FCC Rules Cause Preemption of Saving Private Ryan

BALTIMORE (November 11, 2004) -- Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. (Nasdaq: SBGI) announced today that as a result of ambiguities in the Federal Communications Commission indecency rules, it will not be airing the movie "Saving Private Ryan" on any of its stations which carry programming from the ABC television network. Sinclair deeply regrets not being able to broadcast this highly acclaimed motion picture this evening.

The movie, which is being broadcast by the ABC network in its original theatrical form without any editing for television, contains numerous unedited uses of the "F-word." It is unclear whether this broadcast violates the relevant portions of the FCC's rules prohibiting the broadcast of indecent material between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., or if the content and artistic qualities of "Saving Private Ryan" would excuse the repeated uses of the "F-word." Unfortunately, the FCC has been unwilling to provide any guidance about whether or not they would consider the unedited version of this movie to be indecent in light of their recent rule changes on this subject. The FCC has likewise been unwilling in the past to allow broadcast television stations to air the same artistic content that can be aired on cable television channels, notwithstanding that close to 85% of all homes in this country subscribe to either cable or satellite.

It should be noted that Sinclair was prepared to broadcast "Saving Private Ryan" in its entirety tonight after 10:00 p.m., when the FCC's indecency rules are no longer in effect. Unfortunately, ABC rejected our offer to do so. ABC also advised us that they were contractually prohibited from editing the movie and that we were likewise not permitted to do so.

Accordingly, although we do not personally believe that this movie is indecent in any manner, we believe the FCC guidelines and ABC's refusal to delay the broadcast require us to preempt the movie. It is unfortunate that we felt compelled to take this action, particularly in light of the need to honor the memory of this country's fallen heroes on Veteran's Day. It is similarly unfortunate, however, that the actions by a small but vocal group of individuals in the past have influenced the FCC to the extent that broadcasters are fearful of exercising their First Amendment rights, lest they result in fines by the FCC or action being taken against their licenses. We ask that our viewers join with us in letting the FCC and our elected officials know that censorship is dangerous and that the current rules have gone too far.

Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., one of the largest and most diversified television broadcasting companies, currently owns and operates, programs or provides sales services to 62 television stations in 39 markets. Sinclair's television group reaches approximately 24% of U.S. television households and includes ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, WB, and UPN affiliates. Sinclair owns a majority equity interest in G1440, Inc., an Internet consulting and development company, and Acrodyne Communications, Inc., a manufacturer of transmitters and other television broadcast equipment.

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