

24-hour news channel cannot seek Island ads

BY CARLA WILSON, TIMES COLONIST JULY 21, 2012

A new 24-hour television news channel has won regulatory approval under the condition that it does not seek a share of the Vancouver Island advertising market.

The new English-language Global News Plus B.C. will offer a mix of local and regional news, traffic, weather, business, sports and entertainment.

In its application for a new channel, Shaw also requested permission to broadcast six minutes of local advertising every hour.

That would have represented half of the allowed 12 minutes of advertising each hour.

Victoria-based CHEK television and other regional broadcasters opposed Shaw's plan to solicit advertising from Vancouver Island, citing their concerns at a public hearing held by the Canadian Radio-television Communications Commission, the federal broadcast regulator.

Opponents maintained that running local advertising on the planned Global would give it an unfair advantage.

"[CHEK] argued that the vast majority of advertising dollars spent on the new station would be taken from Shaw Media's television competitors, including CHEK-TV, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for it to absorb the advertising loss," the CRTC said in its published decision.

"We were adamant about that," CHEK president John Pollard said Friday.

"You can only slice the pie so many ways."

CHEK was saved from closure in 2009. Staff and other investors stepped in to keep it operating. Today, the station has more than 72 staff.

CBC also argued against allowing Shaw to broadcast local advertising, as did Jim Pattison Broadcast Group Ltd. Partnership/Astral Media Radio G.P., with markets in the B.C. Interior.

In response, Shaw agreed - prior to the CRTC's decision on whether to approve the channel - not to seek local advertising on Vancouver Island and in Interior markets served by Pattison/ Astral.

The CRTC said Friday that it had approved the new Global channel under those conditions.

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