

## On Screen Manitoba

Presentation to CRTC – Thursday, February 3, 2010

### **BN 2010-926: BCE Inc application to change the effective control of CTVgm's broadcasting entities to BCE - App No. 2010-1506-6**

**Conference Centre, Portage IV, 140 Promenade du Portage, Gatineau, Quebec**

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*Bonjour monsieur le président, membres du conseil et employés.*

*Je m'appelle Nicole Matiation. Je suis la directrice générale de On Screen Manitoba et je présente aujourd'hui avec M. Bill Evans, le Directeur général de AMPIA the Alberta Motion Pictures Industry Association. On vous remercie de nous écouter.*

On Screen Manitoba is an innovative membership-driven association that leads, builds and represents the Manitoba screen-based media industry. On Screen Manitoba's membership represents a cross section of individuals and industry organizations (production companies, creators, labour groups, distributors, broadcasters, suppliers and exhibitors) totaling more than 1,500 individuals.

Our members - the creators, crews and suppliers of Canadian independent screen-based media in Manitoba - play a vital role in the fulfillment of one of the Broadcasting Act's core mandates, to ensure the Canadian broadcasting spectrum is used to provide a diversity of voices to the Canadian people. We believe this includes ensuring access to broadcast schedules for a wide variety of independent producers including Aboriginal, Francophone, Anglophone and multicultural producers from all regions of Canada.

In their application BCE recognized the important role that tangible benefits from past changes of ownership have played in supporting the development and production of independently produced Canadian content, we agree wholeheartedly with this assertion. So we are pleased to acknowledge BCE has indicated in their revised tangible benefits proposal presented earlier this week that they will commit 100% of the contribution to on screen and new media programming to independent producers and that they have increased that contribution amount. We are also encouraged to hear that CTV's leadership feel that they are nearing the completion of terms of trade discussions with the Canadian Media Production Association (CMPA).

That said, we fully support the position of the Canadian Media Production Association (CMPA) in particular, that:

- The quantum of the tangible benefits must represent 10% of the total value of the CTV television assets. The CRTC must continue to be diligent in assessing the real value of these assets. Further, it must not allow BCE to exclude any of its television-related assets in making this calculation;
- A minimum of 85% of the total tangible benefits must be allocated to the creation of Canadian programming;

- The resources allocated to the creation of independent Canadian programming must be administered by a third-party, and must not be limited to projects that are ultimately broadcast only on CTV or its many television properties.

*Avec son peuple aussi diversifié que sa géographie, le Canada a reconnu depuis longue date, le rôle essentiel que les systèmes de communications, et leur contenu, jouent en engendrant un sens d'appartenance et de connexion chez ses citoyens. La politique des communications au Canada, ainsi que ses pratiques, sont basés sur des principes qui garantissent aux Canadiens l'accès à du contenu qui reflète les intérêts du nord, du milieu rural et des centres urbains ainsi que les réalités culturelles des communautés Autochtones, Francophones, Anglophones et multiculturelles. La consolidation et l'intégration verticale des propriétés de télédiffusion et de communications représentent un vrai défi aux principes de l'accès et de la diversité.*

We were pleased to hear in the presentation earlier this week that BCE intends to expand local television news in several western locations including Winnipeg. This type of initiative supports principles of access and diversity of voices, BUT we note that regional producers also play a key role in bringing diverse voices to programs of NATIONAL interest.

In Manitoba, the impact of consolidation has been acute. The shift from locally-owned to consolidated, Toronto-based mega-corporations has wiped out the regionally-headquartered broadcasters that were originally founded in Manitoba as family-owned businesses including the A-Channel (the Craigs), CKY and WTN (the Moffats) and Canwest Global Communications (the Aspers). The distribution of tangible benefits to regional producers administered by a third party entity will help to address a growing disconnect between regional producers and the increased concentration of broadcast decision-makers in central Canada.

Broadcast decision-makers currently have no obligation to travel to regions to seek opportunity to form relationships and develop content projects with regional producers. In the past regional broadcast offices have acted as a conduit to national decision-makers.

We would like to acknowledge the success of the CTV Western Development Office that was established in Winnipeg in 2001 as a part of the benefits package created when CTV purchased CKY in Winnipeg. The creation of this office and appointment of a Development Manager had a direct impact on Manitoba's independent production sector: \$11 million in production leveraged from CTV's investment of \$600,000 from the Manitoba Script and Development Fund and \$1.6 million from the Local and Regional Programming Initiative (called *Manitoba Moments*). As a result of these two initiatives, 56 shows were licensed from over 30 Manitoba production companies. Nationally licensed Manitoba-made shows include: ELIJAH, HOCKEY BRAWL (a Banff CTV Doc Pitch prize and Gemini-winner), AS SEEN ON TV! THE K-TEL STORY, THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE, and MUSIC RISING. It is important to note that, prior to 2001, few Manitoba productions had aired nationally on CTV. Unfortunately, the Winnipeg-based CTV Western Development office closed in 2007 once the benefits requirements expired.

The current application by BCE and the upcoming CTV license renewal affords a new opportunity to build on the success of this initiative. We will be putting forward a case that a condition of license for CTV should be the establishment of regional development offices or some such mechanism to facilitate opportunity for regional producers to interact directly with decision-makers and that CTV demonstrate a true commitment to supporting diversity and access to regional content.

We note that in an often referred to recent study states that Canadians consume the largest amount of digital video in the world. Bell's strategy to use their multiple communications platforms to engage Canadians across four screens intersects with the vision of Manitoba's production community to share their best content with audiences across Canada and beyond.

In conclusion, we ask the Commission to keep in mind how consolidation and vertical integration ownership limits opportunity for regional producers to build partnerships and projects with broadcast decision-makers in central Canada. This in turn threatens the sustainability of smaller production markets, potentially reducing the diversity of programming available to Canadians, and ultimately weakening the broadcast and communications systems in Canada.

*Merci encore de cette opportunité de partager notre position.*