

**An Achilles Heel in Emergency Communications:
The Deplorable Policies and Practices Pertaining
to Non English Speaking Populations**

Federico Subervi, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
Professor & Director
Center for the Study of Latino Media & Markets
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

(512) 245-5267
subervi@txstate.edu

December 2010

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| <u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u> | |
| <u>PHASE 1: THE FIELD RESEARCH</u> | 3 |
| INTRODUCTION | 5 |
| Research Questions | 8 |
| Caveats | 10 |
| METHDOLOGY | 11 |
| Demographic Data Sources | 11 |
| Broadcast Media Data Sources | 11 |
| Government Agencies Data Sources | 12 |
| Other Resources | 13 |
| FINDINGS | 14 |
| The Demographic-Language Landscapes | 14 |
| The Spanish-Language Media | 15 |
| The Spanish-Language Broadcast Media Landscape in Central Texas | 16 |
| The Spanish-Language Radio Landscape | 16 |
| The Spanish-Language Television Landscape | 20 |
| Media Landscape Summary | 22 |
| The Websites | 24 |
| The Interviews | 26 |
| Government Officials | 26 |
| Media Representatives | 28 |
| Community Leaders | 30 |
| Other Interviews | 31 |
| Summary of the Interviews | 33 |
| CONCLUSIONS OF FIELD WORK RESEARCH | 34 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 35 |
| For Government Agencies that Deal with Emergencies | 35 |
| For the FCC and Other Regulatory Agencies | 36 |
| For Ethnic-Language Broadcast Media | 37 |
| For Academic Units | 40 |
| For Business and Community Leaders | 41 |
| <u>PHASE 2: THE <i>LATINOS A SALVO</i> FORUM</u> | 42 |
| OVERVIEW | 42 |
| PARTICIPANTS | 43 |
| POSITIVE OUTCOMES | 44 |
| Synopsis of Participants' Recommendations | 44 |
| Government Officials/First Responders | 44 |
| Media | 48 |
| Community Leaders/Insurance Representatives | 49 |
| Social Media | 51 |
| LIMITATIONS | 53 |
| An Informative Misunderstanding | 53 |
| FORUM SUMMARY | 55 |
| <u>THE NEXT STEPS</u> | 55 |
| NOTES | 57 |
| APPENDICES A – D (in separate document) | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this project and report was to document emergency communication policies and practices related to Spanish-speaking populations in Central Texas. Focusing primarily on that region and on Latinos, the work aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are demographic data relevant for emergency communications with Spanish-speaking populations?
2. What is the landscape of the media and information systems directed to Spanish-speaking populations?
3. What are the various local, regional, state and federal agencies that are responsible for providing information and managing public crises?
4. What are the current emergency communication policies and practices of the government and other organizations that deal with public crises?
5. What are the current emergency communication policies and practices of the media directed to Spanish-speaking populations?
6. Based on the research findings, what would be the best possible options to improve the training that will increase the effective communication flows between the government, the organizations, the media and the targeted communities?
7. What public policies are needed and can be recommended to improve the emergency communication flows and the security of Spanish-speaking populations as well as society at large?
8. What funding opportunities are there to successfully develop the training programs and public policy recommendations?

Answers to most of the questions (except item 8, which will follow after the completion of this project) emerged over the two years of this study (2008-2010), which was divided into two phases. First, field research that included assessments of population and media data, Internet websites, and interviews with government emergency response officials, media representatives, and community leaders. Second, the organization of a *Latinos a Salvo* forum (11/5/10 at Texas State University) that brought together 80 persons from public and private sectors to discuss and offer recommendations to improve emergency communication strategies.

Two assumptions guided this project: First, the safety of a community is contingent on well-informed citizens regardless of what language they speak or understand. Second, any and all individual's security is potentially at risk if others around him/her are not properly informed about what is happening and what to do during crisis situations. The project's main focus on Latinos is justified on the fact that this population is a rather large demographic, is rapidly growing, and demands attention for the safety of its communities.

The term “Achilles heel” is used in the title and text of this report because the data showed that the policies and practices pertaining to non-English language speaking populations are, at least from this scholar’s vantage point, deplorable and can thus potentially undermine the safety of not only minority populations but also society at large. As documented in this report:

- Government agencies responsible for emergency communications are not fully or properly staffed to produce and disseminate multiple language messages be it in person, printed materials, or their websites.
- Many but not all Spanish-language broadcast media in Central Texas offer their audiences emergency weather alerts, yet none of the Spanish-language radio stations have news staffs or operations that could provide additional emergency news or information, especially after daylight operating hours.
- Standardized and efficient regulations are lacking to guide what broadcast media should do in emergencies or the content of their emergency communications in English or Spanish.

The causes of the current state of affairs and the remedies to improve them are complex and multifaceted. The shortcomings do not stem from any ill will of any individual, broadcast media, agency or organization, each of which work laboriously to serve their constituents or audiences. In fact, this report obtained and includes evidence of these positive efforts. Still, the modus operandi is not optimal for overcoming the current shortcomings to assure the maximum possible safety and well being that all residents of every community deserve, regardless of the language they speak.

It is hoped that this report, especially the numerous recommendations by the attendees of the *Latinos a Salvo* forum and those made by the Principal Investigator, will be of value to bring about prompt and positive changes in the emergency communication policies and practices pertaining to non English speaking populations. The faculty of the Center for the Study of Latino Media & Markets welcomes input, feedback, critiques, and other commentaries about this report and is open to suggestions from faculty, students, government agencies, first responders, traditional or social media, community leaders, and the general public on how to work together to make Latino and other vulnerable communities safer when they face crisis situations caused by environmental factors or human error or intention.

This project and the *Latino a Salvo* forum were made possible thanks to a grant from the McCormick Foundation. The project and the forum required the dedicated time and efforts of numerous faculty, students, staff, colleagues, and friends; they are acknowledged in the corresponding sections of the report.

PHASE 1: THE FIELD RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

When severe inclement weather is approaching or occurring, most people turn to their radio or TV stations—or, nowadays, possibly Internet sources—to seek information about the situation and hopefully assure their safety. The mass media and the Internet also become sources that people depend on for a variety of other news and information during occurring or impending crises—be these local, national, or international. However, what happens when people want to obtain timely news and information pertaining to a pending or ongoing calamity in their area and little or none can be easily found? Just how do they accurately know what to do, where to go get out of harms way, to seek shelter, food, or medical care if and when needed?

This is precisely the quandary faced by thousands if not millions of non-English-language speakers in many parts of the United States, including Central Texas,¹ every time a calamity—be it caused by nature or by humans—impacts their area. The main reasons are twofold: First, because non-English-language speakers have few, and in some locations no broadcast stations that promptly and reliably inform them about inclement weather or any other types of emergencies. Secondly, government offices that manage emergencies are not fully and adequately prepared to communicate in Spanish or other foreign languages.

This project report documents these problems in Central Texas and addresses what can indeed be called an “Achilles heel” in emergency communications. This term applies because, as will be evident in the pages that follow, the policies and practices pertaining to non-English-language speaking populations are, at least from this scholar’s vantage point, deplorable. The project was made possible thanks to a McCormick Foundation grant.² Upon summarizing the main findings of the research conducted over the last two years, various recommendations are proposed for improving emergency communication policies and practices related to non-English-language speakers, and by extension help improve the safety of all citizens.

The causes of the current state of affairs and the remedies to improve them are complex and multifaceted. They do not stem from any ill will of any individual, broadcast media, agency or organization. They are, nevertheless, the outcome of the modus operandi of each of the entities that work oftentimes too independently of each other and not in the coordinated and collaborative manners that are indispensable for overcoming the current shortcomings to assure

the maximum possible safety and well being that all residents of every community deserve, regardless of the language they speak.

Studies and writings about communications during emergency situations consistently point to the central and crucial roles played by the mass media.³ The same is true regarding communication efforts directed at culturally diverse communities in the United States—especially those whose dominant language is not English. Research findings based on case studies from actual crisis situations time and again point to the problems that have been caused by the gaps in the communication flows between government officials, community organizations, and the ethnic-oriented media. Invariably, recommendations are made to improve these matters.

While the actions taken on the recommendations made by those studies might not be easily discernable, positive changes have certainly been made. One example is the transitioning of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to a Common Alerting Protocol (CAP),⁴ which is an outcome of decisions stemming from the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) office of the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).⁵ The current EAS as well as the emerging CAP/IPAWS allude to the inclusion, at least in theory, of Spanish-language efforts in the emergency communication protocols. It is too soon to assess how detailed, efficient, and operational these protocols are.⁶

Regardless of how well the plans are laid out at the government level, the positive outcomes will be contingent on at least two important factors: First, the capacity of the government agencies and their personnel to communicate promptly and efficiently with the communities, particularly with the outlet channels directed to the Spanish-language and other non-English-language speaking communities. This entails written information and messages originating from the agencies, be these messages in print (e.g., press releases), broadcast public service announcements, or via the respective Internet sites. It also includes the oral presentations (e.g., press conferences, interviews) made by government's official representatives who should in addition have ample knowledge of and working relationships with ethnic-oriented media outlets. Second, and possibly more important, will be the availability of media outlets and sufficient number of adequately trained personnel at those media—especially broadcast stations and low-power and cable outlets—to promptly receive and transmit the emergency alerts as well

as other essential information during the preparation, mitigation and recovery stages of emergencies, be these at the national, state, regional, or very local level.

The assessments conducted as part of this grant suggest that with respect to both these areas—government information/personnel, and ethnic-oriented media—the policies and practices pertaining to non-English-language speaking populations in Central Texas are currently deplorable.⁷ There appear to be major gaps and shortcomings on both sides of the equation. The problems, however, are multifaceted and vary among the entities that have been studied. Furthermore, while the purpose of the study was assessing the current state of affairs, the main objective is to build on the knowledge gained from the assessments in order to propose and act on solutions related to the emergency communication policies and practices that would significantly enhance the safety of communities, regardless of the language their residents may speak.

In line with this last statement, two assumptions guide this research effort: First, that the safety of a community is contingent on well informed citizens, regardless of what language they speak or understand. Second, that any and all individual's security is potentially at risk if others around him/her are not properly informed on what is happening and what to do during crisis situations. This implies that emergency communication policies and practices should not be directed to reaching only people who can understand English, or that it should be a requirement for people to have sufficient command of the English language in order to benefit from news and information about emergency situations. While command of the nation's dominant language is a laudable goal for individuals who have decided to reside in the United States permanently or even just temporarily, it should not be a factor that determines whether or not they will have access to communications that would enhance the security of their life and that of their family. Furthermore, this population is a rather large demographic and is rapidly growing, and thus demands attention be paid to the safety of its communities. Finally, it must be recognized that anyone who is uninformed or misinformed about what precautions and actions to take during crises has the potential to negatively affect many others around him/her in the ethnic communities and/or society at large.

Corresponding with the aforementioned objectives and assumptions, one of the proposed outcomes of this study is to initiate a training program for the public relations personnel and other representatives in government agencies who communicate with ethnic media and

communities during emergencies in the form of crisis communication plans. Concomitantly, the data gathered could serve as a guide to establish training opportunities for journalists who work with or for ethnic-minority media and whose tasks include covering issues related to emergency communications. Together, these initiatives should increase the effective communication flow between the government, the organizations, the media and thus the multicultural, multi-language communities.

Another long-term objective of this study is to contribute to the development or refinement of public policies, rules, and/or regulations that can enhance how government agencies and the mass media operate during emergencies on matters pertaining to non-English-language speaking populations. At some levels, for example federal agencies establishing and revising the Emergency Alert System and Common Alerting Protocol, significant changes are already in process. However, the assessments made prior to initiating this study, and more so since then, suggest that focused attention is needed for crisis situations that affect primarily local communities. It may be the case that special policies or regulations might have to be considered for assuring emergency communication flows for communities that have little or no access to broadcast/cable media that air news and information, especially those that have little or no personnel to provide such news and information during emergencies.

Research Questions

The development of this study, which focused primarily on emergency communication policies and practices related to non-English-language speakers in Central Texas, was guided by eight interrelated and complementary research questions:

1. What are demographic data relevant for emergency communications with non English-speaking populations?
2. What is the landscape of the media and information systems directed to Spanish-speaking and other non-English-speaking populations?
3. What are the various local, regional, state and federal agencies that are responsible for providing information and managing public crises?
4. What are the current emergency communication policies and practices of the government and other organizations that deal with public crises?
5. What are the current emergency communication policies and practices of the media directed to non-English-speaking populations?

6. Based on the research findings, what would be the best possible options to improve the training that will increase the effective communication flows between the government, the organizations, the media and the targeted communities?
7. What public policies are needed and can be recommended to improve the emergency communication flows and by extension the security of non-English-speaking populations as well as society at large?
8. What funding opportunities are there to successfully develop the training programs and public policy recommendations?

Because of the exploratory nature of this research endeavor, no specific hypotheses were developed. However, observations and data gathered informally prior to the launch of this project suggested that there were many areas of deficiencies in the availability and delivery of emergency Spanish language news and information during emergencies. It was thus predicted that the data would show that the deficiencies were not random occurrences, but instead the modus operandi at least in the Central Texas region most familiar to the author. It was also predicted that similar, dysfunctional or not optimal modus operandi would be the norm in other locations.

Three factors contributed to selecting and limiting the scope of this study to Texas, in particular to the Central Texas cities of Austin and San Antonio. First, large numbers of Latinos, including sizeable Spanish speaking populations, reside in each of these three locations. Second, Spanish-language media operate in each of these cities. Third, with Austin as the home base of the principal investigator, and San Antonio being located only approximately 80 miles away, these cities facilitated the effort of seeking information from the targeted government agencies, media, and other communities leaders interviewed for the study. Austin is particularly valuable because it is where the Homeland Security and the Emergency Management offices for the state are located. During the initial stages of this project, efforts were also made to gather comparable data about Chicago and Springfield, Illinois. However, those efforts could not be completed with the time and resources available to the Principal Investigator. Thus, this report provides only limited mention of the research and findings from Illinois.

Applying the analogy and often-stated wisdom that a chain is as strong as its weakest link, it might be appropriate to suggest that the security of a community is as sound as is the knowledge of the least informed citizens. It would then be reasonable to affirm that assessments of the emergency communication policies and practices pertaining to Spanish language and other

foreign language speakers are significant and valuable efforts toward the assurance that a whole community is potentially safer during crisis situations. The effort is even more justified given the size of especially the Spanish-speaking populations in the target areas (see Table 1 below). The findings, and most importantly the implementation of any positive changes to enhance emergency communication flows are certain to benefit these ethnic-minority populations and by extension the other residents of those cities and possibly other localities, as well.

Caveats

Before moving on to the methodology and findings, various caveats of this study merit mention. First, while the study was initiated in Spring 2008, it has not been a project that has been worked on full time by the research team. The two research assistants who were hired for the project (Cherie Rivero: Spring–Fall 2008 and Robert Hill: Spring–December 2009) worked only part time on a variety of tasks.⁸

Second, their initial task was to find answers to the first three questions listed above. Some data—such as Census information about Hispanics in the selected cities—were obtained rather easily. Obtaining other data, such as Spanish-language versions of government agencies’ emergency communication policies and procedures, was more elusive.

Third, even more difficult or impossible was getting written policies and procedures from the Spanish-language broadcast stations. If these exist in writing, they were not made available to us. Interviews, most conducted by the Principal Investigator, yielded important insights, but not always the complete “open records” type of accountability that was hoped for.

Fourth, many calls were made and letters/e-mails were written but unanswered. It was frustrating and puzzling to understand why representatives of government agencies and some Spanish-language broadcast media were so reluctant to respond to basic inquiries about issues pertaining to emergency communications. Nevertheless, patterns did emerge in the assessments of the government policies and practices, as well as those of the Spanish-language media studied. The report builds on those patterns, which with cautious confidence can be generalized regarding the emergency communication situations in the studied cities.

The fifth and final caveat about this project relates to some key definitions. The focus of the project is *emergency communications*, which encompass a broad range of information gathering and dissemination by government agencies and by organizations, including the mass media, that respond to crises disasters or calamities caused by nature or humans and that can

affect the general public. The information gathering and dissemination that we seek to assess—including the news component pertaining to media operations, is that which is directed to the general public—not *the internal flows of information that are directed only to the personnel working in or for such entities*. Thus, internal communications that discuss who would provide information about an emergency would not be of interest. However, it would be of value to know whether or not a person fluent in Spanish, for example, is assigned to do so.

Emergency communications also refers to the gathering and dissemination of news and information related to the crises, disasters or calamities that affect the general public. A fire that affects or threatens to impact a large number of people in a community would be considered a potential emergency communication issue, but a fire that consumes only an individual's home, for example, would not. Likewise, *the emergencies studied exclude personal crises, etc., that may result from family conflicts or those faced by businesses or agencies but that do not affect the general public*.

METHODOLOGY

The multiple facets of this study required that various steps and methods be used for the data gathering (research questions 1-3) and for the assessments (research questions 4 and 5).

Demographic Data Sources

The “American FactFinder” section of the United States Bureau of the Census easily yields data about the number of Hispanics in states, counties and cities. Selected data from this source are reported to contextualize the presence of Hispanics in the studied cities. However, to assess the number of Spanish-language speakers in those cities, we requested the assistance of James Aldrete, of Message Audience & Presentations Political Communications, who had access to and provided the needed data for the estimates.⁹

Broadcast Media Data Sources

To identify the non-English-language broadcast media, Internet listings and directories were scrutinized.¹⁰ The names, call letters, addresses, phone, and Internet sites of each were compiled on Internet spreadsheets.¹¹ Next, the program listings were carefully read to identify, which, if any, had local news and information programs. When the news and information data could not be discerned from the stations' Internet sites, calls were made to the management of the stations to inquire about such programming. Many calls were not answered, but as discussed in the findings, this type of programming is practically non-existent in the Spanish-language

radio stations in Austin, San Antonio, or any of the cities in between; it is also very scarce in Chicago and not available at all in Springfield. On the Spanish-language television stations in Austin, San Antonio and Chicago, a few local news programs are available. However, programming other than in Spanish is not currently available in any broadcast outlet in the Texas cities, and only minimally on one radio station in Chicago. Inquiries with Latino colleagues and friends in each city confirmed the paucity of this type of content.

To assess the practices and policies related to emergency communication at the broadcast stations, it was imperative to know if the station had personnel available to obtain and/or retransmit emergency signals, and related news and information. The first level of scrutiny was the websites of the stations. Lacking information there, calls were made to request meetings with the stations' management. Some were granted, which produced very informative face-to-face conversations with management. However, a major network—Univisión—denied permission to meet with its personnel and did not authorize its management or reporters to speak directly to us. Instead, it provided written responses that were useful, but only partially addressed the queries at hand¹² (see Appendix A). At some of the broadcast stations that were visited in Austin, San Antonio, and Chicago, public files were scrutinized for evidence of public service content. Of particular interest was seeing if there were any news or informational programs that could be considered as contributing to the public safety of the audiences. At Univisión's TV stations at which permission was denied to interview management or reporters, public files were made available for assessment of public service content.¹³

Government Agencies Data Sources

The identification of government entities responsible for providing information and managing public crises in Texas and Illinois began in spring 2008 with searches of the websites of the State of Texas, Travis County, City of Austin, Bexar County, City of San Antonio, State of Illinois, Cook County, Alert Chicago, Sangamon County, IL, City of Springfield, IL, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Homeland Security, and the American Red Cross. Upon conducting comprehensive searches of the websites, efforts were made to find (a) information in Spanish and (b) policies on how to communicate with Spanish-speaking or other non-English-language speaking populations. To assure that all relevant sections of the agencies' websites had been fully and properly scrutinized, calls were made to

inquire whether or not they had such content, and if so, where it could be found. The corresponding content, or lack thereof, was noted.

Because websites are dynamic and subject to changes and updates on a regular basis, in fall 2009, another round of reviews was conducted of the Internet presence of the cities of Austin and San Antonio, and of the American Red Cross. In addition, the sites of the City of Austin Office of Emergency Management, the Lower Colorado River Authority, and the City of San Antonio Office of Emergency Management were also assessed for Spanish language content.

Regardless of finding multi-language content or not, in order to fully assess the policies and practices, personal visits to select agencies and face-to-face interviews were requested with key officials in the agencies located in Austin, San Antonio, Chicago and Springfield. In Austin, inquiries were possible with government officials who were knowledgeable of emergency related work. They provided information as well as names and contact information for follow-up interviews with other key informants. Efforts to interview government representatives at the other locations were not as fruitful. Some information was obtained via phone conversations. However, in more than one instance, calls were not returned or meetings were repeatedly postponed.

Other Resources

One of the most productive face-to-face meetings of the project was with Ann Arnold, President of the Texas Association of Broadcasters, who for many years has been at the forefront of improving emergency communication practices and policies not only in Texas, but nationwide. The insights from the two-hour conversation with her contributed to the researcher's better understanding of the national efforts in this arena, as well as to the initial drafting of some of the recommendations listed below. Also valuable for the drafting of recommendations were various telephone conversations and e-mail exchanges with David Honig, President & Executive Director of the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council based in Washington, DC. In Austin, we appreciate the meetings with various local community leaders, among them, Rudy Garza, Assistant Manager for the City of Austin, Mike Martínez, City Council Member, and Paul Saldaña, Chief Operating Officer of Adelante Solutions. In Buda, we visited with Hilda Ochoa Bogue, Resource Development & Policy Analysis Director of the National Center for Farmworkers Health, Inc. Her insights from her years at Travis County's Office of Emergency Services were invaluable.

Sandy Close, Director of New America Media, and her staff, have encouraged this project and offered guidance and collaboration for subsequent training components of this project. Currently, the plans for the extensive training-related activities, the search for funding opportunities for these, and the development of detailed public policy recommendations for media and government are still in process.

FINDINGS

The research conducted for this project has yielded findings that are divided into four categories: (1) the demographic-language landscapes, (2) operational characteristics of the Spanish-language broadcast media, (3) patterns from the websites, and (4) insights from the interviews.

The Demographic-Language Landscapes

While it may be common knowledge that the Latino population is rapidly growing across the country, particular details and interpretations about this growth and its characteristics are still indispensable contexts for analysis of the current and future emergency communication policies and procedures.

Table 1 shows the total population of the main cities, counties and states that are covered by this study, and estimates of the primarily Spanish-speaking people in these locations. The last column on the right offers an approximate estimate of the number of Latinos in those places whose primary language might be Spanish and would thus be most dependent on emergency news and information in that language. This number is based on a conservative estimate of 25 percent of the Latino population; in some locations that number might be much higher.¹⁴ As can be observed, even with low estimates, each of the locations has a substantial number of residents who would benefit from having access to Spanish-language news and information about and during emergencies. Additionally, it almost goes without saying that the rest of the population in any location would be most appreciative of knowing that the Spanish-speaking residents in their area are well informed and would know how to proceed in any major emergency situation.

Take for example the city of San Antonio, a major crossroad of interstate highways and rail traffic. If there were any type of emergency that would require the mobilization of even a fraction of that city's and its counties Spanish speakers, just how would at least 200,000 people be informed promptly and efficiently? Moreover, what about in Chicago and Cook County, where emergency contingencies would require immediate communication in Spanish with

anywhere from 190,000 to 300,000 people? In responding to these questions, it is imperative to keep in mind, that during any evacuation, television is valuable for preparation and subsequent recovery, but of limited use when people are on the road. Therefore, radio remains the most valuable mass medium. Millions of Latinos working the farmlands are even more dependent on radio for emergency news and information and, of course, entertainment.

Table 1. Hispanic population in the main cities, their counties and the two states relevant to current study, and estimates of primarily Spanish-language speakers in those areas.

| Cities | Total pop. | Hispanics | % | Est. SpSp¹⁵ |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Counties</i> | | | | |
| Austin | 746,835 | 261,672 | 35.0 | 65,418 |
| Pflugerville | 44,806 | 10,609 | 24.1 | 2,652 |
| <i>Travis</i> | 968,659 | 313,708 | 32.4 | 78,427 |
| San Antonio | 1,277,322 | 782,220 | 61.2 | 195,555 |
| <i>Bexar</i> | 1,588,536 | 911,852 | 57.4 | 227,963 |
| Cedar Park | 43,848 | 7,699 | 17.7 | 1,925 |
| Georgetown | 41,552 | 10,043 | 24.2 | 2,511 |
| Round Rock | 85,963 | 22,259 | 25.9 | 5,565 |
| <i>Williamson</i> | 372,109 | 77,547 | 20.8 | 19,387 |
| Buda* | 2,404 | 635 | 26.8 | 159 |
| Kyle* | 5,314 | 2,780 | 52.3 | 2,695 |
| San Marcos | 43,496 | 15,038 | 34.6 | 3,760 |
| <i>Hays</i> | 141,438 | 45,165 | 31.9 | 11,291 |
| New Braunfels | 52,619 | 17,431 | 33.1 | 4,358 |
| <i>Comal</i> | 104,722 | 25,966 | 24.8 | 6,492 |
| Texas | 23,845,989 | 8,566,395 | 35.9 | 2,141,599 |
| Chicago | 2,725,206 | 758,877 | 27.8 | 189,719 |
| <i>Cook</i> | 5,278,738 | 1,203,695 | 22.8 | 300,924 |
| Illinois | 12,890,014 | 1,910,423 | 14.9 | 477,606 |

Source: “American FactFinder” section of the United States Bureau of the Census. Population based on 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, except where noted with * in which case data are based on 2000 Census.

The Spanish-Language Media

The answer to the last questions in the previous section should be simple and straightforward: emergency communication could and should take place by way of the Spanish-language broadcast media (SLBM) in the various geographic areas. As illustrated below, in some locations these media are available; in other locations not as much. A common problematic pattern observed is that the infrastructure, policies and procedures for gathering and

disseminating emergency news and information are woefully limited or non-existent even when SLBM are present. Moreover, access to up-to-date and accurate information about the local area stations can be very challenging.¹⁶

The Spanish-Language Broadcast Media Landscape in Central Texas¹⁷

The landscape of the Spanish-language broadcast media in Central Texas has changed from the date this study was started in spring 2008 to the time it was written in late 2010. At least half a dozen SL radio stations stopped broadcasting in that language and/or changed ownership. Today, the cities of Austin and San Antonio each have various FM and AM radio stations, as well as TV outlets that offer Spanish-language content and also have production operations located in those cities (see Tables 2 and 3). At some of the TV stations that have local news staff, emergency news and information does get covered and transmitted. However, that is not the norm at the radio stations, and even at some of the TV stations the local news options are in short supply or do not exist.

The Spanish-Language Radio Landscape

In Austin there are currently five FM and five AM radio stations that broadcast full time in Spanish-language (SL) formats (see Table 2a and 2b). There are variations in watts of the transmissions, and in the distance that the radio signals cover. If they wished to do so, most Latinos in Austin could tune in to at least one SL radio station in the area. However, even though the strengths of the SL radio signals are either strong or very strong, nighttime AM signals are significantly diminished. This means that nighttime listeners many of the Austin SL AM stations would be out of signal range for receiving emergency news and information—including severe weather alerts.

San Antonio has even more Spanish-language radio stations serving its much larger Latino community: 8 FM stations, and 6 AM stations (see Table 3a and 3b). Again, while the wattage of the transmissions varies, the distances covered by the signals and the strengths of these would suggest that potentially all Spanish speaking residents in that city would potentially be within range for tuning into at least one of the SL stations for emergency news and information. Yet as is the case in Austin, nighttime listeners many of that city's SL AM stations would be out of signal range for receiving emergency news and information— including severe weather alerts.

Table 2: Select characteristics of the Spanish-language radio and TV stations in Austin

| 2a: FM stations | | | | Signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Format | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
|-----------------|--------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Call sign | FM frequency | Watts | Signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Format | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment | |
| K246BD | 97.1 | 99 | 15 | S | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |
| KLQB | 104.3 | 48,000 | 21.7 | S | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |
| KTXX | 104.9 | 3,200 | 13.1 | S | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |
| KLZT | 107.1 | 49,000 | 17.7 | S | Regional Mex. | no/no* | yes* | |
| KLJA | 107.7 | 10,500 | 19.3 | S | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |

| 2b: AM stations | | | | Daytime signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Call sign | AM frequency | Daytime watts | Nighttime watts | Daytime signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
| KWNX | 1260 | 1,000 | 144 | 25.1 | S | Sports | no/no |
| KELG | 1440 | 800 | 500 | 10.4 | VS | Religion | no/no |
| KFON | 1490 | 1,000 | same | 6.7 | VS | Religion | no/no |
| KTXZ | 1560 | 5,000 | 700 | 10.1 | VS | Tejano | no/no |
| KOKE | 1600 | 5,000 | 700 | 10.1 | VS | Regional Mex. | no/no |

| 2c: TV Stations | | | | Power in kilowatts | Transmission tower location | Signal distance | Signal strength | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Call sign | Channel | Power in kilowatts | Transmission tower location | Power in kilowatts | Transmission tower location | Signal distance | Signal strength | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
| KAKW | 62 | 45 | Kileen | 45 | Kileen | | VS | yes/yes | yes |
| KEYE | 42.2 | 1,000 | Austin | 1,000 | Austin | | S | yes/yes | yes |
| KADF-LP | 20 | 150 | Austin | 150 | Austin | | VW | no/no | no |

VS=Very Strong, S=Strong, M=Moderate, W=Weak, VW=Very Weak

Table 3: Select characteristics of the Spanish-language radio and TV stations in San Antonio

| 3a: FM stations | | | | Signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Format | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
|-----------------|--------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Call sign | FM frequency | Watts | Signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Format | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment | |
| KROM | 92.9 | 45,000 | 19.3 | S | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |
| K227BH | 93.3 | 115 | 11 | M | Religion | no/no | no | |
| KLEY | 94.1 | 11,000 | 38 | M | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |
| KG SX | 95.1 | 100,000 | 21.3 | S | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |
| KLMO | 98.9 | 92,000 | 58.1 | W | Religion | no/no | no | |
| KHHL | 103.1 | 34,000 | 52.1 | W | Sports | no/no | no | |
| KRIO | 104.1 | 100,000 | 52.6 | M | Regional Mex. | no/no | no | |
| KXTN | 107.5 | 98,000 | 19.3 | VS | Tejano | no/no | no | |

| 3b: AM stations | | | | Daytime signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Format | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Call sign | AM frequency | Daytime watts | Nighttime watts | Daytime signal distance in miles | Signal strength | Format | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
| KSAH | 720 | 10,000 | 890 | 20.9 | VS | Regional Mex. | no/no | no |
| KBIB | 1000 | 2,500 | 5,000 | 22.5 | S | Religion | no/no | no |
| KCOR | 1350 | 5,000 | 160 | 8.1 | VS | Talk | no/no* | no* |
| KWMF | 1380 | 4,000 | 1,000 | 31.2 | S | Religion | no/no | no |
| KBRN | 1500 | 250 | 1,000 | 28.1 | VW | Religion | no/no | no |
| KEDA | 1540 | 5,000 | 1,000 | 11.6 | VS | Tejano/Conjunto | no/no | no |

| 2c: TV Stations | | | | Power in kilowatts | Transmission tower location | Signal distance | Signal strength | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Call sign | Channel | Power in kilowatts | Transmission tower location | Signal distance | Signal strength | Local news/new staff | Remote news equipment | | |
| KVDF | 31 | 38 | San Antonio | VW | no | no | no | | |
| KVDA | 38 | 1,000 | San Antonio | yes/yes** | no | no | no | | |
| KWEX | 41 | 580 | San Antonio | yes/yes | yes | yes | yes | | |

VS=Very Strong, S=Strong, M=Moderate, W= Weak, VW=Very Weak

For Spanish-speaking residents of Central Texas, potentially the biggest handicap for access to immediate emergency news and information is that not a single one of the Austin or San Antonio FM or AM stations reported having their own news staff or remote news equipment. Thus, understandably, they do not air any local news programs on a regular scheduled basis. While accessibility to at least one Spanish-language radio station should not be a problem for Latinos residing in Austin or San Antonio, whether or not they would be provided prompt, ample, and continuous emergency news and information—other than the national weather service’s severe weather warnings—cannot be assured, at least not based on the data gathered during this study.¹⁸

There are a few exceptions to this scenario. Currently, only one Austin AM radio station, KELG—which broadcasts religious programming—airs sporadic local news stories during select programs. But neither this station nor any others in Austin have on their current schedule the offering of regular local news, much less the staff to gather news and transmit them from remote locations.¹⁹ Station KLZT in Austin operates out of the same facility that does the English-language news/talk station KLBJ-AM. In extraordinary cases, KLZT could provide Spanish-language emergency news if one of the KLBJ reporters were available to do so. Likewise, the KLBJ remote transmission equipment could be borrowed for a Spanish-language broadcast. In San Antonio, only Univisión’s station KCOR has local news briefs. But the station’s staff that compiles the local news briefs is not set up to gather local news from city hall, police or fire departments, emergency outreach responders or on the scenes. For the Univisión radio stations in Austin and San Antonio, emergency news reports (other than the required severe weather alerts) would depend on reporters and equipment from their respective city’s sister TV stations, KAKW and KWEX.

The scenario is more problematic for the non-metropolitan Central Texas cities listed in Table 1. Not even one of those has a single local Spanish-language radio or TV station with local production and transmission studios that could be potentially available to gather or transmit local emergency news and information. Those cities (excluding Austin and San Antonio) have more than 86,000 Latino residents, of which approximately 24,000 are primarily Spanish speakers.²⁰ Those Latinos would evidently have to depend on Spanish-language emergency news and information they could receive from the SL stations from Austin or from San Antonio. And that

reception would depend on the strength of the signals from those stations, which can reach some but not all the residents of those peripheral cities. Moreover, the number of people who would have access to those non-local stations would vary depending on the time of the day: the power of the signals varies significantly from daytime to nighttime, the latter of which are much weaker and thus less accessible (see geographic cover maps in Appendix D). And for them, as is the case of the Austin and San Antonio Latinos, access to Spanish-language radio news and information is uncertain given the lack of radio news staffs and operations.

The immediate accessibility to emergency news and information in Spanish via radio in Central Texas is even more challenging given that various radio stations in this area do not have any local content production or delivery (other than pre-recorded advertisements). Instead, they offer retransmissions of programs that originate elsewhere. For example, a large amount of the programming aired on Univisión radio stations (which are part of that company's vast radio network²¹) is often standardized content that originates in other cities (e.g., Los Angeles, Miami) and distributed via satellite to the radio network's stations with similar formats. Various radio stations that air religious programming are also networked for their content delivery. At these and other radio stations that do not have at all times in their studios a person who is fully qualified to receive a call, e-mail or fax about an emergency situation—and if needed interrupt a network transmission—to air an alert, there is prone to be a significant delay in getting vital and timely information to the listening audience. The delay might even affect the transmission in Spanish of severe weather alerts, which are usually broadcast upon being received by the station—albeit not necessarily in Spanish. Even for the exceptions noted above, the absence of their own on-staff persons to receive and transmit emergency information could be detrimental. It does not seem that radio stations have contingencies to alert their audiences in cases of sudden emergencies, such as a toxic gas spills, if these were to occur after normal staff hours.

The Spanish-Language Television Landscape

The Spanish-language television landscape in Central is less numerous and has its own characteristics for emergency news and information (see Tables 2c and 3c).²² In Austin, KAKW, channel 62, owned and operated by Univisión, has a 24-hour airtime presence with strong transmission signals that can reach a very wide area and thus most Spanish-speakers in the city and vicinities. In contrast to the area's SL radio stations, KAKW does have regular local news programs, staff and remote transmission equipment. During emergency situations, the station

would potentially be able to transmit the severe weather warning in Spanish, as well as assign news staff to cover the event on location. The word potentially is used because on various occasions, severe weather warnings have been aired only in English without any written or verbal translations to Spanish, and also because emergency situations have gone unreported. These situations have been observed more than once, particularly when the station has been airing national network programming or canned infomercials that have not been interrupted with local emergency news and information.²³

Another station, KEYE channel 42.2, is the local affiliate of the Telemundo network.²⁴ Although the transmission signals are not as strong or widespread as that of KAKW, they can reach most Spanish-language speakers in the Austin area and immediate vicinities. All its programs are retransmissions of the network's offerings, except two local news programs, which air at 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. KEYE-Telemundo is a partner operation with the well established and CBS affiliate English-language KEYE-42 television station, with which it shares studio facilities and remote news-gathering equipment. However, it has its own Spanish-speaking news staff, which, during emergencies does offer in that language reports from the studio or from remote locations. If needed, KEYE-42's local news staff could also be of assistance to the Spanish-language news team.

The third station is Azteca América's KADF channel 20, a low-power retransmitter of programs that originate almost entirely at the TV Azteca's production and corporate headquarters in Mexico City.²⁵ The strength of the signal and coverage area via airways is limited, making access to this station primarily dependent on cable hookups. The local content is scarce and no news staff or news transmission equipment is available. When local news events warrant coverage for the network, stringers (freelancers) gather information, send it to a contracted news production center in Dallas, which then selects stories to air in the regional news programs.

This means that for KADF, any emergency news development would therefore not receive immediate coverage.²⁶ In fact, any change in the programming preset and transmitted from Mexico or the news service out of Dallas would not be aired in less than 28 hours due to the technical set ups for the retransmissions. Therefore, any viewers dependent on this station would not be easily informed of critical news and information on a timely basis. The exception would be regarding emergency alert warnings, which have to be relayed immediately. However, due

the absence of local personnel at the local studios, those warning get transmitted in English instead of Spanish.

The SL television landscape in San Antonio is similar to that of Austin. There, too there is a long-standing Univisión station, KWEX; a Telemundo station, KVDA; and a TV Azteca relay operation KDVF (see Table 3c). The first of these has a 24-hour airtime presence with strong transmission signals that can reach a very wide area and thus most Spanish speakers in the San Antonio metropolitan area and vicinities. KWEX also has regular local news programs, news staff and remote transmission equipment. During emergency situations, this Spanish-language station would potentially be able to assign news staff to cover the event on location and—if allowed to interrupt national programming—air the developing news and information.

KVDA also has a strong signal and 24-hour air presence that could reach most Spanish speakers in that city. In mid-2010, its local full-time news staff consisted of one reporter and one cameraperson. What these staff persons cannot cover is assigned to freelance reporters. Local news programs are assembled at the regional level in Dallas and then transmitted to affiliates. During major floods and other inclement weather situations, newsbreaks have been aired outside of the regular news programs. The limited full-time local news staff and the reliance on regional news assemblage, however, could potentially hamper emergency news offerings.

KDVF, on the other hand, has a low power, very local signal only. Like its sister station in Austin, and in a similar set up to KDVA, it does not have a local news presence. Instead, it relies on a Dallas news service provider for the assembly of regional news programming, although local stations can gather some news and information. The more critical problem for KDVF viewers is the delay in the timely reception of ongoing crisis information. As stated above, the Azteca affiliate stations require 28 hours to interfere or modify preset programming.

Media Landscape Summary

Given the scenarios described above, it could be surmised that in emergency situations, the Spanish-speaking communities of Central Texas might face challenges in being *promptly and extensively* informed about an imminent or ongoing calamity caused by nature or humans. This means not only having access to severe weather alerts generated by the national or regional weather bureaus and retransmitted in English or possibly in Spanish, but also to updated and regular news and information about what is happening during the crisis, where to go for assistance

if injured or in need of food or shelter, or in a worse case scenario how to expeditiously and safely evacuate an area affected by a toxic spill or other life-threatening calamity.

Audiences of the Telemundo and Univisión stations might be better informed because these outlets have news staff of their own that could offer emergency news and information. These two stations also have the capacity to provide remote transmission of developing or ongoing news stories. However, the prompt and extensive dissemination of emergency alerts, news and information would be unlikely if the crises situation were to develop when the stations are transmitting pre-recorded or externally syndicated content that is not interrupted. Worse still would be if the crisis emerges when the stations are operating after hours when no staff person is available to receive, translate if necessary, and disseminate alerts and other information. The audiences of the Telemundo-Austin station might be promptly informed if the news staff of that outlet or if a Spanish-speaking staff person of the English-language affiliated station were rapidly placed on camera to deliver the breaking/developing crises news and information. We could not ascertain if the Telemundo-San Antonio station, or if the Univisión stations in Central Texas have contingencies for transmitting live crisis information after the normal news operations have been completed. We do know that the Azteca TV stations audiences would not receive any local news and information other than possibly an English-language scroll. But during a critical weather or other crises that knock out power, television—be it in Spanish or in English—would be useless as a source for those without power.

Under such circumstances, Spanish-speakers who rely on radio could be particularly shortchanged if they are tuned into the SL stations that do not have their own news personnel or any staff person at the station who makes an effort to disseminate weather alerts and other relevant information. The least amount of information would be forthcoming from stations that primarily depend on receiving emergency content from external sources. In Central Texas the prompt and extensive dissemination of emergency alerts, news and information via SL radio would be very unlikely if the crisis situation were to develop when the stations are operating after hours and transmitting pre-recorded or externally syndicated content. Of course, the same is true for English-language radio stations in the region. The difference is that in Austin and San Antonio, there is at least one English-language station in each city that has 24-hour on-site staff that could offer emergency news and information.

The limitations for Spanish-speaking audiences are incremented by the fact that the stations are not even required to transmit severe weather advisories, alerts or warnings, much less in Spanish. This means that Spanish-speaking audiences might hear alerts and warnings, but not necessarily understand what is being said unless someone at the local station translates and offers that information whenever it is delivered, day or night, even after normal operating hours.

These scenarios, as summarized above, do not imply that during some critical weather situations the Spanish-language radio and TV stations Central Texas have not disseminated emergency alerts. In fact, at times some stations have done so extensively and those stations that care and are able to inform their audiences are certain to continue offering that crucial information within the means of their respective resources. This was made evident in a letter that Ann Arnold, the President of the Texas Association of Broadcasters, sent to this author on November 4, 2010. That letter offers numerous examples of what some of the region's Spanish-language stations aired during severe weather conditions in early fall 2010. The circumstances and timing surrounding Arnold's letter and concerns about this research/report, as well as this author's response are such that they warrant a separate section of this document. For those details, please see the section entitled "An Informative Misunderstanding" in "Phase 2: The *Latinos a Salvo* Forum" segment of this report.

The examples of the weather alerts provided by the stations cited by Arnold are commendable and appreciated, especially because that information was not made available to this researcher and his assistants during the field research phase of this project. Also appreciated are the clarifications she provided regarding government policies related to emergency alerts. However, what is left uncertain is whether the SL stations in Central Texas, given their limited human and technical resources could provide crucial *news and information* other than weather alerts, and if the stations could promptly and reliably provide translated emergency alerts about other types of crises situations regardless of what time of day or night these occur.

The Websites

The summary of findings of this section must begin with a very important caveat: websites are very dynamic as they are subject to updates and even overhauls that can take place overnight. Thus, the following observations based on the assessments conducted between 2008 and 2009 reflect what was found then—but might not represent the more current status of those websites. Also, some sites certainly do offer more and better information than others.²⁷ That

said, some patterns did emerge that merit attention for improving outreach efforts to Spanish-language speakers in Central Texas and elsewhere.

First, not all agencies offer on their respective websites a full range of information in any language other than English. Second, while some websites offer in multiple languages the basic information of the opening page (e.g., www.texas.gov/), only some of the other pages, internal links, and downloadable documents are translated. Third, even when content in Spanish or other languages is provided, the information is not easily found or can be reached within a click or two—if at all. Referrals to Spanish-language sections were hard to find: either the location was not easily visible at first glance, and/or the font size for such section was particularly small.

Under these circumstances, even in the advent of the age of the Internet, steps have not been taken to thoroughly provide in multiple languages emergency-related information that can be found and accessed with ease. This poses a potential barrier for those who seek this venue for guidance to prepare for or recover from emergency situations. Even journalists of ethnic-oriented media, who could be expected to have more skills in computer searches, might not promptly or easily find information to share with his/her audience or readers.

The challenge of providing web-based information in multiple languages is understandable. Professional translators are required when an office does not have a staff person who is fully versed in languages other than English and who could provide as part of his/her job impeccable translations. Yet this does not diminish the potential negative outcomes that can arise from not having information in other languages especially when—as is the case in Central Texas and other regions—a large proportion of the population is not English-language dominant.

Another problematic area with respect to Internet-based information stems from the websites of the Spanish-language broadcast media. With these, two patterns were most evident and recurring. First, few sites of the radio stations have sections specifically dedicated to local news and information. This is a reflection of those stations' modus operandi and summarized in the findings in a previous section of this report. Without local news staff, it follows that there is no one at the station who can be alert to and then update the station's Internet site about impending or developing crises or any sort of emergency warnings and information. This would not necessarily be the case with the TV stations that have local news staff, but it is when the news components of those stations' websites are not updated on a regular basis. It thus follows that if

there is no news-focused person or web master on call and able to update the local urgent news alerts as they occur, that type of information will not be evident in a station's website.

The second, problematic area with the SL media web sites is the availability of the names, phones, or e-mails of emergency contact persons at each station. While local government agency first responders might have knowledge of the key persons and their information, such is not always the case. This type of gap was ascertained in our interviews with some government agency representatives who were not aware of the diversity of Spanish-language media in the area, or of the persons to contact for dissemination of information—especially after normal operating hours of the stations. Even the basic, minimal switchboard phone numbers of the stations are not easily listed, if at all, on many of the broadcast media web sites scrutinized.

These aforementioned conditions are all barriers to rapid dissemination of emergency news and information via Internet sources. When coupled with the absence of local news offerings via radio, and even with the characteristics of the offerings via television, a conclusion can be drawn that with respect to options for immediate news and information sources during emergency conditions, large segments of the Spanish-speaking populations of Central Texas are potentially or actually at risk.

The Interviews

Information gathered from Internet sites, printed and electronic sources is very telling, but does not offer a full understanding of the status of the emergency communication policies and practices. For additional insights, we turn to the findings from the face-to-face interviews.

Government Officials

Two of the common denominators stemming from the interviews with government officials are (1) there is an acknowledgement of the challenges of reaching out to non-English-speaking populations during emergencies, and (2) there are limited human resources—due to the lack of dedicated financial resources—to provide the full range of the information needed by those segments of the population.

On the first issue, city, county and state officials recognized the importance of striving to provide the public—regardless of language abilities—with the information needed to assure their safety. Never did we detect any ill will or prejudice towards Latinos or others who are not fluent in English. It was also clear that the safety of the community at large was interrelated with the safety of the non-English-speakers: if members of the latter group were not properly informed

and advised on how to proceed during emergencies, the safety of other members of the community members could be at peril.

On the second issue, the *modus operandi* can be characterized as a “default system” in which agencies assume that they can count on or have sufficient Spanish-speaking staff members who can be called upon when needed during emergencies. Upon inquiring if specific plans were at hand to assure that *at all times and types of emergencies* there would be bilingual speakers from the agency, the usual answers were “no.” However, to enhance the number of potential Spanish speakers among its staff the City of Austin, for example, provides financial incentives to bilingual employees who are then assets for outreach work that requires that language. We cannot report here whether or not this is a common practice across all agencies.²⁸

The interviews with government officials yielded two additional findings that merit mention pertaining to emergency management agencies’ relations with Spanish-language media. First, agencies may not be “up to speed” on (a) the diversity of those media and (b) the vacuum of news operations at the radio stations.²⁹ The operating assumption of emergency agency personnel is that the media, including Spanish-language broadcast media, disseminate promptly and broadly the emergency related information that is produced. The absence of news programs at the radio stations, and the limited hours at which some TV stations offer even emergency news was not common knowledge among all government people we talked to.³⁰ Moreover, some interviewees were surprised to learn that at Spanish-language stations, emergency alerts were often broadcast in English instead of Spanish.

This leads to the second finding about the relationships with Spanish-language media: the paucity of reporters who attend press conferences and other informational activities hosted by emergency offices. This implies that information that emergency offices prepare for dissemination as well as training of reporters will not easily reach the Spanish-language media and by extension also not reach the audiences of those media.

The counter-argument from the SL media is that the information is not provided in Spanish, and lacking human resources of their own, those media cannot engage with the English-language information and then translate it on short notice for distribution via their respective outlets.

What can be summarized from these interviews is that the ultimate outcome of the *modus operandi* contributes to Spanish-dependent audiences being handicapped regarding timely information stemming from the government offices that deal with emergency situations.

Media Representatives

One of the most important findings from the interviews with the media representatives we could talk to face-to-face was the explanation of the absence of any local news operations among the radio stations in Central Texas. Whatever local news operations existed when the radio stations were locally owned and operated by individuals or small business entities had been dismantled altogether in the era of conglomerate or corporate ownership. The justification was the economy: news operations cost money and do not yield financial returns worth the investments required for these to continue.³¹ In essence, news production and expenditures was not compatible with their current business model.

The interviews also confirmed that given that there is no FCC rule that requires broadcast stations to transmit emergency alerts in any language, management does not feel *obligated* to offer information beyond the station's own staff capacity. The onus is passed on to the government, which management believes should provide all emergency information in Spanish.

More problematic was the learning that even severe weather alerts that are transmitted by general market English-language stations do not always find their way on some Spanish-language stations. For example, at a radio station in Austin, during the visit for the face-to-face interviews, we also scrutinized the public files for evidence of transmission of severe emergency alerts. A few days before the date of that visit in Spring 2009, a tornado watch had been issued in the area. We observed that the station's logs did not reflect that such alert had been transmitted at that station. When the station's engineer was asked when was the last time that severe weather alerts had been aired at his station, he replied that it was done when an ice storm hit the area *in winter 2007*. It is plausible that warnings about other tornados, storms, or floods might thus have not reached the audiences of that station.

The interviews further revealed that at the Spanish-language TV stations, the barriers for dissemination of emergency news and information are not as high when local news staff and technical resources are available, when management has the authority to interrupt pre-scheduled syndicated programming or can assemble extraordinary live news reports outside of the scheduled news times. However, the barriers can emerge if a station has only small local news

staff and limited technical resources such as remote transmission equipment. The reliance on freelancers or stringers or on regional rather than local news assemblage can hamper the speed at which emergency news gets covered and aired. The biggest barriers to speedy dissemination are when a public emergency unfolds while the station is airing a syndicated network program and the local station is not authorized to pre-empt that transmission with a local emergency story. Another barrier is when an emergency occurs or continues even after the local evening news is assembled and aired. Without the human resources to offer live coverage, any emergency coverage follow up would have to wait until the next day's newscasts—even if a program that comes after a scheduled news show is an infomercial. The reason for this is again economics: extraordinary coverage and live transmissions require human resources and cost money that some stations claim they do not have.

Two specific cases, one encouraging, the other one not, merit elaboration. On the positive side, a telephone conversation with the general manager of the Austin Telemundo station revealed that since the launch of that outlet in October 2009, extraordinary efforts were regularly being made to cover ongoing emergency and crises news events including the floods caused by the storms in mid-September. The extended coverage incorporated newsbreaks during non-regular news times and efforts were made to air news flashes every time its English-language CBS co-owned station would do so. This type of rapid and extended coverage certainly significantly enhances the safety of Latinos in the Austin area.

On the other hand, the most egregious example of barriers to getting emergency news and information to emerged from a conversation with a representative of Austin's Azteca America station. According to him, it is the government's obligation to provide information in Spanish and if the government wanted to get emergency alert to his station's audiences, it should take over the transmissions. He would not be able to interrupt his station's programming even if a train derailed down the street and a toxic plume was affecting the local area. The reason, he pointed out, is the operating structure of that station, which is set up to primarily retransmit content from Mexico. Thus, his networks' stations are not set up to incorporate local content with less than 28 hours advance notice. Given that no government agency is set up to "take over" the transmissions of any stations, especially not during *local* emergencies, audiences of Azteca stations are not prone to promptly be informed of any impending emergency crises that could affect them. The exception would be if they received the emergency alert signals, which

they would receive (but then have to understand) in English. That same representative added that he is not even required to have public files for review. Thus, we could not ascertain if Azteca stations air public service information of value for its audiences to prepare for or recover from emergency situations.

On this latter point, a final finding from visits to the radio stations was the paucity of *local* public service content observed in many *of the public files that were scrutinized*. Although the time period (one or two quarters of the year 2009 reports) was short, most PSAs were for national causes; few dealt with emergency preparedness. This was not the case at the Univisión TV stations in Texas and Chicago, or the Telemundo station in Chicago. The public files of the Telemundo station in Austin were not visited.

When these findings are taken altogether, they raise concerns about the situation faced by Spanish-language speakers who depend on local Spanish-language radio emergency news and information. While the situation is better via some of the TV outlets, it is not optimal—especially at stations with limited resources or if they cannot offer immediate local content. Other than the English-language severe weather alerts, many Spanish speakers might not receive timely and accurate news, information, alerts or warnings that could help them safeguard their lives and property.

Community Leaders

The community leaders interviewed in Texas agreed on the value of enhancing the government's *and* the media's efforts to provide multi-language emergency information. Interestingly, leaders affiliated with city governments thought that while there was a need for additional Spanish-speaking personnel at their respective entities, past crises situations (e.g., hurricanes Ike and Rita) had been adequately handled. Leaders outside of government offices considered that more bilingual staff and Latino-focused strategies were in dire need.

Separate from the interviews directly related to this project, this author, while attending social and cultural gatherings in the Austin area, had multiple opportunities to converse about this project with members and leaders of civic and business organizations. During those very informal talks the most revealing fact was how little awareness those leaders had of the limitations faced by Spanish-language speakers during emergency situations. One reason for that low awareness is their dual language fluency. Practically each of those leaders pointed out that as primarily English-language speakers, they get their news in English and that they are not

regularly tuned into or rely on Spanish-language media weather or emergency alerts. That said, each of those leaders also supported making positive amends to the current state of affairs.

Other Interviews

As mentioned above, one of the most productive face-to-face meetings was with Ann Arnold, President of the Texas Association of Broadcasters. Among the things learned during that conversation was that problems with emergency communication policies and procedures are not restricted to Spanish-language media. In fact, she pointed out, there are many other problems endemic in the current emergency communications modus operandi of government agencies, the (lack of) coordination among federal and state agencies, and the interfaces between those and the general market broadcast media. As she stated during the interview and then reiterated in a subsequent letter (see Appendix B), the single biggest problem that broadcasters face in trying to provide alerts and warnings to the public is that:

“While the FCC requires every radio and television broadcaster to be equipped to receive warnings and rebroadcast that information to their audiences, nobody – not the FCC, nor FEMA, nor the Department of Homeland Security – makes even the mildest suggestion that state or local governments should provide warnings for broadcasters about any emergencies.”

Also, correcting a statement she noted in an early draft version of this report, she adds in that same letter (see Appendix B):

“FCC regulations do not require all stations to air an Emergency Alert Signal or even a national presidential alert. The rules always have allowed stations that do not want to participate in EAS to indicate they are nonparticipating stations and to go off the air rather than transmit any EAS order from the president. Similarly there are no FCC requirements regarding what level of National Weather Service alarms must be carried on a station or cable operator. Rules require every station to have operational EAS equipment capable of receiving and rebroadcasting an EAS message. Each station, however, is free to program their equipment to activate on whatever specific EAS messages they want to air.”

Not surprisingly, to overcome the current shortcomings in emergency communications pertaining to non-English-speaking populations she believes that efforts should be:

“...directed toward the government agencies responsible for alerting Americans that are not providing Spanish language versions of warnings for broadcasters to use. It is more reasonable and cost effective to expect the governmental entity generating an alert to provide the message in whatever languages are appropriate, i.e. a substantial proportion of the audience needs. [...] Clearly there is much room for improvement in the way governmental agencies utilize EAS technology and local broadcasters’ unique ability to instantly communicate emergency information to entire communities.”

With respect to the current performance of the Spanish-language broadcast media during emergencies, her letter adds:

“... there is no doubt that local broadcasters do an outstanding job saving lives and preparing audiences for emergencies because of their singular commitment to serving their local communities. The public is safer because of the extraordinary efforts of local broadcasters before and after disaster strikes, despite the reluctance of government entities to partner with stations in delivering emergency information.”

From Arnold’s letter and conversation, two points stand out. First, that federal as well as state government agencies should do a much better job at providing emergency communications to the broadcast stations, including Spanish language and other ethnic-minority language stations. Second, the government should not enact additional regulations that would require stations to air news, information or public service content related to emergency communications.

On the other hand, conversations with David Honig, President & Executive Director of the Washington, DC-based Minority Media & Telecommunications Council, pointed in another direction: without FCC or other government requirements or regulations, broadcast media are not going to be inclined to significantly enhance their news and information output during emergency situations. More specifically, without FCC rules that require it, there will probably not be any agreement among all the stations that serve a local community to assure, for example, that at English-language stations multiple languages are used to transmit emergency information if at any time all the minority language stations are knocked off the air due any type of calamity. Honig cited various examples of failed efforts in this arena, and also shared a document that points to the limitations of the most recent standardization alert systems.³²

Pointing to a shortcoming of the Common Alerting System (CAP) he states in that document, for example, that:

“...CAP, all by itself, cannot ensure that multilingual emergency warnings will reach those without access to mobile phones or other non-broadcast devices, since an emergency may silence a market’s only multilingual station. Further, CAP does not provide the comprehensive information people need in an emergency – how to seek shelter; where to find food; when it is safe to return; how to be safe upon returning; where to obtain medical assistance; how to find missing loved ones. Only local terrestrial radio’s regular programming is suited to perform that vital function.” [emphasis is original]

To improve the emergency communication outreach to people who speak languages other than English, in the same document, Honig thus recommends:

“In addition to warnings, all radio listeners ought to expect that when they surf the dial before, during or after an emergency, they will find at least one station providing, in their widely spoken language, information about how and where to evacuate, where to find medical assistance, food and shelter, how to locate missing loved ones, and when it is safe to return home. That is the least our nation’s broadcasters should provide to all of their listeners in return for the protected use of valuable and free spectrum. If a broadcast license means anything at all, it should mean that every broadcaster will cooperate to save lives in an emergency.”

Summary of the Interviews

Succinctly stated, three views emerge from the interviews. First, unquestionably all sources agree that improvements are needed in the policies and practices of emergency communications pertaining to Spanish- and other ethnic-minority language speaking populations. Second, government does and should play an important role in such matters. Third, there is disagreement regarding what regulatory strategies the government should require or not to initiate the needed changes with the media. This author’s stance on this latter point is presented in the conclusions and recommendations that follow.

CONCLUSIONS OF FIELD WORK RESEARCH

One of the obvious conclusions that may be drawn from this study and report is that there are evidently many shortcomings in the communication policies and practices pertaining to non-English-speaking populations. The limitations abound in government jurisdictions as well as with broadcast media. Another conclusion echoes the last paragraph of the previous section: significant improvements are urgently needed to ensure the security and safety of non-English-speaking communities, and by extension society at large.

The *fact* that millions of people's security, lives and property are potentially at risk due to the absence of timely news and information available via the radio stations they have access to in their preferred language is deplorable. This would be even more execrable if they were stranded, left adrift or perished in the event of an actual major calamity. And while some television outlets can and do offer timely news and information, most do not. Even so, television is no recourse for people on the run from a developing calamity, or of much help for the millions of Spanish-speaking farmhands who while working the fields, might only be able to listen to entertaining music and not warnings of an impending hailstorm, tornado, flash flood, or a rapidly deploying toxic cloud from a nearby chemical accident. These concerns do not emerge from unlikely scenarios; in different places and times, they've already happened. Such tragedies and the practices that cause them are nothing less than deplorable.

This report could easily be expanded to provide additional examples of the shortcomings of current emergency communication policies and practices, and why these can be considered an "Achilles heel," which implies, in this case, that the safety of a larger social body is hampered by the weaknesses and challenges faced by a few, whomever they may be.

However, as stated above, the main objective of this endeavor is to build on the knowledge gained from the assessments in order to propose and act on solutions. That is precisely the focus of final section of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous recommendations can be proposed building on what was learned from this research project and its findings as summarized in these pages. The recommendations are divided into categories of to whom they are addressed: Emergency response government agencies, Federal Communications Commission, Spanish-language broadcast media, academic units, and business and community leaders. As will be evident, some of the recommendations require collaboration between representatives of these entities.

For Government Agencies that Deal with Emergencies

Every government agency that deals with emergency communications should have staff, preferably full time and at all times, that can communicate effectively in the language or languages called for by the largest ethnic-minority communities in the agency's jurisdiction, be it local, state or regional. It is not within the realm of this report to suggest which languages should be covered. But for sure, in Central Texas as well as Chicago and surrounding areas there is a need and urgency to have sufficient number of staff that can communicate correctly and effectively in Spanish. In the foreseeable future, these locations are certain to have thousands of residents—many if not most of whom are U.S. citizens³³—whose main language is Spanish. For them and for the Latino-oriented media that serve these communities, Spanish-language information should be made available in multiple formats, including printed materials, audiovisual outlets, Internet sites, and even messages on designated telephone-based answering machines when appropriate. Having qualified staff to prepare such materials and then to be personally available to assist during actual emergencies is imperative.³⁴

A very important provision in the training and designation of the multi-language staff persons is that they be available to disseminate information directed to and in response to queries from ethnic-oriented media—*especially at peak times during the unfolding of actual emergencies*. Having multi-language staff persons who are so immersed in their routine tasks that would impede them from responding to at least media inquiries would not enhance the communication strategies needed to increase the safety of those ethnic communities. And having just one “do it all” person is not optimal. That person might not be able to make it to work that day, or might be so busy translating an urgent message that calls and other electronic or press inquiries would be left unanswered. In essence, multi-language staff persons are important, but so is their availability at critical times.

Increasing the number of multi-lingual staff is a challenge in times of fiscal restrictions and cuts in government coffers. But while hiring full-time staff versed in more than one language would be ideal, it is not the only solution. Efforts can and should be directed to increasing the number of qualified *volunteers* to help with all types of multi-language communication outreach during emergencies. During our research, we learned of such programs that have been existed only to be dropped when a key staff person has resigned and not replaced. We also learned of the challenges of obtaining security clearance for some volunteers. Both challenges are not insurmountable if the directors of the government agencies make it a priority to enhance these strategies. Special funds can be requested, at a minimum, to expand the recruitment of potential volunteers. Even the process of training the multi-lingual staff as well as volunteers has cost-effective options when done in collaboration with academic institutions. Details about this latter point are presented in a separate section.

For the FCC and Other Regulatory Agencies

The most important recommendation to regulatory agencies is that emergency alerts—including but not limited to only the severe weather warnings—should be *required* to be transmitted in the language that the licensed stations operates. The demographic-linguistic landscapes, as illustrated in Table 1 of this report, and the layout of the ethnic-oriented broadcast media justify this strategy that should apply for radio and TV stations, even the low-powered stations. The same is true for hundreds of regions and ethnic-oriented broadcast media across the country. Efforts are in process to establish multi-language emergency alerts that might emerge in the case of a national-level crisis. The same should be assured for regional and local emergencies, where the vast majority of crises situations unfold on a daily basis.

A parallel recommendation is that provisions be made to *require* that the multiple languages emergency alerts get transmitted *at any time of the day as needed*. It can no longer be the case that stations promise to offer in-house translation services, but only during normal operating hours (e.g., 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday to Fridays). To make possible 24/7 transmissions of emergency alerts, current or new technologies should be set up wherever they currently do not exist. In another section below, options for this type of set up are discussed.

A third regulatory recommendation is that *all* ethnic-serving broadcast stations keep in their public files (a) records of how they have set up the provisions for the non-English-language emergency alerts, and (b) logs of any and all instances of the transmission of those alerts.

Connected to the previous point, the fourth and final regulatory recommendation is that all ethnic-oriented stations that fail to broadcast emergency alerts in the language they transmit should be held accountable if they do not fulfill that community service obligation. This accountability should stand, regardless of whether or not a station receives the emergency alerts in English or in the station's language. Without the regulations and reports confirming the requirements are being followed, little change of the current status quo would be promptly forthcoming. The next section turns to recommendations for the broadcast stations and proposes technology options that can help facilitate the implementation of the multi-language transmissions.

For Ethnic-Language Broadcast Media

The first recommendation for the stations that broadcast in Spanish or any other ethnic language: if not already in place, is to immediately set up operation mechanisms (e.g., human and technology resources) that will guarantee the transmission of emergency alerts *regardless of what day or time these are received, and even if the alerts are received only in English.*

When staff persons are not available to go on air to offer ethnic-language versions of emergency alerts, then technology should be in place and used to trigger at least computer-generated messages in the required language. The technology already exists for the translation of emergency alerts. If not at hand, it should be obtained and used. Pre-recorded messages can be set up to broadcast something like “impending _____ weather situation. For further information, go to _____ web site, or call this number...”³⁵

More than just alerts, stations should be set up to provide on a regular basis emergency related news and information for the preparation stage, the mitigation stage, and for any recovery that may be called for. Moreover, when staff persons are not available to provide this, then technology can assist in such matters. For example, pre-recorded messages can be set up stating, at a minimum, “for _____ emergency related need, go to _____ web site, or call this number...”

Low-income people without a computer will have little or no use for the Internet based resources. However, such resources may be of subsequent value, an even more so for people who have smart phones with Internet capabilities. Regardless, providing at least options at which the greeting message is in the preferred language can make a major difference in the safety and/or recovery of the persons in need.

Ideally, all broadcast stations, regardless of the language in which they transmit, should have paid staff on call to assist in the broadcasting of any and all types of emergency news and information. Currently, financial limitations might not make that possible at most stations. For those, and any others that could only make offer emergency information with the aid of technology, new options could be set into place to make that more feasible. For example, general managers of stations, as well as their staff in the designated chain of command, could remotely trigger the stations to transmit emergency alerts and other warnings. With the use of their smart phone, they could call in a special number that would override the prerecorded or satellite programming and broadcast instead at a minimal a basic warning or a phone number to call alluded to above.³⁶ The pre-recorded audio messages (or written scroll for TV) could also guide the audience to tune in to some other broadcast source that is currently transmitting information live. While that would immediately cause a drop in that station's audience, which some advertisers and the station's accountants and stock holders would not appreciate, in crises situations the safety of the audience should take absolute precedence. On the other hand, broadcast stations can also use emergency management as a sales pitch in their advertising to garner more audience members and increase their advertisement costs to make amends with their accountants. If a station packages the technology as a innovative idea to be used in the interest of protecting its audience, other stations will soon follow as to not want to seem that they don't care. This strategy could definitely start a trend.

The recommendation that radio stations have their own staff for providing emergency news and information is less feasible in times of limited advertising revenues. But it is not insurmountable with alternative, creative options. Two can be recommended. The first would be the establishing of a pool of well-trained and very reliable human resources who would be willing and able to gather and share—be it in Spanish or some other language as needed—vital information during crises situations. Freelance reporters, community informers, journalism students and retired journalists are among the potential human resources that could be tapped to be properly trained for gathering and disseminating emergency news and information pertaining to variety of crises conditions in their local communities. Even insurance agents, who also know their communities well, could be trained to observe and share via smart phones and other electronic tools at least basic information such as which roads and streets are flooded, downed trees that block transit, which shelters are fully operation and with space and which should not be

overtaxed. When proper protocols and safeguards are established for the gathering and dissemination of this type of news and information, broadcast stations should no longer face the challenge that they cannot afford to have their own reporters in order to inform their audiences. What the stations would nevertheless need is the will and mechanism to orderly relay the information.

These human resources could be of value for government emergency agencies, too. Well-trained, reliable and with proper protocols in place, these could be the early eyes and ears providing crucial and timely information that would otherwise have to wait until the official government responders can arrive to affected areas, assess the situation, and then start the relay process to their agencies, who then take even more time to relay to the public via the media.

The second recommendation for radio stations that do not have their own staff is to consider relaying the news and information that is being broadcast by some other radio or even TV station that does offer those vital services. While some costs may be involved in setting up this type of coordinated transmission, and competitive corporate interests may be initial barriers, the value of providing timely information should be much higher than the cost of human lives or property damaged due to the lack of the emergency information.

This latter recommendation should also be considered for television stations that might during some emergency be short on their own staff, or face technical problems that impede the production of their own emergency related news. For example, if their reporters are trapped in a flood or fire and cannot send live signals, or if the station's studios can relay signals, but are flooded or damaged in ways that do not allow for on site reporting. In major crises, the stakes might be too high to not consider a short-term collaboration the most imperative communication strategy to assure the safety of the audience.

Another recommendation related to broadcast media is that arrangements be made to assure that during major calamities, multi-language messages be aired via English-language stations if and when ethnic-broadcast stations are knocked off the air. The messages can be as simple as those mentioned above. In this case, a message could be disseminated with voice or, for TV, scrolled that states, for example, "for information in [language] about this situation, call [some number that is working and can handle many calls], tune in to [some operating station in a frequency not familiar to the area's public], and/or go to this web site..." FCC and other

government representatives, advocacy groups, and broadcast media companies have discussed this collaborative option. However, to date there has been no agreement on its implementation.³⁷

A final recommendation in this rubric: if emergency communication plans do not exist, they should be developed and implemented at all levels of the company. A key component should be the multiple levels of command that should be set up to guarantee the continuity of transmissions if and when key people or top management are unable to do so.

Related to all the previous recommendations, special mention is warranted regarding the multi-language emergency alert system that the organization New America Media has been developing. When fully operational, it will allow the managers and others affiliated with ethnic-media to receive quick alerts from government emergency dealing with emergencies and crises situations.

For Academic Units

A major recommendation for academic units is the incorporation of multi-cultural and multi-language short-term modules or long-term courses pertaining to a variety of emergency communication issues.³⁸ Some of those modules/courses should be generic and applied beyond the geographic areas served by the university or college. Other training should be specific to the local region and local populations. Such education material and knowledge should not be restricted to students on campus. It could and should be extended to journalists, communication professionals, and even to government and other employees who in some capacity deal with or are responsible for managing emergency situations of different types. The collaborative efforts between academia and other sectors of society are germane to the mission of any university and of great value to the partnering entities. Well-trained students develop into more qualified future professionals for employment options in the emergency communications arena, including media outlets that seek staff with those skills.

Another recommendation for academic units is that they at least occasionally sponsor and host forums, conferences, and other gathering that bring together media, government, community leaders, and businesses that can benefit from knowing about each other and their otherwise independent efforts related to emergency communication issues. In 2009, the University of Georgia sponsored and hosted a gathering that for the first time in the state, brought government officials, ethnic media, community leaders and others to know about each other and their corresponding roles as they related to the region's ethnic communities and services. In

November 2010, the Center for the Study of Latino Media and Markets and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University served as hosts and sponsors of a forum titled Latinos A Salvo. The goal of this event, bringing together government, media, community leaders and businesses was to seek ways to enhance emergency communications pertaining to Latinos in Central Texas. Other academic units could follow these examples, which do contribute to increasing the security of ethnic-communities and the population at large.

For Business and Community Leaders

The main recommendation for business and community leaders is that they take action and even advocacy roles that can contribute to the development and implementation of enhanced emergency communication strategies. Government offices, media organizations and academic units often do react positively when business and community leaders propose ideas and advocate for action on issues of common interest. When the modus operandi of either government or media outlets is not as optimal as it could and should be to safeguard all members of a community, business interests are at stake. Insurance companies, for example, can suffer major losses when their customers are under or ill advised about impending storms. They can also suffer major losses when people they insure are negatively impacted by people whom they do not insure err in what to do or how to proceed during, for example, a rapid and massive evacuation. In such instances, the analogy of the title of this report once again can be applied: least informed and misguided few can become the Achilles heel of the safety of the community at large.

The closing words of field research part of this report are to reiterate that its goal is to enhance the communication strategies that can improve the security of non-English-language speakers as well as all members of any community that are in potential danger of calamities caused by nature or by humans. As this report is circulated, it is certain to be followed by feedback, critiques, and other commentaries. Regardless of the type of responses this provokes, if it nevertheless contributes to one or many steps that positively change the current deplorable policies and practices in emergency communications pertaining to non-English-speaking populations, then the raison d'être of this research project and report will have been accomplished.

PHASE 1: THE *LATINOS A SALVO* FORUM

OVERVIEW

To culminate this phase of this emergency communications project, on November 5, 2010, the Center for the Study of Latino Media and Markets (The Center) at Texas State University hosted at that campus a forum entitled “*Latinos a Salvo.*”³⁹ As stated in the introductory pages of that day’s program⁴⁰:

The ultimate goal of this forum is to enhance communication strategies, including the policies and practices, directed to vulnerable populations. In the Central Texas region, this refers primarily to non-English-speaking residents, the majority of which are of Latino heritage. The event will start with a report that assesses the prevalent strategies of government offices that deal with emergencies, and by Spanish-language broadcast media in the region. This will be followed by presentations by national leaders in this arena. However, the most important component of the forum will be the ideas, recommendations, and other forms of input from all participants. To meet the proposed goal of this forum, we must begin by considering and then implementing collaborative plans of action to significantly improve communication strategies that will benefit the communities in the region, state and the nation as a whole.

After the welcoming protocols, the morning session of the forum started with the delivery by this author of a summary of the report in these pages,⁴¹ followed by 20-30 minute presentations by: Dr. Manuel Chávez, Associate Professor at the College of Communication Arts & Sciences, Michigan State University; Sandy Close, Executive Director of New America Media; and Margarita Quihuis, Researcher at the Stanford University Persuasive Technology Lab. A lunchtime keynote talk was by delivered Francisco Montero, Co-Managing Partner Fletcher, Heald & Hildreth, P.L.C. Chávez’s talk focused on “Preparing Journalists for Covering Emergencies and Disasters”; Close elaborated on “Government Communicating with the Governed—Why Ethnic Media’s Role is Key”; Quihuis addressed “Social & Mobil Technologies in Multicultural Settings”; and Montero informed the audience about “Multilingual Emergency Alert Announcements: Advancements and Pending Challenges.”

The afternoon was dedicated to small group (breakout) discussion sessions at which participants were the protagonists of the conversations among peers and others with similar

interests about ways to improve emergency communication strategies.⁴² To that end, two 90-minute periods of four breakout sessions were organized: government emergency agencies/offices and first responder organizations; media; community leaders and insurance agencies; and social media.⁴³ During the first time period, the moderators of the sessions guided participants to talk about what they and/or their own organization could do to improve emergency communications. During the second time period, the focus was turned to discussing what participants thought the “other” organizations (aside from their own) should do. At each breakout session, a moderator guided the exchanges between participants and a scribe took notes of the discussion and suggestions.

PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 80 persons, including the organizers and special invited speakers, attended the forum. Participants came in from Central Texas, as well as from other Texas regions. The attendees included state, county and city emergency responders and government officials, representatives from the Red Cross, community leaders, and some Texas State University administrators, faculty and students. Attendees from Spanish-language television included Karla Leal, Anchor and Reporter for Austin’s Telemundo station⁴⁴; Edward Romero, General Manager of KDVA Telemundo, San Antonio; Luis Patiño, General Manager of Univisión, San Antonio; and Joe Valdéz, General Manager of Austin’s Azteca América TV. Also present was Ann Arnold, President of the Texas Association of Broadcasters.

Notably absent, however, were representatives of the region’s 24 Spanish-language radio stations. Not a single manager, reporter, staff person or other envoy of those stations attended even though volunteers from The Center sent e-mail invitations and also placed numerous calls to the stations, and in particular to the individuals whose names are listed in the directory included in Appendix D of this report.⁴⁵ The main reason for their absence was an unfortunate and incorrect interpretation about this report and the goals of the forum. A synopsis of that misunderstanding is presented in a separate section below. Also absent, but for reasons we do not know for certain, were journalists and editors of the region’s Latino-oriented print media (only one attended), as well as representatives of the insurance companies (only State Farm had a presence).⁴⁶ Nevertheless, there were many positive outcomes of the forum.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Based on the comments, feedback, and evaluations this author and *The Center's* staff received, the *Latinos a Salvo* forum was a major success. As many participants stated, just the fact of having an event to draw attention to the current shortcomings of emergency communications pertaining to non-English-speaking populations was valuable in and of itself. As repeatedly stated by the participants, they sincerely appreciated attending an event at which they were able to meet each other, network among themselves as they learned about their respective common interests in this arena, and learn from the special presenters. Topping off the positive outcomes were the open discussion sessions at which all who wished to do so could share any idea, proposal, or suggestion to improve the communication strategies be these related to their own organization, media, company, office, etc., or about other organizations, agencies, etc. A synopsis of key points made during the breakout sessions is presented below.

Synopsis of Participants' Recommendations

Government Officials/First Responders⁴⁷

Before addressing what could be improved, the participants in this session first accessed what they do well regarding emergency communication. Among their strengths, they mentioned the emergency drill training process for emergency personnel and first responders, which prepares them for weather disasters or other emergencies, and their ability to maintain “situational awareness” (i.e., a well-developed network that allows the government sector to watch and inform the community with timely messages). Overall, the participants in this group believe that government emergency agencies and first responder groups communicate well with each other and that given budget cutbacks, government agencies have learned to work within their means.

The exploration of the strengths of their respective organizations allowed the group to make a paradigm shift to discuss the need to “*communicate with our constituents as well as we communicate with each other.*” To this end, the participants mentioned the following strategies that could be followed to improve emergency communication and increase understanding with non-English speakers: hiring of *professional* Spanish translators, upgrading the skills of current translators when needed, and assuring that the translations be in understandable and culturally sensitive Spanish.

In this session, it was also pointed out that there might be a need to “promote government mandates for non-English emergency communication as regulation might be the only way changes will happen.” Moreover, that before creating communication campaigns to non-English speakers, research should be conducted on how crisis information is exchanged within non-English speaking communities; that is, how traditional media vis-à-vis social media (e.g., texting, cell phones, Twitter feeds, Facebook posts, etc.) are used for such matters.

In this group’s discussions, the value of bilingual communication for emergency preparedness was also acknowledged. Thus, participants suggested the creation of a bilingual information piece to communicate basic information (e.g., where to go, where to get information, what to have on hand, establish a meeting place, create a ‘72-hour Grab-and-Go kit’), and that bilingual social media also be used in addition to traditional media. In either language, the information should be simple and easy to follow.

To improve communication with their constituents, government officials and first responders pointed out the following: that the targets of the emergency communication should be schools, churches, and community organizations; that high profile crisis situations should be used to get “buy in” from top management and the attention of the public because individuals are more receptive to crisis preparedness communication after a disaster; that trust *during a crisis* with the non-English speaking community could be created by them [the participants] being the source of *on-going emergency preparedness* bilingual communication; and that it is important to encourage individual responsibility *during a crisis* by educating the population with disaster preparedness information *before a crisis*. Individual responsibility (both English and non-English speakers) helps the entire community during emergency situations.

During this groups’ second time period, when the discussion turned to recommendations for what “other” entities should do to improve emergency communications pertaining to non-English-speakers in Center Texas, the first issue addressed was the listing of numerous potential partners for such efforts. Among those mentioned were the following: the media, academia, schools and daycare centers, businesses (e.g., HEB, Walmart, Home Depot), community groups (e.g., homeowners associations, Boy/Girl Scouts, Lions, other service groups), non-profit organizations (e.g., Red Cross, volunteer fire departments), churches and synagogues, hospitals and other public health services, and even political action groups. Specific recommendations were made for the first three of these.

Thus, regarding the **media**, it was suggested that bilingual news staffs be set up, that the stations provide full coverage in English and Spanish in advance and during emergency situations, that they translate scrawls into Spanish, and that as a service to the community, run emergency information PSAs *during peak viewing hours*. This group also recommended that the media should create “weather education” programming in English and Spanish, by promoting weatherman personalities for school education programs and by partnering with emergency communication stakeholders to disseminate public information campaigns. An example of this latter effort would be that a TV station could cover an emergency drill session at a school and in doing so include interviews with teachers, students, administrator, and parents.

Recommendations for **academia** included ideas such as providing the educational training in public relations and advertising classes and internships so that students and recent graduates—especially bilingual individuals—could apply their skills in both the private and public sectors. Also suggested was the promotion of public relations and advertising class project that would focus a on the issue of communicating emergency information to non-English speakers in Texas. This would entail a full campaign (complete with objectives, strategy, example creative executions, media plans and evaluation methods) that should be presented to various community stakeholders.

An equally valuable recommendation for **academia** was to encourage faculty to develop a stream of research focused on persuasive emergency communication directed to non-English speakers. One productive area of research would be an exploration of the *lived experience of individuals* who would benefit from improved non-English emergency communication. Under this rubric, it was also recommended, as stated above, that research be conducted on non-English (Spanish only) speaking individuals regarding which type of media are used during emergencies and how information is exchanged within their communities. With the research at hand, academia could better provide thoughtful leadership and an organization platform to drive the policies and practices of emergency communications directed to non-English speakers in Texas.

Turning to **schools and daycare centers**, this group recommended the creation and distribution of emergency communication educational materials, adding that the materials should be available in both electronic and print formats in English and Spanish for distribution when families are most receptive, but that victims’ stories be used judiciously. To this end, it was advised that the materials be simple and consistent and made for use in fun, kid-friendly game

formats (e.g., word searches, cross word puzzles), with pictures and illustrations to demonstrate key ideas, and culturally appropriate and catchy safety slogans (e.g., “alert today, alive tomorrow”). Another school-focused idea was that a cute, recognizable animal mascot be created and used as a “spokescharacter.” For these school-based suggestions, it was also recommended that educators (teachers, administrators, counselors, staff) should model good “emergency preparation” behavior as an additional way to educate students and their families.

The last set of recommendations were directed to the **private sector**, about which participants considered that businesses such as H.E.B., Walmart and the Home Depot are ideally suited to become partners in bilingual emergency communication campaigns because business have a financial incentive to create a well-supplied, well-stocked community, plus a public relations incentive to be good citizens in their communities. Mentioned among the things that the private sector could do was the establishing of public relations operations that can provide the financial and organizational resources to create bilingual emergency preparedness campaigns and branded emergency preparedness communication such as “the Home Depot Home Safety Check List,” in-store displays of “emergency necessities,” “the H.E.B. 72-hour Emergency Preparation Kit,” and “Emergency preparedness” themed grocery inserts with bargain priced batteries, canned good, weather radios, etc.

Finally, the attendees to the *Government & First responder* breakout sessions recommended an “**Action Plan**” consisting of establishing ongoing, coordinated communication between all emergency communication stakeholders in the community. Thus, the communication between “others” and government agencies/first responders should be coordinated and directed by an organizing group, consistent, on a regular basis (not just during disasters or crisis situations), technology based (i.e., using email, listserves, wikis, webinars, etc.), as well as with face-to-face meetings. The group mentioned as an example that the City of San Antonio hosts a regular weekly briefing for all city stakeholders (e.g., public schools, Red Cross, police department, hospitals) to discuss upcoming public events that might affect public safety (e.g., outdoor events, weather patterns, races, special events). Regular briefings focused on emergency communication issues, especially pertaining with non-English-speaking community members and other vulnerable people would certainly be a positive strategic action plan to improve the current emergency communication policies and practices.

Media⁴⁸

In spite of the absence of representatives of the region's 24 Spanish-language radio stations, breakout sessions on the topic of "media" were carried out.⁴⁹ The forum participants who attended these sessions first made general observations about the media environment in Central Texas and shared a few recommendations pertaining to the media, but they focused primarily on suggestions pertaining to what "other" entities should do to improve emergency communications directed to non-English-speaking populations.

The observations about the media included mentions about the large number of Latino and other ethnic-oriented print media in Central Texas, especially Austin, and the role these could play in emergency education campaigns. It was also pointed out that the National Weather Service, in partnership with Univisión, has plans to teach meteorology to Hispanics so that they can identify on their own weather patterns (this educational campaign would be akin to the Skywarn Program already active in English-language media).

Regarding recommendations for the **media**, it was suggested that every broadcast station and print medium should have disaster or emergency plans and not wait for crises to learn how to deal with them. This includes having designated people to disseminate emergency news and information. It was also suggested that cable channels should make arrangements with TV stations that have live newscasts so that the cable companies' outlets could disseminate emergency news and information. Moreover, that the media should establish and maintain relationships with government and emergency entities prior to crises situations.

Most of the recommendations during the media breakout sessions were directed to **government agencies and first responder organizations**. For example, that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather radio alert systems should be set up to air automatically at the radio stations. In this regard, it was mentioned that Puerto Rico and the cities of Miami, as well as McAllen and El Paso, Texas, have automated alert systems that offer bilingual options, but that Central Texas does not have these options. Another recommendation was that other government offices provide Spanish-speaking spokespersons (such as is done by the Lower Colorado River Authority), which would facilitate the media's informational work. Spanish-speaking spokespersons at community organizations were also deemed important. Understandably, it was advised that all the designations of Spanish-speaking spokespersons be done prior to the crises situations when it is more difficult to identify and make such persons

available. Of particular importance was the availability of more Spanish-speaking meteorologists at the National Weather Service, where there are very few persons with such language skills.

Attendees at the media breakout sessions also pointed out that government and all other agencies that deal with emergency preparedness messages should recognize that Spanish-speaking communities have limited access to computers and social media. Thus, emergency related materials, including survival kits, should not only be translated to Spanish, but also provided in print format. Even with limited access to computers and social media, it was also acknowledged that cell phones are ubiquitous in Spanish-speaking households, which makes it valuable to develop a bilingual emergency alert text message system. Also mentioned was that since wireless/broadband has been surprisingly high in Spanish-speaking markets, an emergency application for Spanish-speaking users should be developed. And while cell phone companies have not provided emergency response systems for cell phones, universities have a model to send out emergency text messages to their faculty, students and staff.

One additional government related recommendation was that emergency communication should be extended to police actions, including shootings and terrorist threats. To enhance how this type of information is gathered and disseminated, it was suggested that people be taught how to gather news and send that as reports.

Community Leaders/Insurance Representatives⁵⁰

The attendees of this breakout session started by acknowledging that recommendations that have fiscal attachments will be hard to develop and implement in these economic times. Thus, it might be necessary to request donations to establish a system that the community could use together to be aware of local emergencies. Among the ideas about what the community leaders and/or insurance agents could work on from their own vantage points, a suggestion was made to establish at the local community level “neighborhood alert systems” that would reach out by “word-of-mouth” to the most poor, vulnerable and at times inaccessible people in a variety of dwellings (e.g., homes or apartments). This idea could be developed with designated “go to” “safe persons” like “block parents” who could be sought for guidance and help. The value of the neighborhood-based initiatives derives from the concern that at times recent immigrant communities distrust government-based alerts. Thus, it was pointed out that it is essential for communities to have and develop leaders, including youth leaders. As an example

of the community-based efforts, the Vietnamese community in the Houston area was mentioned, especially regarding how they got together to inform and help each other during the recent hurricanes that affected that region. It was suggested that this concept should be applied with the Hispanic community through different means: schools, churches, Hispanic grocery stores, restaurants, etc.

Other community-centered recommendations included the development of neighborhood radio, sirens, horns, and text messaging systems that would be available to alert the local members about impending emergencies. State Farm Insurance Company's text messaging system for its agents to alert their customers was mentioned as an example of an innovative way to quickly communicate critical information. It was pointed out that whatever solutions are sought, these would need to be grassroots focused and proactive, with organic solutions adapted to each community that addresses its own characteristics. Concomitantly, it was stated that the community should be educated, including about the environment and infrastructure.

Turning to recommendations for the "other" entities, participants at this breakout session indicated that **employers** in the area should invest in the local communities for improving emergency communication strategies. As alluded to above, emergency information could be posted at local businesses, and disseminated by employers. Communication business in particular (e.g., AT&T) could develop products, including "ticker signs" that provide emergency alter messages. Doing so could help companies develop consumer loyalty.

For all the above, the participants in this breakout session believe that improving communication during emergencies calls for accessible tools that are generation, and pocket friendly. Some attendees also opined that the information disseminated, including signs, should be in English *and* Spanish. Upon acknowledging that some employers might be reluctant to communicate critical information in both languages, it was suggested that leaders should be found who could lobby for legal pressures that would push for or mandate the proper tools for emergency communications. One strategy to help that process would be to present the argument as a general public safety concern; humanizing Latinos and creating non-segregated emotional messages that get through different sub-groups (e.g., race, class, etc.) would also be invaluable. Likewise, it would be important to have research with data to back up the creation of messages and the need for the emergency alert systems. Another suggestion for employers was that they

should respect emergencies and be more understanding and supportive of employees who have to miss work due to an emergency situation.

One additional suggestion made by the attendees of the community leaders/insurance representatives breakout session was that the logo *Latinos a Salvo* be branded and put to use to help people become more aware of the proper safety procedures to follow during emergencies.

Social Media⁵¹

Interest in discussing strategies to use social media for improving emergency communications directed to non-English-speaking populations was high among forum participants, regardless of the individuals' professional backgrounds. Furthermore, various ideas and recommendations for the use of new technology and social media communication were shared among the people who attended the breakout sessions under this topic. Not surprisingly, telephones, be they traditional or smart phones, were considered important venues for reaching Spanish-speaking and other non-English-speaking populations during emergencies. Cell phones, especially smart phones can and should be used to send multiple language audio and/or messages not only to alert the public about impending or ongoing crises situations, but also with additional guidance. Examples mentioned regarding the guidance included sending of brief, action-directed text messages with information about where to go for specific resources (e.g., shelter, food, loans) that might be needed by persons affected by a storm.

One of the particular strategies for enhancing the use of new media for emergency communications included the recommendation that smart phone owners should have to “opt-out” of emergency messaging because unless an individual already wants to engage or unless the process is made to be fun, people won't opt-in. It was also advised that women—especially home and care providers—should be targets and central points of emergency communication via social media. Likewise, children who are quick to adapt and use social media and other new media, and who are often bilingual at a young age should be included in the development of educational strategies (e.g., fire drills, tornado drills, etc.) that would help get messages to their parents.

In the efforts to use social media, participants at these sessions recognized the importance of engaging the private sector, including business and insurance companies, who could help disseminate emergency communication information, especially if there is incentive for them to do so. Whatever the social media used, it was also acknowledged that different disasters call for

different action and that it is crucial to give people tools, knowledge and skills to be proactive. Concomitantly, whatever social media based messages are developed, the human element is indispensable, as is the need for a cultural connection to assure people act promptly and efficiently.

Turning to “others,” attendees of the social media breakout sessions divided their recommendations into three categories. For **traditional media**, it was advised that the social media of existing stations (e.g., Univisión as a major player) could and should be used to provide detailed information that is not repeatedly broadcast during emergencies. Likewise, traditional media could send out breaking news feeds via text messages, especially during emergencies. Of course, such efforts by the traditional media would require that the stations have more professional staff that could do such tasks at the local level.

Another set of recommendations included the increasing the number of public relations, marketing and advertising companies that are in the conversations and implementations of strategic emergency communication efforts. Enhancing the education of journalists and public relations professionals so they can become better communicators about emergencies was also suggested, as was that journalists should learn how to be first responders in a world of climate change. One way to achieve the above was to develop student driven programs of public affairs (for example, as class assignments) focused on emergency communications, especially regarding the most needed members of the community. Last, but not least with respect to traditional media, mention was made of the importance that the chief executives officers and management of traditional media become more socially responsive to the communities they serve.

Recommendations regarding **government** agencies included the development of more multilingual educational pamphlets, but equally important was that agencies such as the Center for Disease Control and the Federal Emergency Management Administration work more closely with the telephone companies to disseminate messages and develop a standard emergency protocol that is more culturally competent and thus help eliminate the communication disconnect that currently exists with various minority communities. It was also recommended that these and other government agencies should foster more diversity focused emergency communication education in college-level journalism, communication and marketing programs.

Regarding the **community**, attendees of the social media breakout sessions recommended the need to develop community-based information hubs and grassroots (training sessions), that

community based organizations should become their own media entrepreneurs, and that Spanish-speaking activists distribute communication in their communities. To facilitate these strategies, it was advised that community leaders learn from case studies from other communities (such as the Promotoras health communication model) as a basis for developing crisis communication plans. That learning should be from successful plans as well as from those that have failed from which to analyze what went wrong and avoid the same mistakes. In working to enhance the emergency communication strategies with communities, the role of journalism schools and training programs were mentioned as important as was the role of targeted, community-based research.

LIMITATIONS

The absence of representatives from the Spanish-language radio stations in Central Texas, as well as the attendance of only three managers of the area's SL television stations was the most notable limitation of the *Latinos a Salvo* forum. Spanish-language broadcast media and their employees, be they reporters or other staff members, play crucial roles in emergency communication practices and policies that affect Spanish-speaking populations. The forum could have greatly benefited from their attendance, especially in the breakout session dedicated to discuss strategies to enhance the role of SL media in keeping Latinos safe.

An Informative Misunderstanding

The series of events that culminated in the “boycott” of the forum by many of those media representatives started with a misconstruing of a September 8, 2010 e-mail that this author sent to Hector Guerrero, Warning and Coordination Meteorologist of the Texas Flash Flood Coalition. The e-mail expressed a “concern and observation that Spanish-language broadcast media did not do their civic duty to inform their audiences about the flood and what to do if they had damages.” The concern was legitimate, especially given what had been learned in the process of this research project. However, the observation (monitoring of SL stations) had been very narrow in time and thus not an accurate generalization for all the SL station in the area.

The e-mail that had been shared with other members of the Coalition, also found its way to Sean Abbott, assistant to Texas State Senator Mario Gallegos, chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Flooding and Evacuations. The e-mail also reached Benjamin Wright, assistant to State Representative Aron Peña, co-chair of the Select Committee on Emergency

Preparedness. Upon reading my e-mail, Abbott contacted Arnold to request her comments on such matters at a hearing the Senator had scheduled in Dallas that same week in September.

To prepare her comments for the hearings, Arnold wrote to the Texas Association of Broadcast members, which includes the managers of SL radio and TV stations, to request that they provide evidence of the weather alerts they had aired during the September storms. Unfortunately, the subject line of her e-mail read: “Austin-San Marcos broadcasters attacked for alleged failure of civic duty to broadcast flood warnings in Spanish.” Also, the text of her e-mail stated, among other things, “that broadcasters are under fire from a Texas State University professor who charges Spanish-language stations are failing to perform their civic duty because they did not air warnings in Spanish during floods last week in Central Texas.” Furthermore, her missive stated that, “Dr. Subervi (sic) has criticized broadcasters in speeches and papers in the past for not providing EAS warnings in Spanish. Putting his complaints in front of lawmakers certainly could cause some problems for us.”⁵²

Immediately upon learning about Arnold’s misreading of this researcher’s concerns, on September 16 a clarification letter was sent to Abbott and Wright, and cc’d to Arnold.⁵³ A response from Arnold was not received until November 4, the evening prior to the *Latinos a Salvo* forum. In the interim, the buzz generated by her misconstruing of the concern as if it were an “attack” had the consequence of, so to speak, “poison the well” about the goals of the forum; thus the boycott by most of the Spanish-language radio and TV personnel. This was made clear to this author during telephone conversations with two SL television managers before the November 5 forum as well as with two SL radio managers after that forum.

Unfortunate as the misunderstanding and the boycott turned out to be, Arnold’s letter (see Appendix B) was indeed very revealing and valuable for learning about the actions that SL broadcast media in Central Texas take to inform their audiences during severe weather conditions. As Arnold made clear, and as mentioned to in the *Media Landscape Summary* section of this report, at least some Spanish-language radio and TV stations in Central Texas make efforts to fulfill their civic duty to inform their audiences during severe weather conditions. If the stations offer additional news and information on what to do upon facing damages, or if the stations have contingency plans to broadcast emergency information during non-regular daytime business hours was not mentioned in Arnold’s letter, nor could we ascertain that during the field research.

FORUM SUMMARY

All things considered, the *Latinos a Salvo* forum was worth the investment in time, funds, and human resources that it required. The networking opportunities shared by the attendees, the presentations by the invited speakers, and the discussions and recommendations generated during the breakout sessions were all positive outcomes. If even just a handful of the recommendations made by the forum participants come to fruition, then the goal of forum will have certainly been met in full. While the presence of representatives of Spanish-language broadcast media was limited, practically each of the state, county and city emergency responders and government officials, representatives from the Red Cross, community leaders, and Texas State University administrators, faculty and students who did attend considered the forum worthwhile and an important step for enhancing the safety of Latinos and other vulnerable populations during emergency situations.

THE NEXT STEPS

Revealing as the field research turned out to be, and as valuable as the *Latinos a Salvo* forum was for all who attended, there are still many steps that must be taken to improve the safety of Latinos and other vulnerable populations during occurring or impending crises caused by nature or humans. Enhancing how government and first responders prepare and disseminate information, increasing the quality and quantity of news and information outputs by way of Latino-oriented media, other minority media, and social media, training people of various backgrounds to gather and disseminate reliable and timely information via any of those media, as well as developing feasible government policies are among the many crucial strategies that merit prompt action. Another important step is conducting research with non-English-language speakers and other vulnerable populations to better understand what they need and prefer to face and recover from disasters of various types.

In the Texas, and across the country, there are many people already working with one or more strategies and we hope that this report will be of value to their efforts. We also trust that this report and the networks that were established during the forum will combine to get more individuals working together for significant, prompt and positive changes in the emergency communication policies and practices pertaining to non-English-speaking populations.

In these times of limited government funding one of the ideas discussed at the forum that merits serious and prompt attention is the development of collaborative efforts for multilingual emergency communication plans between business, community leaders and government agencies. Instead of separate uncoordinated action plans, however, the strategy would include the creation of, for example, Public Service Announcements that would have the support of national corporations and local businesses (thus enhancing a company's image and becoming a marketing tool for businesses), and will be disseminated by the broadcast media that cannot produce their own but would benefit upon being recognized by their audiences for caring for the safety of their communities. Insurance companies would be ideal partners in such efforts as well as in efforts to train multilingual emergency information and news gatherers who could offer crucial updates and status reports from the immediate locations affected by local crises.

Faculty, students, staff and volunteers of the Center for the Study of Latino Media & Markets are certain to take leadership roles in academic tasks, additional research, and community outreach efforts. For example, with this project and report completed, The Center will now start to seek grants to develop and implement some of the journalism and community communication and reporting training strategies recommended in the previous pages. Furthermore, another *Latinos a Salvo* forum is already being planned for 2011 or 2012. That forum will be more focused on strategy implementation (not just recommendations) and hopefully have the full participation and collaboration of more community members and especially the representatives of Spanish-language broadcast media not only from Central Texas, but other regions and states, too.

Last, but not least, the faculty of The Center welcomes input, critiques, and other commentaries about this report. Moreover, we are open to suggestions from faculty, students, government agencies, first responders, traditional or social media, community leaders, and the general public on how to work together to positively enhance the policies and practices in emergency communications pertaining to non-English-speaking populations, the *raison d'être* of this research project.

NOTES

1. For the purpose and scope of this report, Central Texas refers specifically to the region just north of Austin to San Antonio, including their surrounding cities and counties. See Table 1.
2. Special gratitude is extended to Mark Hallett, Senior Journalism Program Officer of the McCormick Foundation, and his staff not only for the support and guidance that made this project possible, but also for his patience in the extended period required to complete the project. Thanks also to Dr. Lori Bergen, who was the Director of Texas State University's School of Journalism and Mass Communication when the grant was secured. Her assistance was instrumental in obtaining this grant and guiding its initial phase. A special thanks is also extended to Marisa Reyes, Texas State University graduate student, for taking the time to read, edit, and offer constructive feedback for this report. Any oversights and errors, however, are the responsibility of the Principal Investigator only.
3. This assertion will be documented in more explicitly when a literature review section is completed in a separate report.
4. See: 2010 EAS Summit Reveals Encouraging Progress on EAS Transition to CAP. http://radiomagonline.com/currents/2010_eas_summit/index.html
5. See: Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/ipaws/>
6. See Appendix C for the Reply Comments and concerns from the Minority Media & Telecommunications system to the FCC regarding the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP).
7. The same can be stated regarding Chicago, which was a field research site at an early stage of this project. The assessments from that site, however, were not completed and only mentioned in passing in this report. Springfield, as the capital city of Illinois, was also originally included in the study, but then dropped from detailed research given the limited information relevant to the goals of the study.
8. Robert Hill and Cherie Rivero were graduate students at Texas State University. Another Texas State graduate student, Alejandra Achurra, who was working with this author on a different but related project pertaining to Spanish-language media, also helped gather data.
9. A special thanks is extended to James Aldrete, owner and creative director of Message Audience & Presentations Political Communications, located in Austin, Texas.
10. Ethnic-oriented newspapers were also noted, but not included or assessed for this study because the Central Texas Latino-oriented newspaper do not publish on a daily basis, only weekly. Also, FCC policies and regulations pertaining to emergency communications do not apply to print media, which, in any case, could not easily provide instantaneous news and information about impending crises unless they do so via their Internet sites for which the content is not regulated by FCC rules. Print media are of course invaluable for long-term preparations against disasters, and during the recovery phases of such occurrences. Furthermore, because print media have news gathering staff—even if just freelance writers—they are important sources of information even if not instantaneously available in printed formats.
11. During the span of the project, the Spanish-language media landscape has changed significantly in the United States, including the three cities studied. One outcome of the changes is that there are currently fewer Spanish-language stations with locally generated programming and even fewer with locally produced news or information services. The implications of this are discussed in the main text.

12. The correspondence, stemming from the network's corporate headquarters in New York provides a list of the public service programming aired by the stations in Central Texas. The letter also welcomes the exploration of collaborative opportunities with Texas State University's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. However, Univision's correspondence does not address how specific crises situations or other instances of public emergencies had been dealt with at the stations, or particular needs that local stations may have to improve emergency communication news and information.
13. By Federal Communication Commission regulations, licensed radio and TV stations must allow public access to the station's public files.
14. Estimates and projections of the number of Latinos who are primarily Spanish speakers vary widely depending on the particular question that is addressed, age, education, and proportion of years in the United States. Different responses and percentages of Spanish speakers will result depending on whether a person is queried about, for example, the "language most spoken/preferred at home," "what language they personally like/prefer to speak," "what language they can read, write, and comprehend," or "what language is most spoken at work." And as can be expected, younger people who have higher levels of education and people who have spent a greater proportion of their lives in the U.S. vis-à-vis a non-English-speaking country will be more versatile in English. But even Latinos who prefer or are primarily English speakers will frequently live with or have friends and/or neighbors who are primarily Spanish speakers and could thus consider valuable having access to Spanish-language emergency news and information that they could then pass on to or share with the Spanish-speakers in their circle of influence.
15. See explanation in previous note on calculation of this estimate.
16. Various sources were consulted to have an accurate inventory of SL stations in the areas studied. An excellent site is Radio Locator: <http://www.radio-locator.com/> Yet even its information can be inaccurate. For station KHHL, the phone number listed is instead a fax number; the listed fax number is a phone number for some other company. Likewise, other Internet sites that list stations are not always up to date and accurate either. For example, the site http://www.ontheradio.net/metro/austin_tx.aspx was not current or accurate when retrieved one July 7, 2010. The most daunting part of this data gathering is the absence of names of persons, phone numbers, e-mail addresses—not even when Internet sites were identified—to write to for inquiring about the station's operations. In addition, at some stations, even when key contact people were identified, they opted (for whatever reason), to not respond to inquiries to verify the public information that had been gathered about their respective stations and sent to them in an easy to access and edit e-mail message. All these challenges were eventually surpassed and the needed information for the directory was obtained; but it took almost three weeks of dedicated efforts to do so.
17. The Spanish-language radio and TV stations that are the focus of this report are those that have operating studios in the Central Texas geographic regions listed in Table 1. TV stations and cable carriers that only retransmit signals and do not have the potential capacity to offer local news and information are excluded from the report and directory as shown in Appendix D. Also excluded are stations that occasionally air a brief program in another language such as Austin's KUT-FM program Horizontes on Friday afternoons, or KOOP-FM's Latino themes programs. For this study, we did not assess which English-language television

stations in the area offer Second Audio Programming (SAP) that is set up or could be made available for emergency news and information. Those media outlets could be studied in future research that would include the options, if any, in the community access television channels.

18. During some severe weather situations, some radio stations have provided information beyond the warnings received from the national weather service. See the Phase 2 segment of this report of an explanation of how this was done during the September 2010 floods in Central Texas.
19. According to Joe García, owner of the Encino stations in Austin, efforts are currently being considered to gather and incorporate some local news for at least one of his stations. Telephone interview on July 9, 2010.
20. The number of Latinos/Spanish-speakers would be even higher if were to add all the residents of the multiple smaller communities in Williamson, Hays, and Comal counties.
21. Univisión's corporate website states the following: "Univision Radio today owns and/or operates 70 stations in 16 of the top 25 U.S. Hispanic markets, including Los Angeles, New York, Miami, San Francisco/San Jose, Chicago, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, McAllen/Brownsville/Harlingen, San Diego, El Paso, Phoenix, Fresno, Albuquerque and Las Vegas. Univision Radio also owns and operates 5 radio stations in Puerto Rico." Source: <http://corporate.univision.com/corp/en/urg.jsp>, retrieved July 9, 2010.
22. A source for assessing the coverage areas of TV stations can be found at http://www.tvfool.com/?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=80. But different from the radio-locator.com web site, the TV coverage area maps cannot be copied and pasted into Word documents as is shown in Appendix D for the radio stations' coverage areas.
23. The author of this report has been eyewitness to these situations. For example, when hurricane Rita devastated the Galveston and Houston areas on September 12-13, 2008, all broadcast stations in Austin kept offering their viewers live newscasts about the storm, which could have also affected the Austin area. KAKW as well as KADF mentioned the hurricane in their respective evening newscasts, but after that, decided to broadcast only infomercials and other "canned" programs. Thus, during the critical period of the hurricane and its effects (late evening of September 12), KAKW and KADF, the only Spanish-language local stations in Austin, did not offer the area's Spanish-speaking viewers or refugees from southeast Texas any hurricane-related news, much less guidance about the storm or options for shelter and aid if needed. That same evening, the author also did spot monitoring of the Spanish-language radio stations and never heard a word of warning or guidance from those broadcasters either. On many other occasions, the author has witnessed on KAKW emergency information scrolls (e.g., flash flood warnings), which have been presented only in English and even with English instead of Spanish voiceovers.
24. The KEYE-Telemundo operation was launched on October 1, 2009.
25. KADF does not even have its own web site. Instead, programming—which is the same for all the network's stations—is listed on the TV Azteca's website.
26. See endnote, above, regarding the author's observations about the lack of emergency news and information during hurricane Ike.
27. Instead of pointing out limitations of particular web sites, the focus is on general patterns that merit attention by the decision makers and respective webmasters.

28. We did not inquire if this latter practice was common at all the agencies or government offices we interviewed. If it were, it certainly would be a valuable resource to enhance the public safety.
29. This observation stems primarily from the most extensive conversations we had on this subject, which took place with representatives of the Travis County Emergency Management Office. But it also applies to other agencies and even the Red Cross.
30. Our informants were also not fully aware of the number and variety of Latino-oriented print media in the Central Texas region.
31. Only one of the managers interviewed indicated he was considering plans for offering local news. To date, such plans have not materialized.
32. See Appendix C for a June 2010 document that shows the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council's Reply Comments regarding the FCC's Part 11 Rules Governing the Emergency Alert System, which was pending adoption of the Common Alerting Protocol by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The CAP system was approved in October 2010.
33. Thousands of Latinos of Puerto Rican heritage, all of whom are U.S. citizens, reside in Central Texas and the Chicago area. While many might well be bilingual, especially if they are college educated or are in the Armed Forces, the same is not necessarily true for members of their extended families (e.g., parents or grandparents) who have relocated to the United States. Likewise, in these regions there are thousands of other Latinos who are U.S. citizens and fully bilingual, but whose relatives, especially older generations, are not.
34. Of course, the staff and materials should be sensitive to diverse national and regional modes and vocabularies of the language.
35. In the Austin and San Antonio area, 1-800-HISPANO (<http://1800hispano.com/default.aspx>) is a company that provides in Spanish free information to callers. If properly tooled, it could be set up as a response center for emergencies.
36. We acknowledge Silvia Rivera for providing this suggestion during a face-to-face interview in 2009. At the time, she was General Manager at Chicago's Radio Arte. Currently is the Managing Director at Vocalo.org.
37. This recommendation stems from conversations with academic and advocacy colleagues who have participated in the meetings or have knowledge about this effort. See also the report titled TRIAL PLAN FOR UNIVERSAL EMERGENCY BROADCASTING, prepared by the Independent Spanish Broadcasters Association, the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, Inc. and the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council, June 2008.
38. Academic units, such as the University of Miami's Center for Public Health Preparedness, the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, a project of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and Michigan State University's School of Journalism, all offer instructions on emergency communication issues. Likewise, the International Center for Journalists also offers workshops of relevance. Each of these entities has online resources accessible for teaching lessons, and/or for application by communication professionals.
39. The forum was made possible thanks to the same McCormick Foundation grant that funded this research project. The forum received additional support from State Farm Insurance, Hertz, Lolita's Café, and the University Bookstore. Special thanks to the Center's Associate

- Director, Dr. Sindy Chapa, and the Center's staff and volunteers (all listed in the forum's program) who worked tirelessly in the planning and execution of this successful event.
40. Electronic and printed versions of the program are available from this author upon request. The program includes the bios of the invited speakers and the details of the day's activities.
 41. Ideally, the field research report would have been completed a few weeks prior to the forum and made available either in print or electronic format to all attendees prior to the event. Even though that was not possible, this full report will be posted at the Center's web site and sent electronically to all who attended and left their contact information.
 42. Attendees were not assigned to the sessions and instead could decide on their own which to go to.
 43. During the planning stages for the forum, six separate breakout sessions were set: government emergency agencies/offices and first responder organizations; Spanish-language radio and TV managers and journalists; Latino-oriented print media editors and journalists; insurance company agents, officers; elected officials and community leaders; social media groups. Upon assessing the number of people who preregistered for the event, the sessions were consolidated into four.
 44. Karla Leal served as Master of Ceremonies for the morning sessions of the forum.
 45. Volunteers for *The Center*, especially Renie Ofoegbu, Jaclyn Garza, Sarah Ann Salazar, and Caitlin Scalley, students in a Public Relations Campaigns class under the supervision of Olga Mayoral-Wilson, engaged in a semester-long professional level promotional campaign for the event. Numerous press releases in Spanish and in English were sent to every general market English-language media outlet as well as to each Latino-oriented media outlet in Central Texas.
 46. The only Latino-oriented print media person to attend was Alfredo Santos, editor of *La Voz* newspapers of Central Texas, who also served as moderator of one of the small group discussion sessions. It is possible that other print media persons did not attend because those newspapers have very limited staff and the forum took place in San Marcos, which is outside of their respective main circulation areas (e.g., Austin, San Antonio). Another possible explanation for the absent of some of the Latino-oriented print media is that they did not even cover the event because The Center did not place advertisements in their newspapers for this event. It is known to this author that the practice of not covering events that are not advertised is common for some small operations across the country. As per the absence of representatives from insurance companies, a plausible explanation for their absence is the lack of understanding of their particular role at the forum. While the value of the forum was indicated in the press releases and subsequent phone calls to the region insurance associations, personal connections had not been made with Latino insurance agents, other than those from State Farm.
 47. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Gigi Taylor, Partner with the Practica Group, LLC, for the summary of the discussions at this breakout session at which she was the moderator. This synopsis of recommendations was adapted directly from her report. Thanks also to Texas State University student Ana Guillot for serving as scribe.
 48. Thanks to Alfredo Santos, editor of *La Voz* newspapers of Central Texas, for serving as moderator of the media sessions, and thanks to Texas State University graduate student Andres Araiza for serving as scribe. The narrative is based on their notes.

49. No list was kept of the names of the persons who went to this session or if the TV managers who attended the forum were present at this session.
50. Thanks to Assistant Professor Gilbert Martinez, School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Texas State University, for serving as moderator of the Community Leaders/Insurance Representative sessions, and thanks to Texas State University student Ana Vargas for serving as scribe. The narrative is based on their notes.
51. Thanks to Juan Tornoe, CMO & Partner, Cultural Strategies, for serving as moderator of the Social Media sessions, and thanks to Texas State University graduate student Marisa Reyes for serving as scribe. The narrative is based on their notes.
52. The e-mail messages related to the misunderstanding are available from this author but are excluded from this report.
53. Following that letter and in an effort to “clear the air” about the misunderstanding with Arnold, a personal meeting was arranged with Abbott, and a telephone conversation was held with Wright.

Appendices of the An Achilles Heel in Emergency Communications: The Deplorable Policies and Practices Pertaining to Non English Speaking Populations

Federico Subervi, Ph.D.

Principal Investigator

Professor & Director

Center for the Study of Latino Media & Markets

School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Texas State University

601 University Drive

San Marcos, TX 78666

(512) 245-5267; subervi@txstate.edu

December 2010

- Appendix A: Letters from Mónica Talán,
Vice President of Corporate Communications,
Univision Communications, Inc. A2-9
- Appendix B: Letter from Ann Arnold, President, Texas Association of Broadcasters A11-15
- Appendix C: Reply Comment document from David Honig,
President & Executive Director,
Minority Media & Telecommunications Council A16-23

Excluded from this Appendix are the 42 pages of Appendix D. This document is available upon request from the author.

- Appendix D: Directory of Central Texas Spanish-language radio & TV stations
Including maps or links of coverage areas

Appendix A

Letters from Mónica Talán, Vice President of Corporate Communications Univision Communications, Inc.*

* For an explanation of the context of this letter, see page 12 and endnote 12 of the main text.



605 Third Avenue, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10158

Federico Subervi, Ph.D.
Media Consultant & Scholar
Director, The Latinos and Media Project
6304 Colina Lane
Austin, TX 78759

September 10, 2008

Dear Professor Subervi:

Your inquiry to the News Director of our station WGBO-TV in Chicago has been referred to me. The station participates in the Chicago Emergency Alert System (EAS), a cooperative system that enables the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications to send emergency information directly to participating broadcast stations and cable systems. As a participant, WGBO-TV conducts weekly and monthly tests of the Chicago EAS system. WGBO-TV also broadcasts information regarding emergency situations, such as extreme weather conditions, in its daily newscast and in news bulletins. However, our policy is not to provide specific details regarding our station operations and procedures, particularly when they relate to potential security issues.

Additional information on the EAS system should be available to you from the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Control and from the FCC.

We wish you well with your endeavor.

Respectfully,

Mónica Talán

Mónica Talán
Vice President of Corporate Communications
Univision Communications Inc.

Univision Communications Inc.

Mónica Talán
Vice President
Corporate Communications



605 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10158
212-455-5331

February 6, 2009

Federico Subervi, Ph.D.
Director and Professor
Center for the Study of Latino Media & Markets
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

Dear Dr. Subervi,

In response to your letter regarding local broadcast media in Central Texas (Austin-San Antonio), we have compiled information on Univision stations' local service in the area. Per your request, the following provides examples of our television and radio properties efforts in the communities we serve.

Univision's Goal in Central Texas

The overriding goal of our Central Texas broadcast stations, as with Univision as a whole, is to empower, inform and entertain Hispanics through our multiple platforms. We attribute our connection with our viewers and the success of our television, radio and online platforms to our ability to balance these three areas. Our stations provide not only international and national news of special interest to Hispanics, but also local news and information of importance to our local communities. Our "A Su Lado" or "On Your Side" approach to news and community participation is evident in everything we do.

Central Texas plays an important part in Univision's legacy; in fact we are proud to say that KWEX Univision 41 in San Antonio was the first Spanish-language television station in the United States.

Univision in Austin and San Antonio

We recognize that our stations play an important role in informing our audiences on local issues. Our general managers and community relations managers work diligently to ensure they have a pulse on local needs and concerns. Our news directors, assignment editors, reporters and community relations managers also build relationships with local organizations and community leaders to make sure they are getting information on issues of importance to the community. In addition, local leaders and our loyal viewers frequently call us with stories, issues and tips, which sometimes air as segments within the station's local public affairs program.

Issues we cover range from cultural – in partnership with organizations such as the Instituto Cultural de Mexico en San Antonio and Roy Lozano’s Ballet Folklórico de Texas, Austin- Mexican American Culture Center, Long Center for Performing Arts, Austin Lyric Opera, Blanton Museum of Arts - to those of interest for small businesses, tapping the expertise of other entities such as the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce and the San Antonio and Austin Hispanic Chambers of Commerce; and to financial literacy, credit management and financial aid with partners such as Consumer Credit Counseling Services of San Antonio, Frameworks, the Attorney General’s Office, and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. Another issue we cover extensively is nutrition and wellness, working with the Central Texas Food Bank, American Hear Association and the San Antonio Food Bank as well as focusing on programs such as Food Stamps, WIC and the State Health Department CHIP program.

Our stations’ local partnerships and initiatives are also key, as these allow us to keep a pulse on the community and to alert our viewers of local issues. For example, this past month, as a result of our partnership with the Austin Police Department (APD), Univision and APD, joined forces to bring safety information to the community of St. John’s where there has been an increase in crime.

We have formed partnerships with diverse organizations, such as the Austin and San Antonio Hispanic Chambers, Austin and San Antonio School Districts, the American Heart Association, Latinitas and the Mexican consulates. A partial list of organizations we partner with for community efforts in the Austin and San Antonio markets -- including for events and disseminating information -- is provided as Attachment 1.

We also offer local information to Central Texas residents through our local portals on Univision Online: UnivisionAustin.com and UnivisionSanAntonio.com.

Univision’s Programming and Ratings in Central Texas

Our television stations in the Austin and San Antonio markets air a local daily community show Monday thru Saturday and local news at 5 pm and 10 pm. We are extremely proud that our television stations are the leaders in their local markets in providing news and information – regardless of language. In fact, in Austin our early news is #1 for Adults 18-49, regardless of language and our late news is #1 for Adults 18-34 regardless of language¹. In San Antonio, our early news is #2 for Adults 18-34 and 18-49 regardless of language and our late news is #2 for Adults 18-34 regardless of language.²

Our Austin and San Antonio television stations also air a weekly public affairs show called “Voz y Voto.” This is the only statewide public affairs program in Texas, in English or Spanish. It is produced in Austin, the capital city, airs statewide and focuses on statewide issues.

¹ Source: Nielsen NSI (4-book-avg. Feb, May, July, Nov.) 2008, Austin. Early News (M-F) KAKW, KVUE, KXAN, KEYE: 5-5:30p; KTBC 5-6p; Late News (M-F) KAKW, KVUE, KXAN, KEYE: 10-10:30p; KTBC 9-10p Program Average.

² Source: Nielsen NSI & NHI (4-book-avg. Feb, May, July, Nov.) 2008, San Antonio. Early News (M-F 5-530pm) - Late News (M-F 10-1030pm) KWEX, KSAT, KENS, WOAI, KVDA

In the Austin market, in addition to our local news, our station KAKW airs “Despierta Austin- Fin de Semana” (Wake-Up Austin Weekend Edition) on Saturday mornings. “Despierta Austin- Fin de Semana” is a weekly community show that focuses on education, health, the arts, entertainment and events that are timely and relevant to the community.

On Saturdays KWEX airs “Desde San Antonio” (From San Antonio) a show with interviews focused on topics such as education, the economy, health, the arts, immigration and other topics of interest to Hispanics, which is followed by “Tu Estilo” (Your Style), a local magazine show for Hispanics in the San Antonio area.

The local news is supplemented by our Emmy award-winning evening newscast, “Noticiero Univision” (Univision Network News) with Jorge Ramos and Maria Elena Salinas, along with weekend anchors Sergio Urquidi and Edna Schmidt, which air at 5:30 pm. In addition, “Noticiero Univision Ultima Hora,” (Univision Network Late News) anchored by Enrique Gratas airs M-F at 10:30 pm. These newscasts guarantee instant, thorough and reliable information on all the day's breaking news, including in-depth coverage of events and issues that specifically interest the Hispanic community. Univision also airs “Al Punto” (To the Point) with Jorge Ramos, on Sundays. Featuring one-on-one interviews with world leaders and other well-known people in the news, “Al Punto” goes beyond the 15 second sound-bite and get to the point of the news events and issues that are most relevant to our audience.

Our radio stations in Austin and San Antonio inform listeners and address their needs through a combination of traffic, weather, news and/or local community programming. Additionally, our Univision television stations in Austin and San Antonio provide daily news briefs to our local radio group. In San Antonio we air the public affairs program “La Voz del Pueblo” (The Voice of the Community) on 92.9 FM. In Austin “En La Comunidad” airs on Sundays on KHZS/KINV 107.7FM and KLQB 104.3FM.

Impact of Univision’s Corporate Initiatives In Central Texas

In addition to our local news and information, our stations in Central Texas have worked to extend Univision’s national campaigns in the area through local partnerships and by tailoring these to address issues of most relevance in the Austin and San Antonio markets. In 2008:

- We focused many of our efforts on civic engagement through the “Ya es Hora” (It's Time) campaign. In addition to public service announcements (PSA's) on our radio and television stations and events in partnership with organizations such as the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and National Council of la Raza (NCLR), we covered the issues – ranging from voting rights to local campaigns – via our community affairs programs. In Austin we also worked with Southwest Keys on this effort.
- Our San Antonio and Austin stations also produced PSA's with local political leaders to encourage people to register to vote and get out to vote. The spots included: San Antonio's Secretary of State Gwyn Shea, Henry Cisneros, and Representative Ryan Guillen.
- We celebrated five years of our Peabody Award winning “Salud es Vida...¡Entérate!” (Lead a Healthy Life...Get the Facts!), campaign, a 12-month annual effort that

addresses health and wellness issues through PSA's, events and in-program information.

- In Central Texas a few of our health-related events included Univision's "Feria de la Mujer Latina"; Univision Radio's "Hispanic Heart Festival," Mexican Consulates "Ventanilla de Salud," "The Children's Hospital Run (McDonalds)" and El Buen Samaritanos "Summer Fun - Born to Run," a summer camp for overweight children.
- Our Austin television station also conducts monthly "A Su Lado" efforts in which we discuss an issue on our news and have a phone bank with experts available to answer questions in Spanish. In January, we conducted one focused on CHIP which generated more than 3,000 phone calls from people interested in applying to the program.
- In addition to the events, our television stations air "Entérate," quarterly half hour specials bringing awareness among the top health issues concerning Hispanics. We also have "A Su Salud" segments focused on medical stories of interest, with local doctor and patient interviews and support the Mexican Consulate's "Ventanilla de Salud" initiative. We air PSA's on our television and radio properties and cover the issues on our news and on our television and radio community programs.
- On the radio front, we have covered issues including breast cancer, diabetes, wellness, obesity, HIV/AIDS, puberty, staphylococcus, drug abuse, blood and organ donation and many issues in partnership with the local Susan G. Komen Foundation, the local chapters of the American Heart Association, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District and The South Texas Blood Tissue Center.

Challenges in Broadcast

In today's economic climate, while the challenges are vast for our industry in general, we continue to focus on delivering quality programming while navigating these challenging times. For television, the upcoming digital television (DTV) transition will be a challenge, especially for our audiences. During the past 16 months, our local stations have been working to ensure a smooth transition producing informational PSA's with local news anchors and airing DTV segments on news and public affairs programs. In addition, the stations have registered people for the converter box coupon program and have hosted Town Hall events. Univision began its campaign to educate Hispanics in Central Texas and elsewhere about the DTV transition long before other broadcasters.

Plans for 2009

There are many issues impacting Central Texans this year. Our goal is to continue to work with local organizations to ensure we are informing and helping Hispanics address these issues. We will do this through our news, community programs and events, including our monthly "En Su Comunidad" (In Your Community) events with the local police, fire houses, EMS and Mexican Consulates in different high density Hispanic areas.

We also plan to participate in a number of local activities, including health and education fairs, financial literacy activities, and events such as blood, food and toy drives as well as cultural celebrations. We plan to also increase our focus on education recognizing this is a vital issue for Hispanics in Central Texas.

Partnering with the School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Texas State University

Texas State University has built a strong program that is helping prepare students for careers in the broadcast field. We applaud not only the quality of the program but the focus on diversity. We would like to explore ways to collaborate with you and your students, not only to help your students better prepare but for our stations to continue to deliver on our commitment to our audiences. We propose a meeting to explore opportunities for partnering, keeping in mind the current economic challenges facing the country.

We are proud of our ability to serve the Hispanic community in Central Texas. Our efforts have garnered local recognition from the Austin Hispanic Chamber, APD , the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Susan G. Komen Cancer Foundation, the San Antonio Food Bank, Adelante USA, Texas Department of Health, Retired Seniors Volunteer Program Association, Harlandale School District and the LULAC National Award.

As for the best way to view our public files, each station maintains a file which is available for inspection during regular business hours, without any appointment needed. However, as a courtesy to you, we can arrange to provide information from these files to you at a centralized location in San Antonio and/or Austin, to help facilitate access but look to you on how to proceed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to your questions about our efforts in Central Texas.

If you have additional questions or need additional information, please call me at 212-455-5331.

Sincerely,

Mónica Talán

Mónica Talán
Vice President Corporate Communications
Univision Communication Inc.

Cc: Alejandra Achurra

Attachment 1 – Examples of Local Partner Organizations

Austin Area Community Partners

- College for Texans Telethon
- Austin Independent School District
- Round Rock Parent Centers
- E3 Alliance
- Secretary of State
- local Rock the Vote Campaign
- NALEO
- NCLR
- South West Key Program
- East Austin Vota Campaign
- Pulso de la Ciudad
- Health Insurance for Kids
- St. David's Free Dental Services
- Easter Seals
- Girls Scouts - Central Texas
- Frameworks
- Foundation Communities
- Ad Council
- American Heart Association
- Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Ronald McDonald House
- The Mexican Consulate
- Texas Health and Human Services
- Center for Disease Control
- National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals
- United Way
- City of Austin
- Communities in Schools
- Austin Partners in Education
- Austin Public Library
- El Buen Samaritano
- Safeplace
- Cine Las Americas
- American Diabetes Association
- Austin 311
- Blanton Museum of Art
- Partnership for Drug Free America
- Hispanic Scholarship Consortium

San Antonio Area Community Partners

- City of San Antonio Community Initiatives VITA/IDA
- CDC 'Central for Disease Control'
- American Heart Association
- San Antonio Parks & Recreation
- Internal Revenue Service
- PBS/US Department of Education
- San Antonio Food Bank
- Martin Luther King Commission
- Mujeres Unidas Contra el SIDA/HIV
- Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center
- P.E.A.C.E. Initiative
- Planned Parenthood
- San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Goodwill Industries
- March of Dimes
- Salvation Army
- American Cancer Society
- Metropolitan Health District
- District 4 Back to School
- San Antonio College
- SACADA Solutions to Prevent Drinking and Driving
- Latino Academy Southwest Voter Registration
- Texas Rios Grande Legal Aid – Domestic Violence
- Univision 41 – Digital TV Transition
- Susan G Komen
- Social Security Administration
- Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Greater San Antonio
- South Texas Blood and Tissue Center
- Benitia Family Center
- St. Jude Children's Hospital
- Instituto Cultural de Mexico
- Mexican Consulate of San Antonio
- FEMA
- Daughters of Charity
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- NALEO
- NCLR
- LULAC
- San Antonio Blood and Tissue Bank
- Consumer Credit Counseling of San Antonio

Appendix B

Letter from Ann Arnold, President

Texas Association of Broadcasters*

* For an explanation of the context of this letter, see pages 53-54 of the main text.

November 4, 2010

Dr. Federico Subervi
Center for Study of Latino Media & Markets
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Texas State University
San Marcos, Texas 78666

Thank you for your invitation to attend to LATINOS A SALVO Enhancing Emergency Communication Strategies at Texas State University in San Marcos on Nov. 5. I do plan to attend.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on your report and to correct inaccuracies in it and your letter to Sen. Mario Gallegos and the Texas Senate Subcommittee on Flooding and Evacuations. In your letter you alleged that Central Texas “Spanish-language broadcast media did not do their civic duty to inform their audiences” about flooding on Sept. 7th and 8th of this year.

You said you listened to radio broadcasts on a drive from Austin to San Marcos and did not hear a single warning in Spanish about the impending rains and floods. Later that night you said you checked Spanish language television stations and found only warnings in English. From those limited observations you concluded incorrectly that no Spanish language warnings were issued.

I asked broadcasters in Austin, San Antonio and San Marcos to tell me what Spanish language warnings they aired about the rain and floods spawned on Sept. 7th and 8th.

While not every station took the time to document their extensive public service efforts to warn their audiences, the stations that did reply outlined the extensive warnings they delivered that demonstrate Central Texas broadcasters did, indeed perform their public duty

Univision, for example, provided a detailed report of extensive news coverage and multiple warnings their radio and television stations aired about the floods.

Our logs for San Antonio stations indicate the following:

On September 7th, Univision's KWEX-DT aired 8 news briefs and 4 weather briefs with storm information, a 3 minute flood watch advisory crawl, and 13 news segments totaling over 16 minutes related to the weather emergency, all in Spanish; and 6 EAS weather crawls in both Spanish and English. On September 8th, the station aired 9 news briefs and 3 weather briefs with storm information, two 2:10 minute special weather reports during the *Despierta America* morning program, a 5 minute flood watch advisory crawl, and 10 news segments totaling over 14 minutes related to the weather emergency, all in Spanish; and 9 EAS weather crawls in both Spanish and English.

On September 7th, Univision's KNIC-DT aired 4 news briefs with weather updates in Spanish and 6 EAS weather crawls in both Spanish and English. On September 8th, the station aired 1 weather brief and 3 news briefs with weather information, in Spanish, and 7 EAS weather crawls in both Spanish and English.

On September 7th, Univision's KROM-FM aired 12 weather alerts, half of which ran in the *Piolin Por la Manana* program mentioned by the professor; and on September 8th, from midnight until the following evening, the station aired 34 weather alerts, 4 of which ran in the *Piolin* program. All of this information was in Spanish.

On September 7th, Univision's KGSX-FM aired 12 weather alerts; and on September 8th, from midnight on, the station aired 19 weather alerts. All of this information was in Spanish.

On September 7th, Univision's KCOR-AM aired 13 weather alerts; and on September 8th, from midnight on, the station aired 20 weather alerts. All of this information was in Spanish.

This list does not include Univision radio stations with English language formats or formats in which DJs speak primarily in English.

Our logs for Austin stations indicate the following:

On September 7th, Univision's KAKW-DT aired 3 news cut-ins with weather information, 5 segments on its evening newscasts totaling over 8 minutes related to the weather emergency, and 3 EAS weather crawls, all in Spanish. On September 8th the station aired 9 news cut-ins with weather information and 17 segments on its evening newscasts totaling over 18 minutes related to the weather emergency, all in Spanish. In addition, Univision's low power station in the market, KTFO-CA, aired 3 news cut-ins on September 7th and 7 news cut ins on September 8th with weather information, in Spanish.

On September 7th Univision's KLQB-FM aired 26 weather updates at various times, including during the *Piolin Por la Manana* program mentioned by the professor; and on September 8th the station aired 19 additional weather updates. A number of these updates featured anchors from our Austin television stations. All of this information was in Spanish.

On September 7th, Univision's KLJA-FM aired 14 weather updates at various times and on September 8th it aired an additional 8 weather updates regarding the storm. All of this information was in Spanish.

In your letter to lawmakers, you said you heard and saw no warnings in Spanish language, yet a single broadcast group provided documentation for multiple alerts and warnings in Spanish. And I would note that Spanish language messages aired about the flood danger on both the San Antonio (KROM-FM) and Austin (KLBQ-FM) stations that carry the *Piolin Por la Manana* program you said you listened to on your drive.

The Austin Telemundo TV station also documented extensive airing of “crawls, bugs and break-ins during all programming” they aired in Spanish about the flood danger on Sept. 7th and 8th. They provided a DVD of their coverage

You may also be interested in the lengthy response I received from the manager of three other Spanish language stations operating in the Austin area, KELG, KTXZ and KOKE. Apparently you talked with him in your “research” but never asked what alerts those stations carried about Tropical Storm Hermine.

“We ran four weather forecasts an hour 24 hours a day during the weekend and early week of the Tropical Storm Hermine weather event. We actually do this regularly, whether or not any unusual weather conditions exist....We use a text to speech editor and can update the info at a moments notice. We have the ability to produce these reports in English or in Spanish using this software. Normally, we update the weather in the morning and in the evening. The weather in the summer doesn't change very much on most days. However, in situations like those that existed over the weekend, it required updates every few hours, if not more often. I personally do all of the weather updates. I have access to update the audio files whenever necessary. And I like to follow the weather. In fact, my staff insists that I overdo it. Twice an hour should be enough. I disagree and I run the stations. ...We are proud of he weather information that we have been able to provide our listeners....As a radio station with limited weather resources, I believe that we are delivering the weather forecast along with any pertinent special weather advisories and fully complying with any FCC obligations to serve the public interest. Having that information available every 15 minutes, is also, in my opinion above what most English language music intensive radio formats provide to their listeners.”

In your draft report you reference your lengthy conversation with me about these issues but you failed to even mention the single biggest problem that I told you broadcasters face in trying to provide alerts and warnings to the public: While the FCC requires every radio and television broadcaster to be equipped to receive warnings and rebroadcast that information to their audiences, nobody – not the FCC, nor FEMA, nor the Department of Homeland Security – makes even the mildest suggestion that state or local governments should provide warnings for broadcasters about any emergencies.

I would suggest your concern should be directed toward the government agencies responsible for alerting Americans that are not providing Spanish language versions of warnings for broadcasters to use. It is more reasonable and cost effective to expect the governmental entity generating an alert to provide the message in whatever languages are appropriate, i.e. a substantial proportion of the audience needs.

The draft report also suggests some confusion about what FCC regulations require. The final paragraph of the draft that I received begins:

“Of course, all stations are required by FCC regulations to transmit the Emergency Alert Signal, but other than during occasional tests, this has never been activated; not even on Sept. 11, 2001. The

only other emergency information that all stations are required to transmit is the severe weather warnings. Yet this requirement is only that the English language alert signal and warnings be aired, not that Spanish-language translations be prepared and transmitted by the station. This means that even for the standard emergency weather advisories, Spanish-speaking audiences will probably hear the warnings, but not necessarily understand what is being said.”

In fact, FCC regulations do not require all stations to air an Emergency Alert Signal or even a national presidential alert. The rules always have allowed stations that do not want to participate in EAS to indicate they are nonparticipating stations and to go off the air rather than transmit any EAS order from the president. Similarly there are no FCC requirements regarding what level of National Weather Service alarms must be carried on a station or cable operator. Rules require every station to have operational EAS equipment capable of receiving and rebroadcasting an EAS message. Each station, however, is free to program their equipment to activate on whatever specific EAS messages they want to air.

Clearly there is much room for improvement in the way governmental agencies utilize EAS technology and local broadcasters' unique ability to instantly communicate emergency information to entire communities. But there is no doubt that local broadcasters do an outstanding job saving lives and preparing audiences for emergencies because of their singular commitment to serving their local communities. The public is safer because of the extraordinary efforts of local broadcasters before and after disaster strikes, despite the reluctance of government entities to partner with stations in delivering emergency information.

Respectfully,

Ann Arnold

Appendix C

**Document from David Honig,
President & Executive Director
Minority Media Telecommunications
Communications Council**

* For the context for the inclusion of this document, see pages 33-34 and endnote 32 of the main text.

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Revisions to the FCC’s |) | |
| Part 11 Rules Governing the |) | |
| Emergency Alert System Pending |) | EB Docket No. 04-296 |
| Adoption of the Common Alerting |) | |
| Protocol by the Federal Emergency |) | |
| Management Agency |) | |

To the Commission

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE
MINORITY MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL**

The Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (“MMTC”) respectfully submits these Reply Comments in response to the Public Notice issued in the above-captioned proceeding¹ and the Comments submitted by the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)² and the Texas Association of Broadcasters.³

I. Introduction

MMTC commends the Commission for having the foresight to recalibrate the Emergency Alert System rules⁴ to accommodate the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) pending proposal to implement the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP). We also applaud FEMA for making an effort to include non-English speakers in its CAP proposal. As the Commission defines it, CAP “will allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Weather Service (NWS), a State Governor, or any other authorized initiator of a public alert and

¹ Public Notice, EB Docket No. 04-296, DA 10-500 (released March 25, 2010).

² Informal Comments of the National Association of Broadcasters (DA 10-500; EB Docket No. 04-296), May 17, 2010 (“NAB 2010 Comments”).

³ Ann Arnold Comments Informally on Behalf of the Texas Association of Broadcasters regarding Revision of the FCC’s Part 11 Rules Governing the Emergency Alert System Pending Adoption of the Common Alerting Protocol by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (EB Docket No. 04-296), May 17, 2010 (“TAB 2010 Comments”).

⁴ See 47 C.F.R. Part 11 (2010).

warning to automatically format and geo-target a particular alert simultaneously to the public

over multiple media platforms such as television, radio, cable, cell phones, and electronic

highway signs. CAP will also allow an alert initiator to send alerts specifically formatted for

people with disabilities and for non-English speakers.”⁵ However, CAP, all by itself, cannot

ensure that multilingual emergency warnings will reach those without access to mobile phones or

other non-broadcast devices, since an emergency may silence a market’s only multilingual

station. Further, CAP does not provide the comprehensive information people need in an

emergency – how to seek shelter; where to find food; when it is safe to return; how to be safe

upon returning; where to obtain medical assistance; how to find missing loved ones. Only local

terrestrial radio’s regular programming is suited to perform that vital function. Therefore, we

again respectfully implore the Commission to consider the still-pending Emergency Petition that

MMTC, the Spanish Broadcasters Association and the Office of Communication of the United

Church of Christ, Inc. offered in 2005, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, to update the broadcast

portions of the EAS rules.

II. Background

The Hispanic population in the United States more than doubled between 1980 and 2000.⁶

In 2008, Hispanics were the largest minority group in the United States, comprising 15.1% of the

population.⁷ Given this demographic shift, the federal government must adjust its policies to

ensure they adequately address the needs of the changing population. This includes codifying

mechanisms to ensure that Spanish speakers, as well as those speaking other widely spoken

⁵ Public Notice at 1.

⁶ See Frank Hobbs and Nicole Stoops, U.S. Census Bureau, “Demographic Trends in the 20th Century” (2002) at 1, 78, available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/censr-4.pdf> (last visited May 12, 2010).

⁷ See American Factfinder, U.S. Census Bureau, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2006-2008, available at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=01000US&-gc_url=null&-ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_&-lang=en (last visited May 12, 2010).

languages other than English, are able to receive emergency information in their primary

language. This is critically important since approximately 20% of the Hispanic population speaks a language other than English as their primary language.⁸ Sixty-two percent of these individuals claim Spanish as their primary language.⁹ Forty-four percent of those who speak a primary language other than English at home do not speak English “very well.”¹⁰

III. The Commission Should Implement The Proposals MMTC Et Al. Made In 2005

On September 20, 2005, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, during which over 100,000 people were without emergency information because they did not speak English fluently, we filed a Petition for Immediate Interim Relief (“EAS Petition”)¹¹ in response to a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that sought comment on whether EAS, in its then-current form, was the most effective mechanism for warning the American public of an emergency and, if not, on how EAS could be improved.¹² The EAS Petition requested that the Commission:

- Modify Section 11.14 of the EAS rules to provide that the 34 PEP stations would air all Presidential level messages in both English and Spanish.
- Modify Section 11.18(b) of the EAS rules to include a Local Primary Spanish” (“LP-S”) designation and provide that state and local EAS plans would designate an LP-S station in each of the local areas in which an LP-1 has been designated.
- Modify Section 11.18(b) of the EAS rules to include a Local Primary Multilingual” (“LP-M”) designation in local areas where a substantial proportion of the population has its primary fluency in a language other than English or Spanish.

⁸ See American Factfinder, U.S. Census Bureau, “Population and Housing Narrative Profile: 2006-2008”, available at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_NP01&-ds_name=&-redoLog=false (last visited May 12, 2010).

⁹ See id.

¹⁰ See id.

¹¹ See Petition for Immediate Interim Relief, In the Matter of Review of the Emergency Alert System, EB Docket No. 04-296, filed September 20, 2005 (“EAS Petition”).

¹² See id. (citing Review of the Emergency Alert System, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking EB Docket No. 04-296, 19 FCC 2d 15775 (released August 12, 2004) (“NPRM”).

- Modify Section 11.52(d) of the EAS rules to provide that at least one broadcast station in every market would monitor and rebroadcast emergency information carried by local LP-S and LP-M stations.
- Modify Section 11.52(d) of the EAS rules to specify that if during an emergency a local LP-S or LP-M stations loses its transmission capability, stations remaining on the air should broadcast emergency information in the affected languages (at least as part of their broadcasts) until the affected LP-S or LP-M station is restored to the air.¹³

The cost incurred by broadcasters in connection with these proposals would be minimal, inasmuch as SBA members' stations have volunteered to feed translations of emergency information to affected stations in markets adjacent to the SBA members' stations.¹⁴ Further, each market's broadcasters could easily, and voluntarily, choose designated hitters and create a cost-sharing arrangement among themselves. Commission intervention would be necessary only when a market's broadcasters fail to make the necessary arrangements.

The Commission should also ensure that the revised rules are flexible enough to accommodate future technologies. As EAS evolves, it is critical that all public warnings are available to non-English speaking people. While no single communications technology has 100% market penetration, all technologies combined have very close to 100% penetration, and all technologies combined also deliver much needed redundancy in reaching the public through many channels in an emergency. Each channel contains some vital information. Wireless alerts and over the air radio programming are both needed.

IV. Response to Comments Filed By National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the Texas Association of Broadcasters (TAB)

In its most recent comments, the NAB states that insights from "... representatives of broadcasters and various public interest organizations, specifically Univision, the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC), United Church of Christ (UCC), the Independent Spanish Broadcasters Association (ISBA), the Florida Association of Broadcasters

¹³ See EAS Petition at 15.

¹⁴ See EAS Petition at 17.

(FAB), and NAB” offer a viable solution for ensuring multilingual Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcasts reach non-English speaking populations. The NAB further maintains that this solution is not feasible since “...none of the federal agencies have developed the capacity, plans or budgets to implement originating multilingual alerts”¹⁵ and that “until such time as the federal government implements originating multilingual alerts, voluntary programs created by state and local officials, broadcasters and other interested parties are the preferred and practical approach.”¹⁶ The NAB is referring to a 2007 contemplated but never effectuated test of the MMTC et al. designated hitter plan in Florida. After that test failed to materialize, there were no subsequent efforts to implement a multilingual EAS program in Florida or any other state. Thus, even if Florida’s existing program for multilingual EAS resources were a sufficient model for distribution of multilingual EAS messages, it is still incapable of accommodating the situation that can arise in an emergency (and that did arise in Hurricane Katrina) in which a market’s only station broadcasting in Spanish is forced off the air. In any case, Florida’s voluntary multilingual broadcast system is an anachronism - few other states’ broadcasters have made any effort to address the emergency communications needs of multilingual populations.

NAB contends that the Commission should “refrain from adopting mandatory requirements on the format or content of EAS messages.”¹⁷ However, we reiterate that selection of a “designated hitter” station to serve multilingual populations in an emergency, as well as arrangements for other stations in the market to contribute to its costs voluntarily, would initially

¹⁵ See NAB 2010 Comments at 8 (stating “At this time, however, none of the federal agencies have developed the capacity, plans or budgets to implement originating multilingual alerts.”)

¹⁶ See id. at 7 (stating “Until such time as the federal government implements originating multilingual alerts, voluntary programs created by state and local officials, broadcasters and other interested parties are the preferred and practical approach.”)

¹⁷ See id. at 6 (stating “Expanding access to EAS is a laudable goal, and to the extent possible, broadcasters strongly endorse universal emergency information access for all Americans. However, we respectfully ask the Commission to refrain from adopting mandatory requirements on the format or content of EAS messages.”)

be at the election of local stations. We are not asking that the FCC impose an obligation unless it is necessary to save lives. A mandatory obligation would be necessary only where the stations in the affected market are unable to cooperate and select their own designated hitter.

The TAB maintains that broadcasters should not have to provide multilingual EAS alert services because the federal government is better equipped and positioned to provide these services.¹⁸ TAB further claims that new multilingual emergency alert regulations would likely prove challenging and unfeasible,¹⁹ and that “[s]tate and local governments can provide translated versions of warnings from a central point much faster and more economically than requiring dozens of individual stations to keep fluent staffers available 24/7.”²⁰

However, sterile translations of warnings are not a sufficient response to an emergency. Imagine the outcry if such warnings were all that the nation’s broadcasters offered to English speakers. In addition to warnings, all radio listeners ought to expect that when they surf the dial before, during or after an emergency, they will find at least one station providing, in their widely spoken language, information about how and where to evacuate, where to find medical assistance, food and shelter, how to locate missing loved ones, and when it is safe to return home. That is the least our nation’s broadcasters should provide to all of their listeners in return for the protected use of valuable and free spectrum. If a broadcast license means anything at all, it should mean that every broadcaster will cooperate to save lives in an emergency.

With the 2010 hurricane season upon us, the Commission should grant the EAS Petition forthwith.

¹⁸ See TAB Comments at 5.

¹⁹ See *id.* (stating “Broadcasters also are concerned about the feasibility of regulations the FCC has considered in the past to require stations to provide emergency alerts in languages used by significant numbers of their audiences.”)

²⁰ See *id.*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Honig', written in a cursive style.

David Honig
President and Executive Director
Minority Media and Telecommunications Council
3636 16th Street, N.W.
Suite B-366
Washington, D.C. 20010
(202) 332-7005
dhonig@crosslink.net

June 14, 2010

