



Media release

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Cayman 27 to sign off

Hurley's TV Ltd., the parent company of Cayman 27, will cease operations on August 30, 2019. The Cayman Islands' only Free-to-Air (FTA) independent television station that has aired news, sports, weather, various talk shows and community events since its inception in 1992 will broadcast its last show this coming Friday at 6pm.

First a division of WestStar TV Ltd., Cayman 27 became part of Logic Communications Ltd., until it was acquired by the newly created Hurley's TV Ltd. in 2015. For the better part of the decade, the economic viability of the TV station struggled - a similar situation other community TV stations globally have found themselves - and the financial situation of Hurley's TV Ltd./Cayman 27 was made known to the regulator. During OfReg's 2015 consultation period looking at the future of local television broadcasting (OfReg, formerly the Information and Communication Technology Authority), numerous submissions were made pointing out the market was too small to support one TV station as a stand-alone FTA without some sort of subscription model. It was also noted that Cayman 27 has never been profitable as it had been subsidised from its inception by its parent company WestStar as part of its own cable licence requirement that it provide local content.

"I acquired Cayman 27 because, as a Caymanian, it was important to keep the country's only FTA independent television station in local hands and to continue providing invaluable service to the public. In my discussions with the regulator prior to the acquisition, I made it clear that there were serious financial concerns and I was under the impression that there would be the creation of a 'must carry' fee where each subscription TV licensed operator would pay to carry Cayman 27, so they could fulfill their own licence obligations that required each to provide local content. The 'must carry' fee or Universal Service Fund never came to pass," said Hurley's TV Ltd Managing Director Randy Merren.

Earlier this year, Cayman 27 received an OfReg notice of unpaid fees spanning a couple of years. In May, Cayman 27 again made its position known to the regulator and laid out the issues the company faces, stating that without a monetary contribution of a subscription fee, Hurley's TV Ltd. will have no choice but to terminate the channel's current programming as it is unsustainable under its licence requirements.

Following that correspondence, the regulator embarked on a comprehensive consultation period spanning various aspects of its remit including local content. In August, before the end of the extended consultation period, Cayman 27 received an Enforcement Notice as the July 29



compliance date had passed. A couple weeks later, a Suspension Notice was issued by the regulator, giving Cayman 27 a deadline of September 1 to address the financial compliance issues, or its licence rights would be suspended.

“In the absence of support from successive administrations and a lack of a level playing field set by the regulator, we find ourselves in the regrettable position of no longer being able to continue daily operations. We have no choice but to shut down Cayman 27 and Hurley’s TV Ltd.,” said Mr. Merren.

For 27 years, Cayman 27 has provided breaking news and up-to-date information to residents through its FTA channel. The channel has consistently provided local content comprised of news, weather, sports, talk shows and community events. Cayman 27 had made its mandate to ensure there is accurate, unbiased and fair news dissemination across its FTA, cable and digital platforms as much as possible. The channel also provides hurricane information, political discourse, movies and other local content generated by local talent.

Cayman 27 also employed and trained Caymanians to learn the tools of both the television production and television journalism trades. “The training of Caymanians at the TV station is one aspect of which I am immensely proud. As long as someone was willing to learn and dedicate themselves to the service of the country through the work we do, the team at Cayman 27 always took the time to train and upskill those who needed it,” said Television Station Manager Tammi Sulliman. “The loss of this important training ground is one that personally affects me as I am acutely aware of how many people gained skills and employment as a result of their time at Cayman 27.”

The television station’s flagship programme Cayman 27 News will be the final show aired on the channel at 6p.m. on Friday, August 30, 2019.

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