



The Honorable Tom Cotton
United States Senate
B33 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cotton,

Hoping this note finds you and your family well after the storm we experienced in Northwest Arkansas on Wednesday, March 25th. I want to provide you a brief recap on how 40/29 and The Arkansas CW (KHBS/KHOG-TV) responded to this tornadic storm and why it is critical to preserve free, over the air broadcasting to as many of our viewers - and your constituents - as possible.

As always occurs in the case of a weather emergency, local television led the way in keeping everyone in the Northwest Arkansas area informed about the path of the thunderstorms and tornados. We take the responsibility of keeping our viewers safe very seriously at 40/29 and the Arkansas CW. Days before, we began warning people that March 25th had the potential to be a dangerous weather day. We showed our viewers when to expect the greatest threat and the areas that would most likely be impacted. In fact, the forecast – in timing, areas impacted, and severity – was similar for many of our viewers. As we demand and you expect, our news and weather teams were at the forefront of the local market response to this very dangerous tornadic storm.

In addition to providing plenty of advance warning allowing for appropriate preparation, 40/29 and the Arkansas CW also did the following:

- We called in all news staff to provide as much coverage as possible. We also deployed our “Storm Spotters” in strategic locations to make sure we covered our entire viewing area.
- 40/29 and The Arkansas CW provided emergency information via all of our platforms, on screen, on line and via mobile apps starting at 4:45pm and continued uninterrupted until 10:35pm. Our digital platforms had combined screen views of 831,529.
- We broadcasted a live stream to computer desktops via 4029tv.com, and most importantly via tablets and mobile devices for those who lost power but retained wireless service. 40/29 and The Arkansas CW’s storm coverage recorded 2,450 streamed views on Wednesday, many of whom we assume had lost power.

As you well know, cable and satellite are not able to provide precise weather coverage that local television stations deliver to our communities every day. When severe weather strikes, our certified meteorologists inform residents of precisely where the greatest danger lies and

H E A R S T *television inc*

KHBS-TV 2415 N. Albert Pike Fort Smith, AR 72904

(479) 783-4040 FAX: (479) 785-5375

KHOG-TV 2809 Ajax Avenue, Suite 200 Rogers, AR 72758 (479) 631-4029 FAX: (479) 878-6079

the vital safety information necessary for all. After every storm, no matter the season, 40/29 and The Arkansas CW focuses on the local communities most affected and their efforts on regrouping and repairing the damage. There is still plenty of vital information to share with the area's viewers and local television is the best source to provide it. Our corporate investment by Hearst Television in journalists and broadcast equipment, coupled with Congress' preservation of the still vital local broadcast television system, provides the necessary financial infrastructure allowing KHBS/KHOG-TV to continue to provide critical news, weather and emergency information to our viewers. Thank you, once again, for your continued support of free, over the air local television.

In closing, I would like to share some of the comments we received from our local viewers via social media once the storm had passed. Comments like these further drive us to inform, protect, and serve the very important people we both care about so much.

Margaret Bridwell via Facebook

"Kudos to 40/29 News – Fort Smith & Fayetteville, Arkansas Storm Team last night – Their coverage was outstanding. I was glued to their channel for over 4 hours and not a dull moment. New to the area, this was my first experience with them and a weather event of this caliber. Totally impressed – informative and to the point!"

Miranda Anthony via Facebook

"Thanks for actually being on when tornado warnings were present!"

Doreen Funderburg via Facebook

"We live right across 49 from 40/29 station. Thank you all for all your hard work to keep us informed. I loved the way Drew so calmly talked directly to the children who may have been alone. Thank you."

Jae Foster via Facebook

"Thank you for your continuous coverage of the severe storm coming through the area. I have been on your station since 5pm and thank you for your coverage of storms."

Rich Betz – email sent to our Chief Meteorologist

Drew,

My wife, JoAnn, and I extend our sincere gratitude to you and the 40/29 team for keeping us and our family safe during last evening's weather event. We watched your coverage from start to finish and it was comprehensive, informative, and quite honestly made us feel infinitely "safer". The manner in which you and Brad delivered the information did not enhance our fear of how close the twisters were coming to our home in Rogers, but instead made us feel that if we listened to your instructions we would be personally safe. Also, having Paige and Daniel involved, as well as the storm chasers, displayed an outstanding team effort which led to the resulting excellent coverage. Early in the broadcast, I sent a text to my son and his family to tune in to 40/29 and they also watched. They live further south of us and were very happy that we alerted them. KHOG is our daily "go to" station for news and the manner in which the severe storm coverage was handled yesterday is indicative of why your and the staff are #1 in our household. I have had Allison assist me several times with questions regarding your weather app and she was extremely helpful. During one of our conversations, I related how pleased we were with the staff in general, and your professionalism and caring manner in particular, and she mentioned that we were welcome to tour your facility and meet you. We would love to do so and will be contacting her shortly to make the necessary arrangements.

Sincerely-- Rich Betz

Sincerely,

Shawn Oswald
President and General Manager