



## **Pai Hears From Minority Owners on Road Trip**

*(October 15, 2015)* FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai heard about the opportunities and challenges facing minority broadcasters on Tuesday, not in a sterile hearing room, but through first-person accounts from broadcasters on their home turf.

His Mississippi road-trip started at WLOO, a television station owned by Tougaloo College, a historically African-American college in Jackson. From there it was off to “B Day 99.1” WFQY-AM, a classic hip-hop station in Jackson that simulcasts on an FM translator. During a meeting, owner Gerold Smith “told me how critical WFQY’s FM translator was to the station’s survival,” Pai said Wednesday in a statement about promoting broadcast ownership diversity. “He said that most people now listen to the station on the FM dial.” The importance of the translator was brought home when it recently went off the air due to technical difficulties, Pai said, prompting calls from concerned listeners and advertisers.

The last stop in the Magnolia State was URBan Radio Broadcasting’s three-station cluster in Starkville, where Pai met with president & CEO Kevin Wagner, who told him that some of the FCC’s media ownership regulations made it more difficult for him to get financing to buy new stations. On Wednesday, Pai was set to hear more about the importance of FM translators during visits to Summitmedia’s gospel WAGG (610) and Rivera Communications regional Mexican WAYE (1220) in Birmingham, AL.

Pai says he came away from the Mississippi trip with “a renewed appreciation for the challenges minority broadcasters face and a renewed determination to fight for policies that help them thrive.” That includes the FCC enabling AM broadcasters to acquire FM translators, he said, and establishing an incubator program to make it easier for minority entrepreneurs to enter the broadcast business.