

B. Description

1. The majority of the media in the Diocese of Wilmington has a largely positive general attitude toward the Church despite the extensive coverage of the Church's sexual abuse crisis that was presented in the media from early 2002 until late in 2003. Media outlets based in the diocese continue to respect the local Church due to past and continuing efforts of our Bishops and diocesan officials to deal with sexual abuse issues in a proper and open manner. For example, the most-read daily newspaper in the diocese has praised the Bishop on several occasions for his Review Board appointments and handling of allegations of abuse. The continuing media relations efforts of the Diocese of Wilmington's Office of Communications have also contributed to this attitude.

While the ideological and moral orientation of locally owned and operated broadcast and print media remains strong; the deregulation of and the resulting ownership consolidation in the newspaper and radio industries, have taken control of content out of the hands of local individuals at many media outlets. Content decisions are often made by corporate staffs outside of the diocese that lack knowledge of local community mores.)

Over the past five years, an increasing number of the radio programs heard in the diocese come from outside of the diocese via syndicated shows from New York, Washington, D.C. and elsewhere. This is generally a negative development since these programs are directed at a national audience and ignore market-specific attitudes and needs. While some of these radio programs contain a great deal of sexual content and so-called "adult" language (i.e. Howard Stern) others espouse pro-family values and have an anti-abortion orientation (i.e. Dr. Laura Schlessinger, Sean Hannity, etc.)

Very little television programming originates within the geographic boundaries of the Diocese of Wilmington. Local and regional programming is mostly news and public affairs. Nationally produced broadcast and cable television programming continues to be more sexually explicit in its content and contain language that was unheard on television ten years ago.

The Office of Communications has had a long standing relationship with media throughout the diocese. Our Director of Communications makes frequent visits to the print and electronic media outlets located in the diocese.

The diocese has updated the equipment in its radio broadcast production center in the Chancery Building that has been providing programming to radio stations for many years.