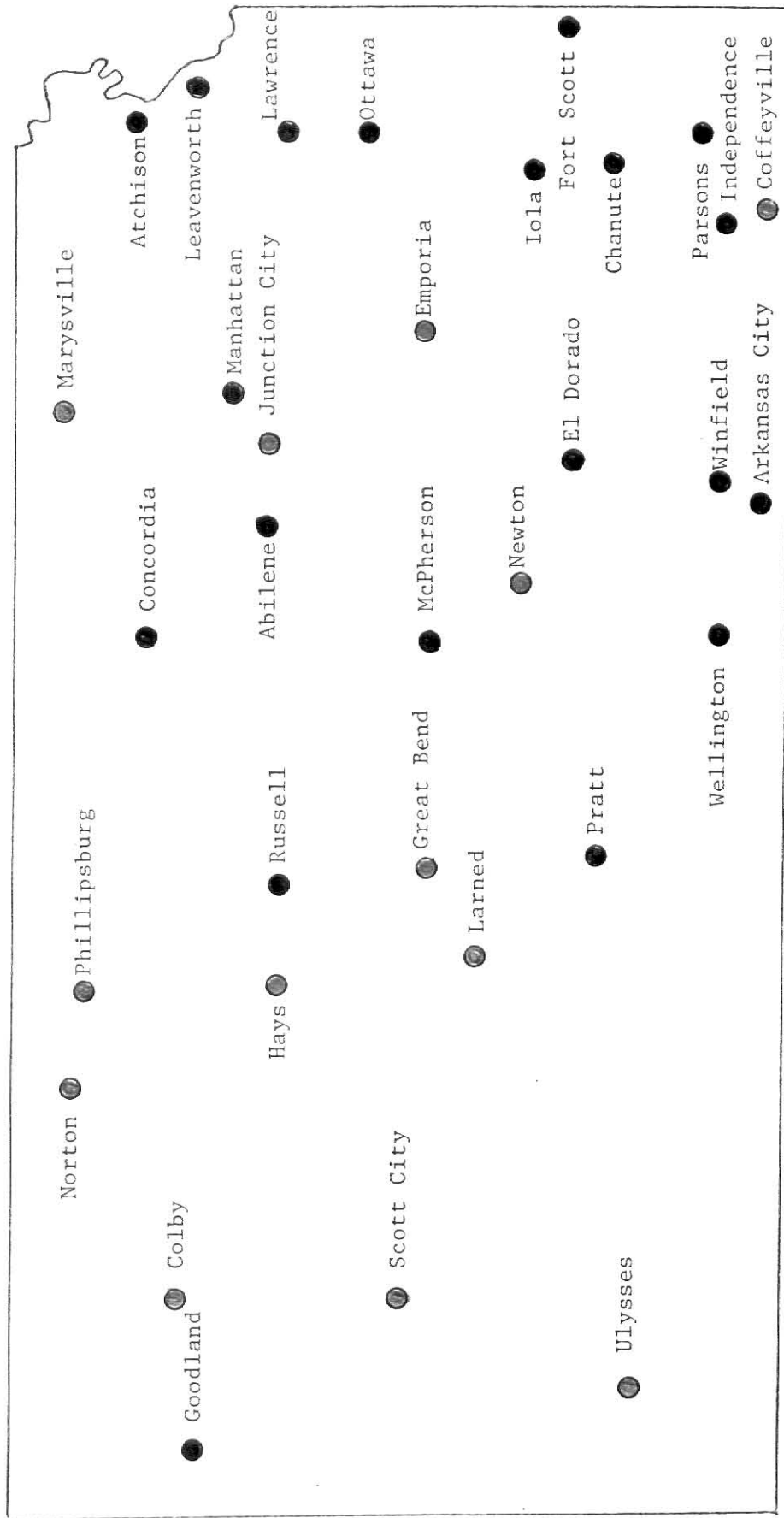
City	City Population*	Station Call**	Transmitting Power in Watts**		Frequency in Kilohertz**
			Day	Night	
18. Lawrence	45,698	KLWN	500		1,320
19. Leavenworth	25,147	KCLO	5,000		1,410
20. Manhattan	27,575	KMAN	500		1,350
21. Marysville	3,588	KNDY	250		1,570
22. McPherson	10,851	KNEX	250		1,540
23. Newton	15,439	KJRG	500		950
24. Norton	3,627	KNDI	1,000		1,530
25. Ottawa	11,036	KOFO	250		1,220
26. Parsons	13,015	KLKC	250		1,540
27. Phillipsburg	3,241	KKAN	1,000		1,490
28. Pratt	6,736	KWNS	5,000	500	1,290
29. Russell	5,371	KRSL	250		990
30. Scott City	4,001	KFLA	500		1,310
31. Ulysses	3,779	KULY	1,000	500	1,420
32. Wellington	8,072	KLEY	250		1,130
33. Winfield	11,405	KNIC	250		1,550

*Kansas Official Highway Map (State Highway Commission, Topeka, Kansas, 1971).

**Broadcasting Yearbook, 1975, (Broadcasting Publications, Inc., 1975) p. C71-C74.

MAP 1

LOCATION AND POPULATION OF THE THIRTY-THREE
SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN THE SURVEY



0-4,999
5,000-14,999
15,000-24,999
25,000-49,999

KEY

for a copy of the telephone questionnaire.) The telephone questionnaire is designed to cover five major areas related to a station's news operation: (1) station personnel and new staff, (2) physical equipment used by the news staff, (3) reporting and editing practices, (4) news, public affairs and editorial programming, and (5) commercial time sold within the newscasts.

A pre-test of the questionnaire will be made by telephone interviews of five station managers in three multi-market communities in Kansas not included in the study. They are WIBW and WREN (Topeka), KFH and KFDI (Wichita), and KSAL (Salina). These same managers will be asked in a follow-up personal interview what suggestions they have for additions, deletions, and revisions which they propose to improve and refine the telephone questionnaire. The appropriate revisions will be made.

Gathering the Data

The data will be gathered by telephone interviews with station managers with the selected commercial AM radio stations. A letter will be sent to each of the thirty-three station managers explaining the study and inviting them to participate. The managers will be given an opportunity to indicate what day; Monday through Saturday, and what time would be most convenient for the telephone interviews; morning, afternoon, or evening. The managers will also be asked if they would like a summary of the study after it is completed. A self-addressed stamped postcard will be included with the explanatory letter for their reply. Those station managers who do not reply within one

week to ten days will be telephoned to request their decision and response. Each station manager who agrees to participate will be telephoned at the time he requests. The interviews, which should take no longer than thirty minutes, will be conducted by the investigator.

Analysis of the Data

The data will be tabulated to summarize station personnel and news staff, station equipment, reporting methods, editing methods, editorial practices, news programming, public affairs programming, editorial programming, and sales of newscasts by the stations. The tables will show the results for each station. The stations will be listed in transmitting power groups: (1) low power stations using 250 and 500 watts, and (2) high power stations using 1,000, 5,000 and 10,000 watts. Attention will be given to the eight high-power stations that remain on the air after sunset.

THE FINDINGS

Results of the Pre-test

A pre-test of the telephone questionnaire was conducted using the five multi-market AM commercial radio stations in three Kansas communities. A letter was mailed on June 4, 1976, inviting the five station managers to participate in the pre-test. (See Appendix B for a copy of the letter and postcard.) Of the five station managers, three station managers responded by postcard; the remaining two were contacted by telephone seven days later and asked if they would participate. The two station managers agreed to participate in the pre-test and the telephone appointments were made. Each of the five station managers thought the telephone questionnaire was adequate and none of the station managers had suggestions to refine and improve the telephone questionnaire.

The Interviews

Thirty-three letters inviting the universe of thirty-three station managers to participate, were prepared and mailed on June 30, 1976. A self-addressed stamped postcard was enclosed with each letter. (See Appendix C for a copy of the letter and postcard.)

On July third, nine postcards were returned, and before the ten-day waiting period was over, sixteen postcards had been received. The remaining seventeen station managers were telephoned and asked to par-

ticipate in the study. For those station managers who consented to participate, a telephone appointment was made.

A total of thirty-one station managers from a universe of thirty-three station managers agreed to be interviewed, and these thirty-one telephone interviews were completed. This was a 93.9 percent completion result. Table 2 lists the stations that participated in the study.

Two station managers decided not to participate. One said, "I'm too busy. It's vacation time," and the other said, "I'm ashamed of our news operation. I don't want it publicized."

The information obtained by the telephone questionnaire was tabulated. Following the plan for summarizing the data, the thirty-one stations were divided into two categories: (1) sixteen low power stations of 250 and 500 watts of transmitting power, and (2) fifteen high power stations of 1,000, 5,000 and 10,000 watts of transmitting power. The eight stations that remain on the air after sunset are included as a subgroup of the high power stations. Table 2 lists the stations and cities that participated in the study, their daytime and nighttime transmitting power, frequency of operation, and city population.

TABLE 2

THE THIRTY-ONE RADIO STATIONS SURVEYED, THEIR COMMUNITIES AND POPULATIONS,
DAYTIME AND NIGHTTIME TRANSMITTING POWER FOR STATIONS REMAINING
ON THE "AIR" AFTER SUNSET, AND THEIR OPERATING FREQUENCY

Station Call	City	City Population	Transmitting Power in Watts		Frequency in Kiloherztz
			Day	Night	
1. KABI	Abilene	6,661	250		1,560
2. KSOK	Arkansas City	13,700	1,000	100	1,280
3. KARE	Atchison	12,565	1,000	1,000	1,470
4. KKOY	Chanute	10,341	1,000		1,460
5. KGGF	Coffeyville	15,116	10,000	5,000	690
6. KXXX	Colby	4,658	5,000		790
7. KNCK	Concordia	7,221	500		1,390
8. KOYY	El Dorado	12,308	500		1,360
9. KVOE	Emporia	23,327	1,000	250	1,400
10. KMDO	Fort Scott	8,967	500		1,600
11. KLOE	Goodland	5,510	1,000		730
12. KVGB	Great Bend	16,133	5,000	5,000	1,590
13. KAYS	Hays	15,396	1,000	250	1,400
14. KIKS	Iola	6,493	500		1,370
15. KJCK	Junction City	19,018	1,000		1,420
16. KLIN	Lawrence	45,698	500		1,320
17. KCLO	Leavenworth	25,147	5,000		1,410
18. KMAN	Manhattan	27,575	500		1,350
19. KNDY	Marysville	3,588	250		1,570
20. KNEX	McPherson	10,851	250		1,540

TABLE 2--Continued

Station Call	City	City Population	Transmitting Power in Watts		Frequency in Kiloherzt
			Day	Night	
21. KJRG	Newton	15,439	500		950
22. KNBI	Norton	3,627	1,000		1,530
23. KOFO	Ottawa	11,036	250		1,220
24. KLKC	Parsons	13,015	250		1,540
25. KKAN	Phillipsburg	3,241	1,000		1,490
26. KWNS	Pratt	6,736	5,000	500	1,290
27. KRSL	Russell	5,371	250		990
28. KFLA	Scott City	4,001	500		1,310
29. KULY	Ulysses	3,779	1,000	500	1,420
30. KLEY	Wellington	8,072	250		1,130
31. KNIC	Winfield	11,405	250		1,550

Personnel and News Staff

Of the sixteen low power stations; twelve stations employed 4 to 8 full-time persons; and four stations employed 10 to 15 full-time persons. Of the fifteen high power stations; six stations employed 5 to 9 full-time persons; eight stations employed 10 to 18 full-time persons, and one station employed twenty-seven full-time persons.

One low power station reported employing twelve part-time persons, three low power stations reported employing 3, 5, and 7 part time persons respectively; one station reported employing four part-time persons; seven stations reported employing two part-time persons; and two low power stations reported having no part-time employees. All but one of the fifteen high power stations employed some part time persons; one station employed eight, three stations employed four; two stations employed three; six stations employed two, and two stations employed one part-time employee each.

A majority, eleven, of the low power stations employed a full-time news director, and four stations reported employing a part-time news director. One low power station reported having neither a full-time or part-time news director, the general manager took care of the news operation. All but one of the fifteen high power stations surveyed employed a full-time news director. The one high power station that did not employ a full or part-time news director was at Colby, in Northwestern Kansas, where the program director took care of the news operation.

At two low power stations, the news directors, who are part owners as well, have been employed for twenty-two years at their stations. News directors at ten other low power stations have been employed 1 to 10 years, and news directors at three more low power stations have been employed for less than a year. At the high power stations one news director has been employed for twenty-three years; eleven news directors have been employed between 1 to 10 years; and two news directors have been employed for less than a year.

At most high power and low power stations the news director had some duties other than news. Table 3 shows the percentage of time news directors spend in duties other than news duties. The one percentage listed in the "other" column refers to sports programming.

One low power station reported employing two full-time salaried news reporters other than their news director and the remaining low power stations had no full-time salaried news reporters. One high power station reported employing a full-time salaried news reporter other than the news director. There were six low power stations that reported employing part-time salaried news reporters; one of which employed three; four employed two; and one employed one. There were five high power stations that reported employing part-time salaried news reporters; three stations employed one; one station employed two; and one station employed three part-time news reporters.

Station managers at four low power stations indicated they did have a minimum education requirement; three station managers indicated they wanted a college graduate and the fourth station manager stated that a high school degree was sufficient. Station managers at

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT BY NEWS DIRECTORS IN DUTIES
OTHER THAN NEWS DUTIES, BY STATION

STATIONS	Sales	Programming	Public Affairs	Engineering	Production	Board Shift	Other
Low Power							
KABI			5%		5%	25%	
KNCK	50%		5%				
KOYY					10%	40%	
KMDO							
KIKS							
KLWN			5%				
KMAN			5%				
KNDY			5%				
KNEX		16%			16%	16%	
KJRG		5%			50%		
KOFO		10%	5%		20%	20%	
KLKC	10%	5%	25%	25%			
KRSL			5%		5%	60%	
KFLA				50%			
KLEY					2%	1%	
KNIC		50%					
High Power Day/Night							
KSOK			10%		5%		
KARE			5%				
KGGF			25%				
KVOE			10%		2%		
KVGB		10%	5%		5%		
KAYS			10%				
KWNS			5%			50%	
KULY			5%				
Day Only							
KKOY			5%		5%	5%	5%
KXXX							
KLOE			5%				
KJCK			10%		10%		
KCLO				20%		40%	
KNBI			15%			20%	
KKAN		20%	5%		10%		

six high power stations indicated they had a minimum education requirement; one station manager and that one year of college was adequate for his news staff; three station managers indicated they wanted a college graduate; one manager indicated that a high school degree was sufficient; and one station manager said that all he wanted was experience.

Three of the four low power stations with a minimum education requirement indicated they had college graduates on their news staffs; two stations each had one college graduate both of whom majored in journalism, and one station manager indicated he had four college graduates on his news staff who all majored in radio, television, and film. Five of the six high power stations with a minimum education requirement indicated they had college graduates employed on their news staffs; four station managers said they each employed one person with a degree in journalism and one manager said he had a news director with a masters degree in journalism.

Of the sixteen low power stations, one station manager reported to have a stringer. The stringer was paid \$1.50 for every five minute report. Three high power station managers reported employing stringers; one station employed three stringers, paying them one dollar for every story broadcast. One station manager employed eight stringers and when asked how their pay was determined, the station manager replied that the stringers reported stories just to be on the radio; and another station paid twelve stringers \$5.00 for a major story or \$1.00 for a minor story.

The eight nighttime stations employed 8 to 18 full-time persons. One station employed eight; two stations employed nine; one station employed ten; three stations employed twelve; and one station employed eighteen full-time persons. Seven stations employed part-time help; two stations employed one person; two stations employed two persons; one station employed three persons; and two stations employed four part-time persons.

All eight stations employed a full-time news director. Only one news director had been on the job for six months while the other news directors had been on the job for 1, 2, 2 1/2, 3, or 6 years.

One news director spent 5 percent of his time in programming, while two news directors spent 5 percent of their time doing production work. All news directors spent some time doing public affairs; one news director spent 25 percent of his time; four news directors spent 10 percent of their time; and three news directors spent 5 percent of their time doing public affairs programs.

Only one of the stations that remained on the air after sunset employed a full-time salaried news reporter. Three stations each employed 1, 2, and 3 part-time salaried news reporters.

There were two stations, of the eight nighttime stations, that employed eight and twelve stringers respectively. One station did not pay its stringers while the other station did at the rate of \$5.00 for a major story, or \$1.00 for a minor story.

Station Equipment

Station managers were asked various questions about equipment which their stations have and use for their news operation; such as wire

service(s), networks, various types of tape recorders, two-way radios, production boards, microphones and turntables.

The sixteen low power stations subscribed to a wire service; the majority of the low power stations, eleven, subscribed to the Associated Press wire service; five subscribed to United Press International wire service; ten subscribed to the weather wire from the National Weather Service; and one station subscribed to a farm wire call Commodity Wire Service. All fifteen of the high power stations subscribed to a wire service; ten high power stations subscribed to the Associated Press and six high power stations subscribed to United Press International. One high power station reported subscribing to both wire services. Thirteen high power stations subscribed to the weather wire from the National Weather Service, and two high power stations subscribed to the Commodity Wire Service, a farm wire.

Only two low power stations were affiliated with a network; the two stations affiliated with the same network, the Associated Press Radio Network. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) was carried by the most high power stations; two stations carried ABC Information Radio Network; one station carried the ABC Contemporary Network; and one station carried the ABC Entertainment Network. Two high power stations carried the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) Radio Network, one high power station carried the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) Radio Network; one high power station carried the United Press International Audio Service; and another high power station carried the Associated Press Radio Network.

Table 4 shows the stations' frequency of use of news gathering equipment. Most stations make available to their news staff the necessary equipment which is needed to gather news.

All eight nighttime stations subscribed to a wire service; six subscribed to the Associated Press and three stations subscribed to United Press International. One station subscribed to both wire services. All eight stations subscribed to the weather wire from the National Weather Service, and one station subscribed to a farm wire called Commodity Wire Service.

One station affiliated with the National Broadcasting Company Radio Network; while three other nighttime stations affiliated with the ABC Contemporary Radio Network, ABC Information Radio Network, or ABC Entertainment Radio Network.

As for equipment available to the news staffs of these eight nighttime stations, seven stations reported having and always using police and fire department radio monitors. Reel-to-reel tape recorders were available to seven stations' news staffs; five news staffs use them all of the time; while two stations' news staffs use them some of the time. All eight stations reported using cassette tape recorders; six stations' news staffs always use them; while two stations' news staffs use them some of the time. Two-way radios were always used by three nighttime stations' news staffs; and two stations' news staffs sometimes used two-way radios. All stations made microphones available to their news staffs and the microphones were always used. Only three stations indicated having turntables available, but they were rarely used by their news staffs.

TABLE 4
*
FREQUENCY OF USE OF SELECTED EQUIPMENT, BY STATION

STATIONS	Police/Fire Radio Monitors	Reel-to-Reel Tape Recorders	Cartridge Tape Recorders	Cassette Tape Recorders	Two-way Radio	Production Board	Microphones	Turntables
Low Power								
KABI	A	A	A	A		S	A	R
KNCK	A	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
KOYY	A	A	A	A		A	A	S
KMDO		S	S	A	S	A	A	R
KIKS		A	A	A		S	A	N
KLWN	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
KMAN	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	S
KNDY	A	A	A	A		A	A	N
KNEX	A	A	S	S		S	A	R
KJRG	A	A	A	A		S	A	R
KOFO	A	A	A	A		A	A	R
KLKC		S	S	A		S	A	R
KRSL		A	A	A		A	A	
KFLA		A	A	A		S	A	R
KLEY	A	A	A	A	S	A	A	R
KNIC	A	A	A	A		A	A	N
High Power Day/Night								
KSOK	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
KARE	A	A	A	A		S	A	
KGGF	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
KVOE	A	A	A	A	R	S	A	R
KVGB	A	R	A	A	A	A	A	
KAYS	A	A	S	A	S	A	A	
KWNS			A	A		S	A	R
KULY	A	S	S	S		A	A	R
Day Only								
KKOY	A	A	A	A	S	S	A	N
KXXX	A	A	A	A		S	A	
KLOE	A	A	A	A		S	A	N
KJCK	A	A	A	A	S	A	A	R
KCLO	A	A	A			S	A	N
KNBI		A	S	A		S	A	R
KKAN	A	A	S	A		A	A	

*A=Always used, S=Sometimes used, R=Rarely used, N=Never used

Reporting Methods

Several questions dealt with the reporting methods used by the thirty-one stations. The questions pertaining to this subject dealt with the changing of wire copy, the covering of agencies and organizations common to most communities, and news gathering methods.

The wire copy at the majority of the sixteen low power stations was not changed; neither edited nor rewritten in any way. Only four low power stations indicated they did change their wire copy. These four stations indicated they rewrote some of their wire copy for various reasons such as "to obtain a local angle," "brevity," or, "to make more sense of the story." A little less than half of the fifteen high power stations changed their wire copy before being broadcast. The wire copy was reportedly changed by seven high power stations for various reasons; three high power stations edited the wire copy for "mistakes," "brevity," or "for a local angle;" while four high power stations indicated they rewrote their wire copy for the "local angle," "variety," "brevity," or "mistakes in the copy."

Table 5 shows how often most of the stations surveyed covered local agencies and organizations. Most low power stations did cover all the selected agencies and organizations to a degree, as did most high power stations. One high power station at Colby in Northwestern Kansas did not cover any of the local agencies and organizations because the manager thought of his station as regional in character serving some one-hundred communities. The station manager said he did not feel he could do an adequate job covering all these communities, and therefore,

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY* OF NEWS COVERAGE OF SELECTED COMMUNITY
AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS, BY STATION

STATIONS	City Government	County Government	School Board	Police Department	Sheriff Department	Fire Department	County Courts	City Courts	Hospitals	Mortuaries
Low Power										
KABI	W1	W1	M2	D2	D2	D2	W1	W1	D1	D1
KNCK	D2	D2	M1	D2	D2	D2			D2	D2
KOYY	W1	M2	M2	D1	D1	D1			D1	
KNDO	D1	D1	M1	D2	D2	D2	D1	D1	D1	D1
KIKS	M2	M2	M1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D2	D2
KLWN	D3	D3	W1	D2	D2	D2	D1	D1	D1	
KMAN	D1	D1	M2	D2		D2	D1	W1	D1	D1
KNDY	M2	W1	M2	D2	D2		D1	W1	D1	
KNEX	W1	M1	M1	D3	D3	D3			D1	D1
KJRG	W1	M2	M1	D2			W1	W1	D1	
KOFO	D1	W3	M1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1
KLKC	D1		M1	D2	D1	D1	W3	W3	D1	D1
KRSL	M2	M1	M1	D2	D1				D1	
KFLA	M1	M1	M1	W1	W1				D1	D1
KLEY	D1	D1	D1	D3	D3	D3	D1	D1	D3	
KNIC	M1		M1	D3	D3	D3	M1	M1	D1	D1
High Power Day/Night										
KSOK	D1	W3	W1	D3	D3	D3	W2	W2	D1	
KARE	M2	W2	M2	D1	D3		W2	W2	D1	D1
KGGF	D1	D1	W2	D6	D3	D6	W1	W1	D1	
KVOE	D2	D2	W2	D2	D2	D2	D1	W1	D2	D1
KVGB	D2	D1	W1	D2	D2		D1	D1	D1	
KAYS	D2	D1	M2	D2	D2	D2	D1	D1	D1	
KWNS	W3	W1	W1	D4	D4	D4			D1	D1
KULY	W1	M2	M2	D1	D1		W1	W1	D1	
Day Only										
KKOY	W3	W3	W1	D2	D2	D2	D1	D1	D1	
KXXX										
KLOE	D1	D1	M2	D1	D1	D1			D1	
KJCK	D1	D1	M1	D3	D3	D3	D1	D1	D1	D1
KCLO	W4	W4	M1						D1	
KNBI	D1	M1	M1	D2	D2	D2	D1	D1	D1	D1
KKAN	M1	M1	M1	D2	D2				D1	

* D=Daily, W=Weekly, M=Monthly. Number indicates times per period.

did nothing except use his network and wire copy for news. Another high power station in Northeastern Kansas, near the Missouri state line, did not cover any law enforcement agencies, fire departments, or city and county courts. The station manager gave no specific reason why his news staff did not bother to cover these areas.

Station managers were asked what methods their news staffs employed to gather the news. Daily newsbeats by reporters going into the community were utilized by thirteen of the sixteen low power stations, and used by twelve of the fifteen high power stations. All of the low power and high power stations used a telephone newsbeat where news information is gathered by telephone. Tape recordings of people in the news were used by fifteen low power stations and fourteen high power stations. Long distance telephone calls for news outside of the station coverage area were used by thirteen low power stations and fourteen high power stations. News reports via two-way radio were used by five low power stations and seven high power stations. Six low power stations exchanged stories with the local newspaper while two high power stations did the same with their local newspaper.

Station managers were asked which method they used the most. Eleven low power station managers chose the daily newsbeat by a reporter and nine low power station managers chose the telephone newsbeat. However, station managers at four low power stations could not say which of these methods they used the most and declared they ranked equally. The method used the most at high power stations was tied between a daily newsbeat by a reporter and a telephone newsbeat; nine high power stations indicated using a daily newsbeat and nine stations

indicated using a telephone newsbeat. Two station managers could not determine which of these methods they used the most and ranked them equally.

Five of the eight nighttime stations indicated they changed their wire copy before being broadcast. The other stations edited the wire copy for "mistakes" and "time purposes," while three stations rewrite the wire copy for "the local angle," "variety," "brevity," or "to make more sense of the story."

Table 5 shows how often the nighttime stations covered local agencies and organizations. The nighttime stations covered all local bodies of government, law enforcement agencies, courts, and hospitals on a regular basis.

The most popular method of gathering local news by the nighttime stations was by using both the daily newsbeat by a reporter, and a telephone newsbeat. Five stations indicated using a daily newsbeat by a reporter the most, and five stations reporters using a telephone newsbeat the most. Two station managers said that both methods were utilized equally and could not give a preference. All eight nighttime stations used tape recordings of people in the news; seven stations used long distance telephone calls to gather news; four stations used reports via two-way radio; and none of the nighttime stations exchanged stories with the local newspaper.

News Programming

All stations in the study programmed news throughout a weekday. The times the news programs were presented varied greatly among all

stations, and the amount of time devoted to news also varied widely. Two high power stations programmed news only three times daily; morning, noon, and evening, while the rest of the high power stations programmed news every hour. All of the low power stations programmed news every hour, although, more air time was given to news by the high power stations.

By far, the five minute newscast was the most popular with both groups of stations. All low power stations combined gave 115 five minute newscasts per weekday; while the high power stations gave 125 five minute newscasts per weekday. Local news was programmed by all low power stations and high power stations. All of the low power stations made local news a part of their major newscasts combined with state, regional, and national news. Low power stations programmed between 2 to 15 minutes for local news. High power stations also programmed local news during their major newscast combined with state, regional, and national news. The length of time of the local news at high power stations varied between 3 to 30 minutes, but one station reported programming a newscast two hours and five minutes in length. Some stations in both groups included a local story in every newscast.

Table 6 shows the length of newscasts and how many newscasts were programmed throughout the weekday by both low power stations and high power stations.

News programs were substantially reduced on Sundays by both low and high power stations to make more time for religious programs. The majority of both groups of stations resumed regularly scheduled newscasts on Sunday afternoon, except the length of the newscasts was reduced.

TABLE 6
FREQUENCY OF DAILY NEWSCASTS OF SPECIFIED
LENGTH, BY STATION

STATIONS	MINUTES													
	05	10	15	25	30	40	45	60	65	70	75	90	105	125
Low Power														
KABI	8	1	3											
KNCK	12	1	2											
KOYY	10		2		1									
KMDO		3	2		1									
KIKS	8		4											
KLWN	5		1		1			2						
KMAN	9				2	1	1							
KNDY	10		3											
KNEX			4											
KJRG	6				1									
KOFO	9						2							
KLKC	11		2											
KRSL	11		2											
KFLA	10				2									
KLEY	8		4											
KNIC	8		4											
Subtotal	115	5	33		8	1	3	2						
High Power														
Day/Night														
KSOK	16	1	1	1			1							
KARE	13				1				1	1				
KGGF		2			1									1
KVOE	13								1		2			
KVGB	11		4		1									
KAYS	14	1	3											
KWNS	15	1	2											
KULY								1				1	1	
Day Only														
KKOY	8				2			1						
KXXX	11	1	1											
KLOE	6				1			2						
KJCK	8		4											
KCLO			3											
KNBI	10		2											
KKAN	10	1	3											
Subtotal	125	7	23	1	6		1	4	2	1	2	1	1	1
TOTAL	240	12	56	1	14	1	4	6	2	1	2	1	1	1

Stations that remained on the air after sunset did very little more news programming during the nighttime hours; forty newscasts of five minutes in length were programmed between the hours of 6:00 and 12:00 midnight. One station programmed an hour newscast at 9:00; while one station programmed a fifteen minute newscast at 10:00.

All of the nighttime stations scheduled local newscasts within their major newscasts ranging from 2 to 30 minutes and one station had a local newscast of over two hours long.

None of the news directors were on duty during the nighttime hours from 6:00 to 12:00 midnight. An assistant was on duty to take care of the news operations at five of the nighttime stations; assistants were used to cover special events, do air work, rewrite stories, or do sports in the evening. Two of these news assistants were on call twenty-four hours a day while three of the news assistants were "off duty" at their own discretion or before 11:00.

Sales of Commercials in the Newscasts

All sixteen low power station managers reported selling commercial time within their newscasts, and fourteen of the high power station managers reported the same. One high power station manager reported he did not sell commercial time within his station's newscasts, and when asked why he did not, he replied, "no reason (to sell the newscasts)."

Most of the newscasts' commercial time, sold by the low and high power stations, was sold to local advertisers, but not all low or high power stations exclusively sold commercial time to local adver-

tisers. Table 7 shows the percentage of spot sales sold to local, regional, or national advertisers by the low and high power stations.

Station managers at sixteen low power stations reported that they usually have all the commercial time sold within their newscast. Station managers at thirteen of the high power stations reported they also usually have all the commercial time sold within their newscasts. One low power station manager stated, "We have standing room only. They are waiting in line."

Three low power station managers were asked by local advertisers for more local news programs, but only one of the three low power station managers said he expanded local news programs for the local advertiser. Two high power stations managers reported that they were asked by local advertisers for more local news programs, but only one station manager said he expanded local news programs for the local advertiser.

Station listeners asked two low power station managers for more local news, and one station manager said he did expand local news programs. Station listeners asked five high power station managers for more local news and three station managers said they did expand their local news programs.

The eight stations that remained on the air after sunset reported selling commercial time within their newscasts and all stations reported selling all the available time spots in each newscast. Most of the time was purchased by local advertisers, but a small amount of commercial time was sold to regional or national

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE OF NEWSCASTS' SPOT SALES SOLD TO LOCAL, REGIONAL,
AND NATIONAL ADVERTISERS, BY STATION

STATIONS	Local Advertisers	Regional Advertisers	National Advertisers
Low Power			
KABI	50%		50%
KNCK	100%		
KOYY	95%	5%	
KMDO	100%		
KIKS	100%		
KLWN	80%	20%	
KMAN	85%	7.5%	7.5%
KNDY	100%		
KNEX	98%		
KJRG	80%	10%	10%
KOFO	100%		
KLKC	60%	40%	
KRSL	80%	10%	10%
KFLA	90%		
KLEY	95%		
KNIC	100%		
High Power Day/Night			
KSOK	100%		
KARE	90%	5%	5%
KGGF	70%	20%	5%
KVOE	80%	10%	10%
KVGB	80%	20%	
KAYS	100%		
KWNS	99%		
KULY	75%	25%	
Day Only			
KKOY	95%	5%	
KXXX	20%	40%	40%
KLOE	80%	10%	10%
KJCK	90%	5%	5%
KCLO	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
KNBI	100%		
KKAN			

advertisers. One nighttime station manager was asked by local advertisers for more local news programs, but he did not expand his station's local news programs. Another station manager was asked by his listeners for more local newscasts, and the station manager complied to the request.

Public Affairs Programming

Public affairs was programmed at fourteen of the low power stations and at all of the high power stations. At six low power stations, and at ten high power stations, the news staff was responsible for public affairs programming. At six of the low power stations the station or general manager took care of the public affairs programs; at one low power station the program director took care of public affairs programs; and at another low power station a salesman was responsible for the public affairs programs. The station managers were responsible for public affair programs at four high power stations and one high power station's program director took care of public affairs programming.

Scheduling of public affairs varied greatly between all stations. Two low power stations indicated they had no specific times set for public affairs programming, and it was scheduled when a subject came up. The majority of the low power stations programmed public affairs in the morning or at mid-day. Public affairs programs were scheduled every day of the week, although weekdays were most popular with only a few low power stations scheduling public affairs on Saturday and Sunday. The time for these public affairs programs were as short as five minutes, and as long as one hour in length.

All of the nighttime stations scheduled public affairs, but none of the stations scheduled public affairs during the nighttime hours. All of these nighttime stations programmed public affairs either in the morning or at mid-day. Again, weekdays were the most popular day for public affairs, usually Monday through Friday or Saturday, and the lengths of the programs varied between 5 to 30 minutes.

Editorial Practices and Programming

Editorials were broadcast by eight low power stations and nine high power stations. Three low power stations broadcast editorials as needed, two low power stations broadcast editorials 2 to 3 times a year; another low power station broadcast editorials once a week; and two more low power stations broadcast editorials daily, three times a day. High power stations in five communities broadcast editorials as needed; one station broadcast editorials three times a day, three days a week. One high power station broadcast editorials once a week, and another station broadcast three editorials a day Monday through Thursday.

Most topics for both low and high power stations were on local issues or national issues; only one low power station manager indicated editorializing on a local personality or national personality. One high power station did editorialize on regional topics. Table 8 shows the percentage of editorials by low and high power stations concerning local issues, national issues, local personalities, and national personalities.

Topics of editorials for both groups covered a wide range of issues of which most concerned the community where the station was located. Topics covered were: bond issues, urban renewal, agriculture exports,

TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE OF EDITORIALS CONCERNING LOCAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LOCAL
AND NATIONAL PERSONALITIES, BY STATIONS THAT EDITORIALIZE

STATIONS	Local Issues	National Issues	Local Personalities	National Personalities
Low Power				
KABI	100%			
KIKS	100%			
KLWN	100%			
KMAN	75%	10%	5%	5%
KJRG	90%	10%		
KOFO	90%	10%		
KLKC	50%	50%		
KLEY	50%	50%		
High Power Day/Night				
KSOK	15%	85%		
KVOE	90%	10%		
KVGB	50%	50%		
KWNS	100%			
KULY	100%			
Day Only				
KKOY	100%			
KLOE	75%	25%		
KJCK	70%	30%		
KNDI	100%			

a local school board matter, community recreation center, a new water works, animal control, downtown redevelopment, the jail situation, a city workers wage dispute, and city government.

At the eight low power stations that editorialized, the station manager determined the topic and wrote the editorial. At nine of the high power stations, seven station managers determined the topic and wrote the editorial; at one station the news director determined the topic and wrote the editorial, and at one other station the person who thought of a topic could write the editorial with the approval of the station manager.

The length of time allotted to editorials at both low and high power stations was between 2 to 5 minutes.

Both low power stations and high power stations invited responsible individuals or individuals representing a group to respond to an editorial. Four low power station managers indicated that in the past year, some individuals did respond to the invitation; two low power stations reported two people responded, one low power station reported six people responded, and one low power station reported twenty people responded to the invitation. Three high power stations managers indicated that in the past year, some individuals responded to an editorial; two high power stations reported one person at each station responded; and one station reported three persons responded to the invitation.

Only one of the low power station managers reported he had lost revenue because of an editorial, but the manager also reported he did not change his editorial practices or policies. None of the high power stations reported losing revenue due to an editorial.

Five out of the eight stations that remained on the air after sunset editorialized, and all of these stations editorialized mostly on local issues, and a little on national issues. All of the topics were determined by the station managers and written by the station managers. The topics covered a wide range of issues, usually dealing with the local community.

The length of an editorial by the nighttime stations was between 2 to 5 minutes. Two stations broadcast editorials as needed; one station broadcast an editorial every other week, and two more stations broadcast editorials three times a day, three days a week.

All of the nighttime stations invited responsible individuals or individuals representing a group to respond to an editorial, and in the past year, three stations received a response to their invitation to respond to an editorial. None of the nighttime stations reported losing revenue due to an editorial.

How Station Managers Rated Their News Operation

The majority of the low power station managers rated their news operation as good; eight station managers responded that way, while five low power station managers rated their news operations as excellent. Three low power station managers rated their news operation as average. Station managers at four low power stations who rated their news operation as good added there was room for improvement.

Station managers at six high power stations rated their news operations as excellent; while seven high power station managers rated their news operation as good. One high power station manager rated

his news operation as average, and another high power station manager indicated his news operation was adequate.

Station managers at six stations that remained on the air after sunset rated their news operation as good, while two other nighttime station managers thought their news operation was excellent.

What is the Major Competition For The Local Radio Station?

Station managers at fifteen of the sixteen low power stations responded that the local newspaper was the major source of competition for the advertising dollar. One of the low power stations located close to a metropolitan area said that the metropolitan radio stations and television station were another source of competition. One station manager indicated his station had no competitors and that advertisers were standing on his doorstep waiting to get on the air.

Station managers at fourteen of the fifteen high power stations said the local newspaper was the major source of competition for the advertising dollar. Two high power station managers said that the local television station was another source of competition. One western Kansas radio station cited that its main source of competition was from another high power station in the same part of the state.

Although most of the low and high power station managers indicated the newspaper was the major source of competition to their radio station, a number of station managers indicated it was not very much competition at all.

Major Problems Concerning the News Operation

The low power station managers said problems concerning their news operations were money, time, lack of personnel, finding a good newsman, and finding enough news to report. Many of the low power station managers indicated a major problem was finding people to come to a small community and work. One low power station manager indicated his station had no problem with their news operation.

The high power stations had the same problems--money, time, lack of personnel, finding good newsmen, and finding enough news to report. One high power station manager said his news department was not aggressive enough, and another high power station manager said he had trouble getting information from the local police department.

A majority of the stations agreed on three basic problems.

(1) There is not enough money to run a sound news operation; (2) there is not enough time during the day to gather and report the news; and (3) it is difficult to get experienced people, who can write and read, for the small market radio station.

SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The thirty-one AM radio stations surveyed employ anywhere from 4 to 27 full-time employees, and up to eight part-time employees. The local news operation at twenty-nine Kansas small market AM radio stations are usually one man operations with that one man doing more than just news gathering, writing, and reporting. These news directors have responsibilities in other areas of broadcasting such as public affairs, programming, air work, production, engineering, and sales. The other two stations do not have either a full-time or part-time news director. Thirteen stations reported employing an additional news reporter either on a part-time or full-time basis. Nine station managers have a minimum requirement of a college education for employees who work in their news departments, but only eight of these stations actually are employing college graduates.

Most stations furnished the various types of news gathering equipment, except for two-way radios, and most of the stations use the equipment on a regular basis.

All of the stations use the common methods of news gathering, of which the daily newsbeat by a reporter and the telephone newsbeat are the most popular. All except two of the stations cover agencies and organizations common to most communities on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis with some stations committing themselves more than others to gather the news from these sources.

All stations program news throughout the day, but reduce news programming on weekends. Most stations program local news within a news block during the morning, at mid-day, or in the evening. Some stations indicated that a local story was included within every newscast. The five minute newscast is by far the most popular length programmed among the surveyed stations. Most of the public affairs programs are broadcast on weekdays, usually in the morning or at mid-day, and the lengths of these programs vary widely and showed no discernible pattern.

Editorials are programmed by seventeen of the stations surveyed, and of these stations, approximately half editorialize on a regular basis. The other half editorialize on an "as needed" basis. Editorials are programmed usually on weekdays at various times throughout the day, and the lengths of the editorials vary between 2 and 5 minutes. Editorial topics are selected and written by the station managers. According to the majority of the station managers, the topics are usually controversial and concern community issues. None of the station managers reported losing advertising revenue from an editorial broadcast.

With the exception of one, all of the stations sell commercial time within their newscasts. Stations sell the majority of their newcasts' spot sales to local advertisers, but only a moderate amount of time is sold to regional and national advertisers.

Stations that remained on the air after sunset, which were high power stations during the day, did very little to augment their news

operation at night and in most instances reduced nighttime news programming. However, the majority of the eight nighttime stations have a news reporter on duty or call to report events that might occur during the evening hours.

Generally, the survey showed few differences in news operations between the low power stations and high power stations. As a whole, high power stations overall employ more people than do low power stations. There were two exceptions; low power stations KMAN (Manhattan) and KLWN (Lawrence) employ nearly as many people as do some of the high power stations. More high power stations employ full-time news directors than do low power stations, but more low power stations employ part-time news directors. Three high power stations employ stringers, whereas only one low power station employs stringers. More high power stations employ college graduates in their news departments than do low power stations.

High power stations program more news than do low power stations. Nine high power stations are network affiliated, and only two low power stations are. More high power stations edit or rewrite their news wire copy than do low power stations.

Only two high power stations, KXXX (Colby) and KCLO (Leavenworth), do not check community agencies and organizations regularly because the station managers think their stations reach larger audiences which are not interested in the happenings of the station's licensed locale. So, these two stations use their wire service and network to provide news for their audiences.

The degree to which each of the low and high power stations gathers, writes, and reports the news, local or otherwise, depends on how each station manager perceives the function of his station. It is apparent that most of the station managers think that local news, and news in general, are important to a small market radio station. All managers view their news operations in a positive way by supporting their news operations with equipment and personnel. Several managers expressed concern about the fact that there is room to improve their news operation even when they rated their news operations as good or excellent. There was one exception, a station manager, who when invited to participate in the survey, refused to do so saying that he was ashamed of his news operation and did not want it publicized.

It appears that commercial sales of newscasts indicates how important news is to the small market radio station. Stations in thirty communities sell nearly all of their newcasts to mostly local advertisers, and it is evident that all stations, except one, sell commercial time within their newscasts. This seems to indicate that the station managers know that news programming attracts listeners so management can sell prime commercial time to advertisers. The manager of a Southern Kansas 1,000 watt radio station said, "Local news is the only way to get an audience for a local radio station." Another manager at a Northern Kansas 500 watt radio station said that his station had to be "immersed in the community and the community's activities."

The major problems confronting the small market radio station managers are the financial burdens of a news operation. This includes the cost and time necessary to accomplish accurate news gathering, writing, and programming. Also it is difficult to attract qualified news people to work in a small market radio station which is remote from the "brighter lights" of the larger markets.

Another study might be conducted in which the stations' news directors were the primary source of information. This study might reveal a greater validity from data given by the stations' news directors, who are involved with the day to day news operations, and who might reflect a more objective viewpoint. The stations also could be classified to include the stations' audience size and the potential local advertising support from businesses in the community.

A suggested possible study might be a survey of each of the small market radio station's audience to determine how the audience regards news programs broadcast from its local radio station. The audience could be asked to judge the local radio stations news programs in such areas as content of the news programs, quantity of stories, information value to the listener, and listener satisfaction.

Some of the station managers were surprised that someone was interested in their small market radio stations. One station manager at a 500 watt station in Southeastern Kansas complained, "the NAB (National Association of Broadcasters) doesn't give a damn about small market radio stations. I never see its representative. He signed me up, but he has never been back since, and that's been quite a while." Many

of the station managers were pleasantly surprised about the survey and wondered why someone would be interested in their stations' news operation. All managers seem to agree that news programming helps make a small market radio station successful.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRE

CALL: _____ LOCATION: _____
STATION MANAGER: _____ TELEPHONE: _____
POWER: _____ FREQUENCY: _____
DATE: _____ TIME STARTED: _____

1. How many full-time people does your station employ? _____
2. How many part-time people does your station employ? _____
3. To which of the following news wire services do you subscribe?

Associated Press _____
United Press International _____
Weather Wire _____
Farm Wire _____
Other _____ Specify _____

4. Is your station affiliated with a network? _____ Yes _____ No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

ABC _____ IF CHECKED: Which ABC network? _____
CBS _____
NBC _____
Mutual _____
Other _____ Specify _____

5. Do you change your wire copy in any way before being broadcast?

_____ Yes _____ No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

How do you change your wire copy? _____

Why do you _____ your wire copy.

6. I will list some agencies and organizations, common to most communities; tell me which your station covers regularly.

	DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	HOW OFTEN (DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY)
City Government	_____	_____	_____	_____
County Government	_____	_____	_____	_____
School Board	_____	_____	_____	_____
Police Department	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sheriff Department	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fire Department	_____	_____	_____	_____
County Courts	_____	_____	_____	_____
City Courts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Hospitals	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mortuaries	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

7. I'll list some ways news is gathered; tell me which ones your station uses.

	USED MOST
Daily newsbeat by a reporter who goes into the community	_____
Telephone newsbeat where the information is gathered by telephone	_____
Tape recordings of people in the news	_____
Long distance telephone calls to areas outside your station's coverage area	_____
News reports via two-way radio	_____
Story exchange with the local newspaper	_____
Other _____	_____
Specify _____	_____

OF THOSE THAT ARE INDICATED, ASK:

Of those that you mentioned, which one is used the most by your station?

8. Does your news staff have access to the following equipment?

	IF "YES" ASK:		Does your news staff use it			
	YES	NO	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
Fire and Police Radio Monitors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reel-to-reel tape recorders	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cartridge machines	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cassette tape recorders	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Two-way radio	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Production board	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Microphones	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Turntable for records	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

9. Does your station employ a full-time news director? Yes No

IF "NO" THEN ASK:

Does your station employ a part-time news director?

_____ Yes _____ No

IF "NO" THEN ASK:

Does anyone at your station function as a news director?

 Yes No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

Who functions as the news director? _____

IF THE STATION DOES NOT HAVE A FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME NEWS DIRECTOR, PROCEED TO QUESTION 13.

10. How long has your news director been with the station? _____ Years.
11. Does the news director have any of the following duties other than news?

	YES	NO	PERCENTAGE TIME SPENT
Sales	_____	_____	_____
Programming	_____	_____	_____
Public Affairs	_____	_____	_____
Engineering	_____	_____	_____
Production	_____	_____	_____
Board Shift	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____

OF THOSE THAT ARE INDICATED, ASK:

What percentage of the news director's time would you say is spent in this area?

12. How many full-time salaried news reporters does your station employ? _____
13. How many part-time salaried news reporters does your station employ? _____
14. How many stringers does your station use? _____

IF MORE THAN "ZERO" THEN ASK:

How do you determine the pay of these stringers? _____

15. Do you have a minimum education requirement for your news department?
 Yes No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

What are your minimum education requirements?

How many of your news employees have a college degree?

IF STATION EMPLOYEES COLLEGE GRADUATES, THEN ASK:

Of the news employees who have a college degree, can you tell me what their major areas of study or specialties were at college?

16. What times are your newscasts "aired" during your full daily broadcast schedule?
- TIME & LENGTH

Weekday

Saturday _____

Sunday

17. Does your station broadcast at least one complete local newscast daily?
- Yes No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:	SPECIFIC TIME(S)
1. How many times did you use the product in the last 12 months?	
2. How many times did you use the product in the last 6 months?	
3. How many times did you use the product in the last 3 months?	
4. How many times did you use the product in the last 1 month?	
5. How many times did you use the product in the last 1 week?	
6. How many times did you use the product in the last 1 day?	
7. How many times did you use the product in the last 1 hour?	
8. How many times did you use the product in the last 1 minute?	
9. How many times did you use the product in the last 1 second?	

What time is the local newscast scheduled?

How many minutes are scheduled for the local newscast?

IF "NO" THEN ASK:

How do you broadcast local news?

18. Who prepares and presents the major newscasts?

Morning

Mid-day

Evening _____

19. Do you sell commercial time within the newscasts? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

Are the available time spots within the newscasts usually sold?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Are time spots for these newscasts bought by:
☐ Local ☐ Regional ☐ National Advertisers

What percentage of spot sales, within your newscasts, is
 bought by (Local, Regional, National) advertisers?

Local _____
 Regional _____
 National _____

Have any of your local advertisers asked for more local
 news programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have any of your station's listeners asked for more local
 news programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

Did you expand your local news programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF "NO" THEN ASK:

What is your reason for not selling commercials within the
 newscasts? _____

20. Does your station have a public affairs department? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 (Public affairs programming is defined as the discussion of local,
 state, regional, or national issues or ideas which are of concern to
 the general public of the station's coverage area.)

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

Is the news department staff responsible for public affairs
 programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What times are the station's public affairs programs broadcast?

How many minutes are scheduled for public affairs? _____

IF "NO" THEN ASK:

Is public affairs programming handled by other station
 personnel? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

By whom? _____

21. Does your station broadcast editorials? Yes No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

How often do you broadcast editorials? _____

What percentage of your editorials concern:

PERCENTAGE

Local issues	
National issues	
Local personalities	
National personalities	
Other	

Who determines the majority of the editorial topics your station broadcasts?

Station Owner _____
General Manager _____
Program Director _____
News Director _____
Editorial Board _____
Other _____

Specify _____

Who writes the majority of the editorials broadcast?

Station Owner _____
General Manager _____
Program Director _____
News Director _____
Editorial Board _____
Other _____

Specify _____

What was the topic of any editorial your station broadcast within the last month?

How many minutes are scheduled for editorials?

Do you invite responsible individuals, or individuals representing a group, to reply to your station's editorials?

Yes	No
-----	----

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

In the past year, how many individuals, or individuals representing a group, accepted your invitation to reply to an editorial your station broadcast?

Has your station every lost revenue because of an editorial?

Yes No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

Did this loss of revenue affect your editorial policy in any way? _____ Yes _____ No

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

In what way was your editorial policy affected? _____

22. How would you rate your station's local news operation?

Excellent _____
Good _____
Average _____
Adequate _____

23. Who do you think is your station's biggest competitor for the advertising dollar in your community? _____

24. What are the major problems concerning your news operation? _____

25. Does your station broadcast after sunset? _____ Yes _____ No

IF "NO" TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW.

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

Is your news personnel "on duty" after sunset? _____ Yes _____ No

IF "NO" TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW.

IF "YES" THEN ASK:

What are the duties of the news personnel after sunset? _____

When does the news personnel go "off duty?" _____

TERMINATE INTERVIEW

TIME _____

APPENDIX B

PRE-TEST INVITATIONAL LETTER

June 4, 1976

Dear Mr. :

I am a graduate student at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, employed part-time as a student news reporter for KSAC. I am presently working to complete the masters degree, and in that connection, I have undertaken to study local news operations of community radio stations in Kansas.

The study is limited to single market AM radio stations in communities with populations below 50,000 people. There are 33 stations in Kansas that fulfill these requirements.

I am writing to invite you, one of five station managers in three multi-market communities, to participate in the testing of the questionnaire I have prepared for the 33 selected station managers. I wish to conduct a telephone interview with you which will be the same interview that will be given to the station managers in the survey. The interview should take no longer than 30 minutes. After the telephone interview is completed, I would like to personally visit with you and listen to suggestions you think would improve the questionnaire. If an appointment is needed, it can be arranged by telephone. Please use the enclosed postcard to indicate what day (Monday through Saturday) and what time (morning, afternoon, or evening) would be most convenient for you to participate in testing the questionnaire. Please check the appropriate spaces on the postcard, and drop it in the mail as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your cooperation, and I am looking forward to our telephone interview.

Sincerely yours,

Leroy G. Buller
Graduate Student in Radio-Television
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas 66506

LGB:rb

Enc.

PRE-TEST POSTCARD

Please indicate which day: (check)

Monday___ Tuesday___ Wednesday___

Thursday___ Friday___ Saturday___

and what time: (check)

Morning___ Afternoon___ Evening___

would be most convenient for the telephone
interview test.

Thank you

APPENDIX C

SURVEY INVITATIONAL LETTER

July 1, 1976

Dear Mr. :

I am a Graduate Student in Journalism and Mass Communications at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Also I am employed part-time as a student news reporter for KSAC. My master's thesis involves a study of local news operations of community AM radio stations in Kansas.

The study is limited to single market AM radio stations in communities with populations below 50,000 people. There are 33 stations in Kansas that fulfill these requirements, and this includes your station. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study. I am keenly interested in your station's news operation and your problems concerning news. I need your help to obtain this information.

To facilitate your participation, I wish to conduct a telephone interview with you. The interview will take no longer than 30 minutes. Please use the enclosed post card to indicate what time, (morning, afternoon, or evening) and what day (Monday through Saturday) would be most convenient for you to participate in the study. You may stipulate a specific hour and day if you wish.

If you would like a summary of the study after it is completed, please check the appropriate space on the post card, and drop it in the mail as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your cooperation, and I am looking forward to our telephone interview.

Sincerely yours,

Leroy G. Buller
Graduate Student in the Department
of Journalism and Mass Communications
Kedzie Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas 66506

LGB:rb

SURVEY POSTCARD

Please indicate which day: (check)

Monday___ Tuesday___ Wednesday___

Thursday___ Friday___ Saturday___

and what time: (check)

Morning___ Afternoon___ Evening___

would be most convenient for the telephone
interview.

Please check this space if you would like
a summary of the study. _____

Thank you

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A SURVEY OF LOCAL NEWS OPERATIONS IN
SELECTED KANSAS SINGLE MARKET AM RADIO STATIONS

by

LEROY GLENN BULLER

B.S., Kansas State University, 1975

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Radio and Television
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1976

THE ABSTRACT

The study, conducted in July and August of 1976, dealt with small market AM radio stations news operations in thirty-three Kansas communities with populations below 50,000 people. This focus on the small market commercial AM radio station was intended to gather data in an area neglected in research. The study surveyed the selected single market commercial AM radio stations for the purpose of reporting the status of local news operations, and to report how management rated their stations news operations. The study included areas such as station personnel and news staff; reporting and editing practices; news, public affairs, and editorial programming; physical equipment use by each station; and sales in relationship to newscasts.

The data was gathered by a telephone questionnaire with thirty-one station managers. This was a 93.9 percent return. The seven page questionnaire contained twenty-five questions and follow-up questions designed to gain the necessary information for the station managers.

The thirty-one radio stations employed anywhere from 4 to 27 full-time employees and up to eight part-time employees. The local news operations at twenty-nine Kansas small market AM radio stations are usually one man operations with that one man doing more than just news gathering, writing and reporting. The news directors have

responsibilities in other areas of broadcasting such as public affairs, programming, air work, production, engineering, and sales.

Most stations furnish the various types of news gathering equipment except for two-way radios, and most of the stations use the equipment on a regular basis.

All of the stations used the common methods of news gathering of which the daily newsbeat by a reporter and the telephone newsbeat were the most popular. All stations, except two, covered agencies and organizations common to most communities on a regular basis with some stations committing themselves more than others to gather news from these sources.

All stations programmed news throughout the weekday, but reduced news programming on the weekends. Most stations programmed local news within a news block. Most of the public affairs programs were programmed in the morning or at mid-day during the week and the lengths of these programs varied widely and showed no discernible pattern. Editorials were programmed by seventeen of the stations surveyed, and of these stations approximately half editorialized on a regular basis. The other half editorialized on an "as needed" basis. Editorials were programmed usually on weekdays at various times throughout the day and the lengths of the editorials varied between 2 and 5 minutes.

With the exception of one, all stations sold commercial time within their newscasts. Stations sold the majority of their newscasts' spot sales to local advertisers, but only a moderate amount of time was sold to regional and national advertisers.

Stations that remained on the air after sunset did very little to augment their news operation at night and in most instances reduced nighttime news programming.

The degree to which each of the stations gathers, writes, and reports the news, local or otherwise, depends on how each of the station managers perceived the function of his station. All managers viewed their news operation in a positive way by supporting their news operations with equipment and personnel.

Stations in thirty communities sold nearly all of their newscasts to mostly local advertisers. This seems to indicate that the station managers know that news programming attracts listeners so management can sell prime commercial time to advertisers.

Many of the station managers were pleasantly surprised about the survey and wondered why someone would be interested in their station's news operations. All managers seem to agree that news programming helps make a small market AM radio station successful.