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2004 Campaign News Study in Chicago, Milwaukee and Portland Markets

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Campaign News Study

Introduction

The Alliance for Better Campaigns (now the Media Policy Program of the Campaign Legal Center) contracted with the Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) to examine local television news coverage of the 2004 elections. The Chicago, Milwaukee and Portland markets were chosen for the study. These three cities were chosen because they represented a range of market sizes, as well as providing an opportunity to explore the differences in coverage between battleground and non-battleground states.

To make the study large enough to be meaningful, but still of manageable size, the decision was made to focus on the final four weeks of the campaign (October 4 through Nov 1). This time period was chosen because it corresponds to the period of greatest voter interest and most intense campaign activities. Even the undecided and uninvolved voters pay the most attention to the campaign in these final days.

In each city we examined all locally produced newscasts on commercial English language stations. The 18 station sample that resulted included the ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC affiliates in each city, as well as the WB network affiliate WGN in Chicago and Sinclair Broadcasting affiliate WVTM in Milwaukee. Sinclair affiliate WVTM offered fewer hours of news than the major network affiliates. Otherwise the distribution of newscasts was fairly similar in all three cities.

Most frequently an early morning local news show led into the network morning news. Many stations offered a midday newscast followed by a block of news stretching from late afternoon until early evening. Typically these newscasts led into or surrounded the network national

newscasts. Most stations concluded the day with a late newscast after their prime time schedules were over.

Since the goal of the study was to examine coverage in all locally originated newscasts throughout the day, we did not examine national programming (e.g., *Good Morning America*, *ABC World News Tonight*, *Nightline*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Today Show*, *Dateline*, etc.). In this way the study could focus on locally made news decisions that were designed to capture local issues and races.

To this end the Alliance, through its partner organizations, arranged for the taping of the regularly scheduled newscasts on each of the sample stations. In some markets two tapers were assigned to each station to insure a high recovery rate in the taping. We will address the recovery rate in later sections discussing each market, but overall the recovery rate was very high.

The research presented in this report examined each taped newscast for any stories dealing with elections anywhere in the U.S. For each relevant story, we noted the story length, the contest that was being discussed, and the primary frame used to address the campaign (e.g., horse race, issue discussion, strategy, etc.). We also timed the sound bites of any candidates who spoke. The data obtained through this process are presented in the following three sections of the report.

To complete our analysis of local programming we also examined non-news public affairs programming that were found outside of regularly scheduled newscasts. These public affairs programs ranged from candidate debates to town hall meetings and from panel discussions with local pundits to extended candidate interviews. Because of the unusual nature of these programs they are discussed in a separate section for each city.

Chicago Market Results

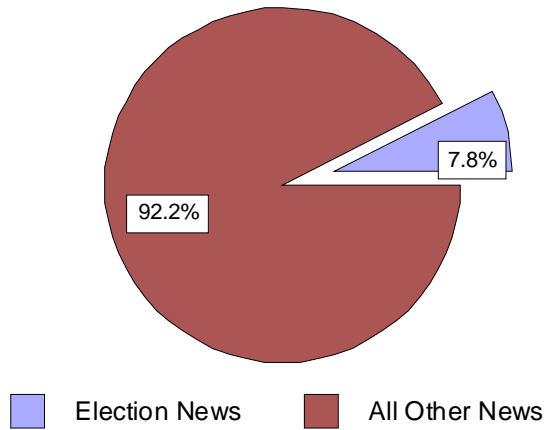
In the Chicago market we examined regularly scheduled newscasts on WLS (ABC), WBBM (CBS), WFLD (Fox), WMAQ (NBC) and WGN (WB). Volunteer tapers were successful in recovering a very high percentage of targeted newscasts, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1			
News Taping Rate for Chicago Stations			
	Total Possible Air time	Actual Taped Air time	Rate
WMAQ	118.25 hours	116.75 hours	99%
WFLD	128.5 hours	126.5 hours	98%
WGN	132.17 hours	125.17 hours	95%
WBBM	147.5 hours	141.75 hours	96%
WLS	136 hours	127 hours	93%

Our recovery rate ranged from 99% on WMAQ to 93% at WLS. The recovery rate was 98% at WFLD, 96% at WBBM and 95% at WGN. Some of the losses were due to taping errors; in a few cases tape quality was too poor to allow for accurate review of the newscast. Given this high rate of recovery we can be confident that this sample reflects the news offerings to Chicago viewers.

As can be seen in Figure 1, election news is a fairly small component of all news on the five stations monitored. Overall, election coverage accounted for just under eight percent (7.8%) of

Figure 1
Election News as a Percentage of all News



all news. Election stories may have had a prominent place in news casts, but they were not a major time component of the news.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of election coverage by individual station in the Chicago

market. The percentage of air time dedicated to election coverage ranged from just under six percent (5.9%) at WBBM to just over nine percent (9.1%) at WLS. Coverage at WMAQ (8.9%), WFLD (7.8%) and WGN (7.4%) fell between these two extremes.

Table 2				
Campaign Air Time in Chicago Market				
<i>Station</i>	<i>Election Air Time</i>	<i>Actual Taped Air Time</i>	<i>Percentage of air time devoted to the election</i>	<i>Number of Stories</i>
WBBM	8 hrs 33min	141.75 hours	5.9%	480
WFLD	9 hrs 53 min.	126.5 hours	7.8%	444
WGN	9 hrs. 17 min.	125 hours	7.4%	492
WLS	11 hrs. 25 min.	127 hours	9.1%	489
WMAQ	10 hrs. 36min.	116.75 hours	8.9%	550
TOTAL	49 hrs. 38 min.	637 hours	7.8%	2442

All five Chicago stations combined aired 2,442 election related stories. WLS offered the most air time, but it ranked third in the overall number of stories, owing to a longer average running time of each story. Thus, WMAQ aired the most election stories (550), followed by WGN (492),

WLS (489), WBBM (480) and WFLD (444). Just over 100 stories separated the most prolific station (WMAQ) from the least prolific (WFLD).

Focus of Coverage

After documenting the amount of coverage, we examined which contest was the subject of each story. As can be seen in Table 3, the presidential campaign dominated election coverage on local television news across the board in Chicago.

Primary Focus of Election Stories in Chicago												
<i>Contest</i>	<i>WBBM</i>		<i>WFLD</i>		<i>WGN</i>		<i>WLS</i>		<i>WMAQ</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number of Stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>
President	324	68%	288	66%	349	71%	301	62%	355	65%	1617	66%
Senate	70	15%	51	12%	53	11%	58	12%	77	14%	309	13%
House	11	2%	20	5%	18	4%	25	5%	16	3%	90	4%
IL State House	2	<1%	2	<1%	0	---	2	<1%	2	<1%	8	<1%
Other IL State races	9	2%	14	3%	13	3%	3	1%	12	2%	51	2%
Other IL local races	1	<1%	3	1%	2	<1%	10	2%	3	1%	20	1%
Other states	2	<1%	9	2%	4	1%	19	4%	5	1%	39	2%
Election Process	61	13%	50	11%	53	11%	65	13%	80	15%	309	13%
TOTAL*	480	101%	437	101%	492	101%	483	100%	550	101%	2442	101%

* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error.

Overall, two-thirds (66%) of all election stories addressed the Presidential race. WGN offered the greatest proportional coverage (71% of all election stories), while WLS offered the least (62%). WBBM placed second with 68%, followed by WFLD at 66% and WMAQ with 65%. In absolute terms WMAQ aired the most stories (355) followed closely by WGN (349). WBBM placed third with 324 followed by WLS (301) and WFLD (288).

The other big race in Chicago was the U.S. Senate race between Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Alan Keyes. Even though the race was never close, the campaign between the new wunderkind of the Democratic party and the theatrical, outspoken Mr Keyes drew heavy coverage. Overall the Senate race accounted for 13% of all election stories, nearly two-fifths (38%) of the air time that remained after the presidential coverage was accounted for. WBBM offered the greatest proportion of Senate coverage (15%) followed by WMAQ (14%), WFLD (12%), WLS (12%) and WGN (11%). Once again WMAQ offered the greatest number of stories (77) closely followed by WBBM (70). WLS aired 58 stories followed by WGN (53) and WFLD (51).

In combination the Presidential and Senate races accounted for nearly four-fifths (79%) of all election coverage at the Chicago stations. At WBBM and WGN the two races accounted for 86% of stories while at WMAQ it was 79%. WFLD (78%) and WLS (74%) completed the picture.

After these two races, the next focal point was the election process itself. Probably as a result of the problems in the 2000 election, there was heavy coverage of problems and issues in the voting process almost anywhere in the country. Spurred by heavier than usual voter registration, there were also stories on how to register, how and where to vote, and what to do if you felt there were improprieties at your voting place. Across the entire Chicago market these stories made up 12% of the coverage, with little difference emerging among the five stations. On WMAQ Such stories made up 14% of all coverage on WMAQ, 13% on WLS, 12% on WBBM, and 10% at both WGN and WFLD.

All other Illinois races combined accounted for eight percent of all election coverage. This included races for the House of Representatives as well as the state legislature and other state and local offices. The contest for the 8th Congressional District race between Republican incumbent Phil Crane and Democratic challenger Melissa Bean accounted for fully half of this coverage

(four percent of election coverage overall). The most prominent state level race on TV was that of Jeff Tomczak, who was running as the incumbent for State Attorney in Will County. The race received virtually no attention until Mr. Tomczak's father was arrested in the hired truck scandal sweeping through Chicago at the time. Once that story broke, Mr. Tomczak's campaign faced questions about suspicious campaign contributions, Chicago city workers volunteering on his campaign, and other issues. Among the five stations WFLD offered the greatest proportional coverage at 11% followed by WLS with nine percent and WGN with eight percent. These races accounted for seven percent on WMAQ and six percent at WBBM.

Framing Election News

Election news can be told or approached through many different perspectives or frames. For example, a candidate's appearance may be presented as an issue-oriented discussion by focusing on the policies and ideas put forth by the candidate (issue frame). Alternatively, the same appearance can be viewed in terms of how the candidate was using an event to reach particular groups of voters or to appeal to voters who feel strongly about the issues the candidate addressed (strategic frame). And regardless of what the candidate says and why he or she says it, the appearance can be presented in terms of how it affects the candidate's chances for election (horse race frame).

As can be seen in Table 4, in the Chicago market, the dominant frame was strategic. Almost one third (32%) of all election stories approached the news from the vantage point of its strategic implications. At WBBM strategic frames accounted for 39% of election coverage. WMAQ was not far behind with 37% of all stories using a strategic frame. Strategy accounted for 35% of stories at WLS and 29% at WFLD. WGN had the lowest percentage of strategic discussions (21%).

Strategic frames were followed in number by horse race frames, which accounted for almost a quarter of all election stories (23%). While WGN trailed all stations in the proportion of stories using a strategic frame, it led in stories using the horse race frame, with a resounding 38% of all campaign stories focused on candidates' prospects rather than their policies or politics.

Table 4												
Primary Frame of Election Stories in Chicago												
Contest	WBBM		WFLD		WGN		WLS		WMAQ		Total	
	<i>Number of Stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>
Strategy	185	39%	128	29%	101	21%	169	35%	205	37%	788	32%
Horse Race	80	17%	104	24%	185	38%	87	18%	95	17%	551	23%
Issues	112	23%	72	17%	73	15%	88	18%	97	18%	442	18%
Voter Info	35	7%	38	8%	34	7%	49	10%	47	9%	203	8%
Personal character	6	1%	21	5%	17	4%	5	1%	19	4%	68	3%
Ad watch	3	1%	1	<1%	2	<1%	1	<1%	3	1%	10	<1%
Other	59	12%	73	17%	80	16%	84	17%	84	15%	380	16%
TOTAL*	480	100%	437	100%	492	101%	483	100%	550	101%	2442	100%

* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error.

WFLD was a distant second with 24% of coverage devoted to the horse race. The proportion of horse race coverage at WLS (18%), WMAQ (17%) and WBBM (17%) was very similar.

Information on how and where to register to vote or how to vote accounted for eight percent of campaign coverage. These percentages were fairly consistent across stations, ranging from 10% at WLS to seven percent at WBBM and WGN. There was little coverage of personal character (only three percent overall), and almost no ad watch stories, which analyzed or evaluated the candidates' advertising claims. Finally, coverage of alleged voting improprieties or potential problems was classified under "Other" in our analysis. This residual category was also used for scandals involving campaigns or candidates, vandalism to election signs, etc.

Candidate Soundbites

The final dimension of our analysis identified all instances in which a candidate for office spoke on camera. We then timed each of these soundbites and aggregated them to determine how much total air time the candidates were given. As can be seen in Table 5, candidate air time varied from a high of one hour 47 minutes at WGN to a low of one hour and five minutes at WBBM.

Table 5				
Candidate Air Time in Chicago Market				
<i>Station</i>	<i>Election Air Time</i>	<i>Candidate Air Time</i>	<i>Percentage of air time devoted to candidates</i>	<i>Number of Soundbites</i>
WBBM	8 hrs 33min	1 hour 5 min.	13%	406
WFLD	9 hrs 53 min.	1 hour 31 min.	15%	510
WGN	9 hrs. 17 min.	1 hour 47 min.	19%	570
WLS	11 hrs. 25 min.	1 hour 36 min.	14%	568
WMAQ	10 hrs. 36min.	1 hour 12 min.	11%	488
TOTAL	49 hrs. 38 min.	7 hours 11 min.	15%	2542

Overall, candidates accounted for 15% of the air time devoted to the election. WGN led in both absolute terms (1 hour 47 minutes) and proportionally (19%). On WFLD candidates accounted for 15% of air time for a total of 1 hour 31 minutes. WLS offered slightly more air time than WFLD (1hour 36 minutes), but that amounted to 14% of the station's total campaign air time. WBBM had the least candidate air time in absolute terms (1 hour, 5 minutes), but at 13% that was proportionally more that WMAQ, with 11% or 1 hour 12 minutes.

There was some variation in the length of the average soundbite at the Chicago stations. WGN had the longest soundbites on average at 11.3 seconds. WFLD was second with 10.7 seconds followed by WLS with 10.2 seconds. WBBM soundbites averaged 9.7 seconds while on WMAQ the average soundbite was 8.8 seconds. Thus WBBM and WMAQ, which devoted the least air time to candidates in both absolute and proportional terms, also broke up their on-air statements into the shortest soundbites. Conversely WGN, which provided the greatest candidate air time, also featured the lengthiest soundbites.

Chicago Public Affairs Programs

In the Chicago market all of the stations offered some public affairs programming outside of their regular scheduled newscasts. Due to technical problems and other omissions only some of this programming was available for our analysis. Table 6 identifies the programs included in our analysis.

Table 6			
Election Public Affairs Programming in Chicago			
<i>Station</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Length</i>
WFLD	10/10	<i>Chicago Perspective</i>	30 min
	10/17	<i>Chicago Perspective</i>	30 min
	10/31	<i>Chicago Perspective</i>	30 min
WLS	10/21	Senate candidate debate	1 hour

WFLD's *Chicago Perspective* resembled a regular newscast with longer political discussions and interviews attached. WLS hosted a televised debate between Barak Obama and Alan Keyes as they campaigned for the U.S. Senate. Missing from this table are a special one hour long edition of WMAQ's *City Desk* that featured extensive interviews with Barak Obama and Alan Keyes. Only about 5 minutes of this program was recorded, so it was eliminated from the study. Also missing is an Hispanic election special WMAQ had on their schedule. WBBM had a public affairs program entitled *Eye on Chicago* that may or may not have had election related content. Similarly, WGN had the show *Adelante* scheduled, but since it was omitted from taping we cannot determine its relevance to the study.

The candidate debate on WLS was focused on issues as are most debates and represents the only program on WLS. WFLD offered a wider range of discussions, as can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7						
Story or Program Focus in Chicago Election Related Public Affairs Programs						
	<i>WFLD</i>		<i>WLS</i>		<i>Total</i>	
Issues	12	32%	1	100%	13	33%
Horse Race	12	32%			12	31%
Strategy	8	21%			8	21%
Other	6	15%			6	15%
Total	38	100%	1	100%	39	100%

Issue discussions and horse race appraisals each accounted for about a third (32%) of WFLD public affairs discussions. Strategic discussions were represented in 21% of discussions. The remaining discussions (15%) fell into a miscellaneous “other” category. This included discussions of the voting process, election improprieties, etc.

The candidate debate on WLS was entirely focused on the U.S. Senate race. The *Chicago Perspective* program on WFLD offered a broader menu of races. The presidential race was dominant, accounting for 61% of the coverage (see Table 8).

Table 8						
Campaigns Discussed in Chicago Public Affairs Programs						
	<i>WFLD</i>		<i>WLS</i>		<i>Total</i>	
President	23	61%			23	59%
House	5	13%			5	13%
Senate	4	11%	1	100%	5	13%
Electoral process	3	8%			3	8%
Mix of contests	2	5%			2	5%

House races came in a distant second with 13% of discussions. The Phil Crane – Melissa Bean race accounted for most of these discussions. The contest between Barak Obama and Alan Keyes was covered in 11% of discussions on WFLD. Stories without a focus on a specific race accounted for eight percent, while those covering a mix of contests accounted for five percent.

Finally, due to the absence of so many election related programs, candidate air time comparisons are problematic and not meaningful.

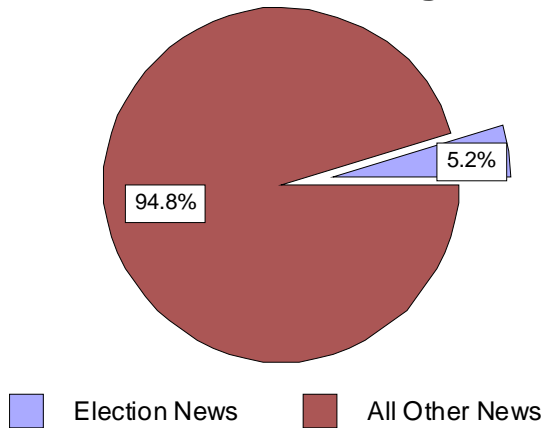
Milwaukee Market Results

In the Milwaukee market we examined regularly scheduled newscasts on WISN (ABC), WDJT (CBS), WITI (Fox), WTMJ (NBC) and WVTV (WB). Volunteer tapers were again very successful in recovering a high percentage of targeted newscasts, as indicated in Table 9.

Table 9			
News Taping Rate for Milwaukee Stations			
	Total Possible Air time	Actual Taped Air time	Recovery Rate
WISN	107.25 hours	103 hours	96%
WDJT	50.42 hours	49.42 hours	98%
WITI	170.9 hours	164.9 hours	96%
WTMJ	150.9 hours	144.7 hours	96%
WVTV	29 hours	28 hours	97%

The recovery rate in the Milwaukee market ranged from a high of 98% at WDJT to a low of 96% at WISN, WITI and WTMJ. The losses were generally due to taping errors or schedule changes. Given this high rate of recovery, we can be confident that this sample reflects the news offerings available to Milwaukee viewers. These totals do not include other public affairs programming outside of the regular newscasts. Which in Milwaukee included the discussion program *A POW's Story* on Sinclair Broadcasting's WVTV. This program examined the controversy over the documentary *Stolen Honor* and its place in the campaign. Such public affairs programming is discussed in a later section of this report.

Figure 2
Election News as a Percentage of all News



As can be seen in Figure 2, election news was a small component of Milwaukee news casts. Overall, five percent of the Milwaukee stations' air time (5.2%) focused on the election.

Table 10, shows the distribution of election coverage at the monitored stations. There was considerable variation among the Milwaukee commercial stations.

Table 10				
Campaign Air Time in Milwaukee Market				
<i>Station</i>	<i>Election Air Time</i>	<i>Actual Taped Air Time</i>	<i>Percentage of air time devoted to the election</i>	<i>Number of Stories</i>
WISN	4 hrs 19 min.	103 hours	4.2%	349
WDJT	4 hrs 27 min.	49.42 hours	9.0%	348
WITI	5 hrs. 44 min.	164.9 hours	3.5%	371
WTMJ	6 hrs. 30 min.	144.7 hours	4.5%	459
WVTV	4 hrs. 37 min.	28 hours	16.5%	247
TOTAL	25 hrs. 37 min.	490 hours	5.2%	1774

Among the major network affiliates, WDJT led the pack with nine percent of air time devoted to the election. WTMJ (4.5%) and WISN (4.2%) were next followed by WITI at 3.5% of air time.

WVTV, which devoted fully one-sixth (16.5%) of its air time to election news, is a special case and not entirely comparable to the other four stations. Its news programming consisted solely of a one hour evening newscast. This program began with a mixture of local Wisconsin stories, followed by a lengthy “News Central” segment which covered national news and appeared to be nationally produced by Sinclair Broadcasting. This segment was heavily focused on the campaign and boosted the proportion of election news.

As a result, while WVTV had the heaviest proportional election coverage, the station offered by far the fewest election stories (247). WTMJ led in absolute terms (459 stories or 6 hours 30 minutes), followed by WITI (371 stories or 5 hours 44 minutes). After that there was a sharp drop off in air time at the remaining stations. WVTV placed third with 4 hours 37 minutes, followed by WISN (349 stories or 4 hours 19 minutes) and WDJT (348 stories or 4 hours 27 minutes).

Focus of Coverage

Having addressed how much coverage the Milwaukee stations offered, we turn our attention to what they covered. As can be seen in Table 11, the Presidential race dominated coverage in Milwaukee, accounting for nearly three quarters (74%) of all election stories. WITI gave the race for the White House the greatest proportional coverage with 87% of election stories. WVTV followed with 75% of election news, then WTMJ with 72% of coverage, WISN with 68% and WDJT with 66%.

Table 11**Primary Focus of Election Stories in Milwaukee**

<i>Contest</i>	<i>WISN</i>		<i>WDJT</i>		<i>WITI</i>		<i>WTMJ</i>		<i>WVTV</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number of Stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>
President	237	68%	228	66%	323	87%	332	72%	184	75%	1304	74%
Senate	13	4%	13	4%	4	1%	13	3%	2	1%	45	3%
House	2	1%	2	1%	0	—	2	<1%	8	3%	14	1%
WI State House	0	—	0	—	3	1%	1	<1%	0	—	4	<1%
Ballot Initiatives	6	2%	6	2%	1	<1%	11	2%	4	2%	28	2%
Other WI State races	2	1%	3	1%	0	—	3	1%	0	—	8	1%
Other states	0		0		1	<1%	0		2	1%	3	<1%
Electoral Process	89	26%	96	28%	39	11%	97	21%	47	19%	368	21%
TOTAL*	349	101%	348	101%	371	101%	459	100%	247	101%	1774	101%

* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The second most common focus after the presidential campaign was the electoral process itself.

These stories addressed no specific race, but focused on issues of how and where to vote, problems in balloting, the absentee ballot process and other aspects of voting. Overall the process accounted for 20% of election stories in Milwaukee.

In Wisconsin, the ability to easily vote via absentee ballot led to many stories providing details on the process. Additionally, a dispute between the city of Milwaukee and the surrounding county over the number of ballots that were to be supplied to the city helped push electoral process reporting higher. WDJT offered the greatest proportion of coverage (28%), followed by WISN (26%), WTMJ (21%) and WVTV (19%). Only ten percent of stories at WITI dealt with electoral process issues.

The race for the U.S. Senate between incumbent Democrat Russell Feingold and Republican challenger Tim Michels drew three percent of all campaign stories. The Wisconsin Senate race was not close, and the coverage was weighted toward a visit by former President George H.W. Bush late in the campaign and the decision of the Republican National Committee to withdraw a million dollars in ad spending from the Michels race and redistribute it to more competitive states. WISN and WDJT each dedicated four percent of their coverage to the Senate race, and WTMJ gave the Senate race three percent. At the other end of the spectrum, this race accounted for only one percent of election news at both WITI and WVTM.

Another three percent of stories focused on a combination of local House races and other Wisconsin state and local offices. As can be seen in Table 11, the majority of this coverage actually focused on ballot initiatives, predominantly a non-binding referendum in Kenosha on building a new casino. Among the House races, the race for the 4th Congressional district between Democrat Gwendolyne Moore and Republican Gerald Boyle was most prominent.

Framing Election News

The dominant frame in Milwaukee coverage was the strategic element of candidate and campaign activities, as can be seen in Table 12. Some of the strategic discussions stemmed from a flurry of brief stories reporting on the various Wisconsin visits of the presidential candidates, their running mates, spouses and families.

Table 12**Primary Frame of Election Stories in Milwaukee**

<i>Contest</i>	<i>WISN</i>		<i>WDJT</i>		<i>WITI</i>		<i>WTMJ</i>		<i>WVTV</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number of Stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>
Strategy	147	42%	142	41%	137	37%	156	34%	61	25%	643	36%
Issues	66	19%	60	17%	79	21%	115	25%	65	26%	385	22%
Horse Race	27	8%	27	8%	50	14%	44	10%	24	10%	172	10%
Voter Info	24	7%	28	8%	1	<1%	37	8%	19	8%	109	6%
Personal character	2	1%	2	1%	9	2%	3	1%	7	3%	23	1%
Ad watch	0		0		5	1%	0		1	<1%	6	<1%
Other	83	24%	89	26%	90	24%	104	23%	70	28%	436	25%
TOTAL*	349	100%	348	100%	371	101%	459	100%	247	101%	1774	100%

* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error.

Over one third (36%) of all Milwaukee area elections stories approached campaign news from the vantage point of its strategic implications. Strategy accounted for 42% of coverage on WISN and 41% on WDJT, followed by 37% at WDJT and 34% at WTMJ. The least strategy-oriented coverage (25%) appeared on WVTV.

The second most common frame in Milwaukee reporting was that of public policy. Once again the frequent visits by candidates and their families may have helped to boost issue discussions, as excerpts from their speeches made news. WVTV offered the greatest proportion of issue-focused coverage (26%). Since WVTV is a Sinclair Broadcasting station, it reported more heavily on the issues raised by the possible airing of the *Stolen Honor* documentary, and this helped boost the overall issue focus. But nearly as many stories (25%) focused on issues at WTMJ, while the absolute number was much higher – 115 compared to 65 on WVTV – because of the heavier

overall election coverage at WTMJ. Issue coverage accounted for 21% of coverage at WITI, 19% on WISN and 17% at WDJT.

Issue frames were followed by horse race frames, which accounted for one in ten election stories (10%). WITI was the most likely to use a horse race frame (14%), followed by WVTV and WTMJ, where horse race frames accounted for 10% apiece. Horse race frames accounted for eight percent of coverage at both WDJT and WISN

Information on how and where to register to vote or how to vote accounted for six percent of all campaign coverage. Eight percent of stories at WTMJ, WDJT and WVTV dealt with voter information, as did seven percent of stories at WISN. By contrast, less than one percent of WITI's coverage – a single story – dealt with this topic. The coverage of alleged voting improprieties or potential problems, as well as scandals involving campaigns or candidates, was classified under “other” in our analysis.

Candidate Soundbites

The final element of our analysis identified all instances in which a candidate spoke on camera. We timed each of these soundbites to determine how much air time the candidates were given during the newscasts. As can be seen in Table 13, candidate air time varied from a high of 63 minutes at WITI to a low of 29 minutes at WVTV. Overall, candidates accounted for 13% of the campaign air time on Milwaukee stations, with three hours 26 minutes combined speaking time.

Table 13				
Candidate Air Time in Milwaukee Market				
<i>Station</i>	<i>Election Air Time</i>	<i>Actual Taped Air Time</i>	<i>Percentage of air time devoted to candidates</i>	<i>Number of Stories</i>
WISN	4 hrs 19 min.	40 min.	15%	260
WDJT	4 hrs 27 min.	38 min.	14%	270
WITI	5 hrs. 44 min.	63 min	18%	268
WTMJ	6 hrs. 30 min.	37 min.	10%	198
WVTV	4 hrs. 37 min.	29 min.	10%	165
TOTAL	25 hrs. 37 min.	3 hours 26 min	13%	1161

WITI led in both absolute and proportional terms (63 minutes and 18% respectively). WISN offered 40 minutes of candidate air time or 15% of its campaign air time. WDJT presented 38 minutes of candidate soundbites or 14 percent of the air time on the campaign. At both WTMJ and WVTV candidate soundbites made up only 10 percent of election air time. Because of the difference in overall election news at the two stations, however, these percentages produced 37 minutes of soundbites at WTMJ compared to 29 minutes on WVTV. The average soundbite across the Milwaukee market was 10.7 seconds long. WITI had by far the longest average soundbites at 14.2 seconds, followed by WTMJ (11.1 seconds) and WVTV (10.4 seconds). The average soundbite dropped to 9.2 seconds at WISN and 8.6 seconds at WDJT.

Milwaukee Public Affairs Programming

In the Milwaukee market only two stations offered public affairs programming dealing with one or more campaigns in the area. WVTM offered a documentary/discussion program, *A POW's Story*, that discussed John Kerry's service in Vietnam and the controversy over the documentary *Stolen Honor*. The latter program was missing from the tapes supplied to CMPA.

WTMJ offered two regularly scheduled public affairs programs, *Sunday Night with Mike Gousha* and *Sunday Insight*. Examination of the tapes showed that only one of the *Sunday Night* programs was relevant to the election. The *Sunday Insight* program consists of a host and a panel of journalists and pundits discussing aspects of the campaign and other political events. Only two of the *Insight* programs were successfully taped for analysis. In addition to these regularly scheduled public affairs programs, WTMJ also aired a debate between incumbent Russ Feingold and his challenger Tim Michels for the U.S. Senate seat. Table 14 provides a list of the programs included in the analysis.

Election Public Affairs Programming in Milwaukee			
<i>Station</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Length</i>
WTMJ	10/24/04	<i>Sunday Insight</i>	30 min.
	10/24/04	Senate candidate debate	1 hour
	10/31/04	<i>Sunday Insight</i>	30 min
	10/31/04	<i>Sunday Night with Mike Gousha</i>	30 min.

Given the nature of these programs, the focus of coverage was mixed, as can be seen in Table 15. The single issue-oriented piece was the Senate candidate debate. The *Sunday Insight* programs ranged from the candidates’ strategies and their personal characteristics to the horse race and beyond, even including an ad watch segment. The large number of pieces classified as “other” reflects discussions of possible election fraud and actions being taken to prevent fraud. These had particular resonance in Milwaukee after Republican party officials claimed that as many as thousands of new registrations might be fraudulent. There was also some discussion of the controversy surrounding Sinclair Broadcasting’s initial decision to air the *Stolen Honor* documentary.

Table 15		
Story or Program focus in Milwaukee Election Related Public Affairs Programming		
	<i>WTMJ</i>	
Strategy	2	18%
Issues	1	9%
Personal Characteristics	1	9%
Horse race	1	9%
Ad watch	1	9%
Other	5	9%

Public affairs programming in Milwaukee covered a wide variety of races, as can be seen Table 16. The presidential race showed up in two pieces, and an equal number of segments did not specify a race, but rather dealt with the election process. The race for the U.S. Senate seat from

Wisconsin was the focus of the candidate debate. Discussion of the Wisconsin State Senate was found in a segment from the *Sunday Insight* program. The group of segments dealing with multiple races is a function of the pundit panel on *Sunday Insight*, which frequently discussed multiple races in each segment.

Table 16		
Campaigns Discussed in Milwaukee Public Affairs Programming		
	<i>WTMJ</i>	
President	2	18%
Electoral process	2	18%
U.S. Senate	1	9%
Wisconsin State Senate	1	9%
Mixed/several races	5	46%

Not surprisingly, these programs offered relatively little additional candidate air time. Only the senate candidate debate offered candidate air time, for a total of 40 minutes and 11 seconds.

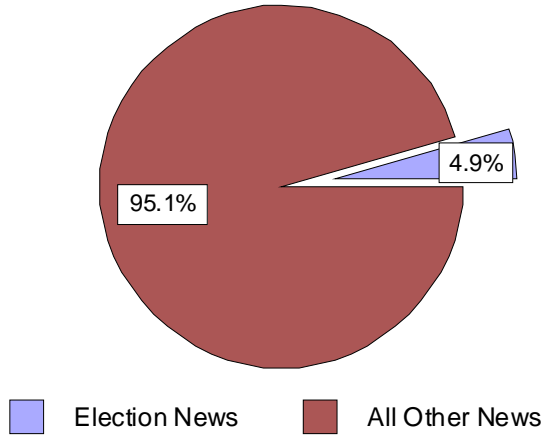
Portland Market Results

In the Portland, Oregon market we examined regularly scheduled newscasts on KATU (ABC), KOIN (CBS), KPTV (Fox) and KGW (NBC). This represents all of the commercial stations that offer regularly scheduled newscasts. KPXG, a PAX network affiliate, rebroadcast newscasts from KGW, but did not originate its own newscasts. Volunteer tapers were successful in recovering a very high percentage of targeted newscasts as indicated in Table 17.

Table 17			
News Taping Rate for Portland Stations			
	Total Possible Air time	Actual Taped Air time	Recovery Rate
KATU	149.9 hours	149.9 hours	100%
KOIN	110.4 hours	110.4 hours	100%
KPTV	120 hours	119.75 hours	99%
KGW	141.3 hours	140.8 hours	99%

The recovery rate in the Portland market ranged from 99% at KGW and KPTV to 100% at KATU and KOIN. Given this high rate of recovery we can be confident that this sample reflects the news offerings in Portland. These totals do not include public affairs programming outside the regularly scheduled newscasts, which included a town hall meeting that aired in place of one newscast on KATU and a one hour special on KGW in which each of the federal candidates in Oregon could speak for 4 minutes. These additional public affairs programs are discussed in a later section.

Figure 3
Election News as a Percentage of All News



As shown in Figure 3, campaign news made up a small percentage of news in Portland. Overall, there were a total of 25 hours and 29 minutes of campaign news or 4.9% of all recorded air time. Once again the prominence of election stories in the newscast does not

equate to a large amount of air time.

Table 18 provides a more detailed breakdown of election coverage across the stations in the Portland market.

Table 18				
Campaign Air Time in Portland Market				
<i>Station</i>	<i>Election Air Time</i>	<i>Actual Taped Air Time</i>	<i>Percentage of air time devoted to the election</i>	<i>Number of Stories</i>
KATU	6 hrs 56 min.	149.9 hours	4.6%	380
KOIN	5 hrs 24 min.	110.4 hours	4.9%	323
KPTV	7hrs. 10 min.	119.75 hours	5.9%	400
KGW	5 hrs. 59 min.	140.8 hours	4.2%	347
TOTAL	25 hrs. 29 min.	520.85 hours	4.9%	1450

There was little variation among stations. KPTV led the way with 5.9% of air time devoted to the election. At KOIN, campaign news accounted for 4.9% of air time while on KATU it was 4.6%. On KGW election news comprised 4.2% of station air time.

There were 1,450 election related stories on the four Portland TV stations combined. KPTV aired both the most stories (400) and the greatest amount of air time (7 hours 10 minutes). KATU followed close behind with 380 stories (6 hours 56 minutes). There were 347 campaign stories on KGW for a total air time of 5 hours 59 minutes. Finally, KOIN aired 323 stories for a total time of 5 hours 24 minutes.

Focus of Coverage

As can be seen in Table 19, the Presidential race dominated election coverage. Oregon was initially considered a battleground state but by the closing weeks of the campaign, polls showed Kerry with a solid lead. Nonetheless, the presidential race accounted for 78% of all election stories. KPTV offered the heaviest proportion with 82% of campaign stories focused on the race for the White House. KGW placed second with 79% of stories focusing on the presidential contest. Three quarters of KATU (75%) and KOIN (74%) stories addressed the presidential race.

Since Senator Wyden was expected to be re-elected easily, there was only light coverage of the U.S. Senate race in Oregon. Overall two percent of stories covered the Senate race. At KOIN five percent of stories covered the race, while at KGW it was three percent. On KATU and KPTV, one percent of stories focused on the Senate race.

Table 19**Primary Focus of Election Stories in Portland**

<i>Contest</i>	<i>KATU</i>		<i>KOIN</i>		<i>KGW</i>		<i>KPTV</i>		<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Number of Stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>Air Time</i>	<i>% of stories</i>
President	286	75%	240	74%	275	79%	327	82%	1128	19h 57m	77.7%
Senate	4	1%	15	5%	10	3%	4	1%	33	34m 30s	2.3%
House	3	1%	4	1%	3	1%	2	1%	12	12m 0s	0.8%
OR State legislature	3	1%	1	<1%	3	1%	1	<1%	8	7m 43s	0.6%
OR local races	3	1%	0	—	3	1%	0	—	6	8m 38s	0.4%
Ballot Measures	48	13%	28	9%	24	7%	30	8%	130	2h 39m	8.9%
Electoral Process	29	8%	30	9%	25	7%	32	8%	116	1h 34m	8%
Other states	4	1%	5	2%	5	1%	4	1%	18	13m 39s	1.2%
TOTAL*	380	101%	323	101%	347	101%	400	100%	1450	25h 29m	100%

* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error.

Ballot measures accounted for 130 stories or nine percent of all campaign stories. The most prominent was measure 36 which dealt with the nationally controversial topic of gay marriage.

Other measures on the November ballot included measure 33 which dealt with legalizing marijuana for medical purposes, and measure 34 which would have set aside forest land from logging to preserve habitat. There was also measure 35 that would have capped medical malpractice awards. Ballot measure 37 affected Oregon's land use laws to require compensation when certain land use restrictions reduce property values. Ballot measures attracted the most attention on KATU, where they accounted for 13% of election stories, more than one in every

eight. Measures were covered in nine percent of KOIN's stories, eight percent of campaign stories at KPTV and seven percent at KGW.

Overall eight percent of election stories in Portland did not deal with any specific race, but rather focused on the electoral process. As in the other markets we studied, some of these stories dealt with problems in other states, but much of the coverage addressed voting in Oregon, including last minute get out the vote efforts by all parties in the final days of the campaign . The four stations devoted almost identical proportions of their coverage to these topics. At KOIN nine percent of stories dealt with the electoral process not connected to a specific race. Those issues accounted for eight percent of stories at KPTV and KATU. At KGW the electoral process accounted for seven percent of all stories.

Local Portland races were lightly covered on TV. The retirement of the incumbent mayor left the mayoral race wide open. In November it was a contest between former police chief Tom Potter and City Council member Jim Francesconi. Mr. Francesconi raised a record \$1 million while Mr. Potter campaigned under a set of self imposed contribution limits. Despite being outspent, polls consistently showed Mr. Potter with a lead. The other significant local race was a battle between Sam Adams and Nick Fish for an empty City Council seat.

Coverage of races in other states was light accounting for one percent of stories overall. The most commonly covered out of state contest was the race for the Washington Senate seat between incumbent Patty Murray and Republican challenger George Nethercutt. Coverage of these out of

state races accounted for two percent of stories at KOIN and one percent at the other three stations.

Framing Election News

As can be seen in Table 20, the dominant frame in Portland coverage was the strategic element of the campaign narrative. Many of these strategic discussions arose from reports on where the candidates were campaigning and how they were angling for undecided or swing voters.

Table 20										
Primary Frame of Election Stories in Portland										
<i>Contest</i>	<i>KATU</i>		<i>KOIN</i>		<i>KGW</i>		<i>KPTV</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number of Stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>	<i>Number of stories</i>	<i>% of stories</i>
Strategy	114	30%	147	46%	131	38%	147	37%	539	37%
Issues	113	30%	79	25%	87	25%	69	17%	348	24%
Horse Race	104	27%	60	19%	85	25%	96	24%	345	24%
Voter Info	6	2%	10	3%	11	3%	16	4%	43	3%
Personal character	0		0		5	1%	13	3%	18	1%
Ad watch	0		0		1	<1%	0		1	<1%
Other	43	11%	27	8%	27	8%	59	15%	156	11%
TOTAL*	380	100%	323	100%	347	101%	400	100%	1450	100%

* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error.

Overall, 37% of campaign stories focused on the strategic implications of the events or actions reported. KOIN offered the greatest proportion of strategic stories (46%). KGW followed with

38% of election stories focused on strategies, while 37% of stories at KPTV took a strategic angle. At KATU strategy stories accounted for 30% of the coverage.

Issue frames and horse race frames each accounted for 24% of campaign coverage in Portland. Coverage of ballot measures often used an issue frame and this helped bolster issue discussions. In the final week of the campaign, however, even ballot measures came to be discussed under a horse race frame, as new polls were released showing which measures were likely to pass.

KATU offered the greatest levels of issue discussions and horse race frames. At KATU 30% of stories used an issue frame while 27% used a horse race frame. At KGW issue frames and horse race frames each accounted for 25% of campaign stories. Meanwhile at KOIN, 25% of stories utilized an issue frame and 19% relied on a horse race frame. At KPTV the proportions were reversed, with 24% of campaign stories covering the horse race while 17% focused on issues.

Reflecting the fact that Oregon has had a vote by mail system in place for several elections and there have been few problems with the system, stories on how and where to vote accounted for just three percent of campaign coverage. Voter information accounted for four percent of stories at KPTV, three percent at KGW and KOIN, and two percent of stories at KATU. The coverage of alleged voting improprieties or potential problems, as well as scandals involving campaigns or candidates, was classified under “Other” in our analysis.

Candidate Soundbites

Finally, we identified all instances in which a candidate spoke on camera. We then timed each of these sound bites to determine how much air time the candidates were given during the newscasts. As can be seen in Table 21, candidate air time varied from a high of 41 minutes at KPTV to a low of 27 minutes at KOIN. At KPTV the 41 minutes of candidate speaking time amounted to 11% of campaign air time. KGW placed second by devoting 8.6% of election air time to candidates (37 minutes). KOIN placed third in the percentage of air time devoted to the

Table 21				
Candidate Air Time in Portland Market				
<i>Station</i>	<i>Election Air Time</i>	<i>Candidate Air Time</i>	<i>Percentage of air time devoted to candidates</i>	<i>Number of soundbites</i>
KATU	6 hrs 56 min.	33 min.	7.9%	238
KOIN	5 hrs 24 min.	27 min.	8.3%	198
KGW	7hrs. 10 min.	37 min	8.6%	243
KPTV	5 hrs. 59 min.	41 min.	11%	275
TOTAL	25 hrs. 29 min.	2 hours 18 min	9.0%	954

candidates (8.3%) but its 27 minutes of candidate sound bites was less than the 33 minutes found at KATU. At KATU 7.9% of air time (33 minutes) was devoted to candidate soundbites. The average sound bite across the Portland market was 8.7 seconds long, with little variation among the four stations. KGW had the longest average sound bite at 9.1 seconds. Soundbites at KPTV averaged 8.9 seconds. At KATU the average soundbite length was 8.3 seconds and at KOIN it was 8.2 seconds.

Portland Public Affairs Programming

Three of the four stations in the Portland market offered public affairs programming outside their regularly scheduled newscasts. KATU, KOIN and KGW aired a combined total of 5.5 hours of public affairs programming beyond their coverage of the three Presidential debates and one vice presidential debate. These programs were selected after a thorough search of program schedules for the market and represent all relevant public affairs programming. (This analysis did not examine the three presidential debates or the vice-presidential debates, because these were national programs outside the control of local stations.)

As can be seen in Table 22, KGW aired by far the most public affairs programming -- four hours, followed by KOIN with one hour and KATU with 45 minutes. Public affairs programming ranged from KGW's regularly scheduled *Viewpoint* program to special Town Hall programs on KOIN and KATU and a candidate debate on KGW. *Viewpoint* is a regularly scheduled 30 minute public affairs program that airs early on Sunday morning on KGW. The program included extended interviews with candidates or ballot initiative activists and a final pre-election panel discussion of a range of races with political journalists and academics. KGW also hosted a debate between the Portland mayoral candidates.

KGW's *It's Your Time* was an unusual program that offered candidates for federal office in the area four minutes to discuss why people should vote for them. For its part KOIN aired an hour long Town Hall program featuring activists and citizens of both sides of Measure 36. KATU aired a thirty minute Town Hall session with supporters of both Mr. Bush and Mr. Kerry arguing the merits of their candidate for the White House. KATU also offered one special edition

newscast after the Presidential debate. This newscast was like any other, and only stories relevant to the election were analyzed. It is included in this discussion since it fell outside the regularly scheduled newscasts.

Table 22			
Election Public Affairs Programming in Portland			
<i>Station</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Length</i>
KGW	10/9/04	<i>Viewpoint</i> regularly scheduled public affairs program	30 min
	10/16/04	<i>Viewpoint</i> regularly scheduled public affairs program	30 min
	10/23/04	<i>Viewpoint</i> regularly scheduled public affairs program	30 min
	10/25/04	<i>It's Your Time</i> special candidate air time program	1 hour
	10/26/04	Mayoral debate	1 hour
	10/30/04	<i>Viewpoint</i> regularly scheduled public affairs program	30 min
KOIN	10/24/04	Town Hall session on Initiative 36	1 hour
KATU	10/8/04	Special edition newscast following Presidential debate	15 min *
	10/24/04	Town Hall session on the presidential election	30 min

* Total air time of election stories in the special edition newscast

With the exception of KGW's *It's Your Time*, all programs were taped in their entirety. In the case of *It's Your Time*, technical problems in taping resulted in missing 30 minutes of the program. We chose not to extrapolate the missing air time to avoid introducing error into the calculation. As a result the air time for some candidates is missing.

Table 23 shows the focus of these public affairs programs and stories. The dominant focus was issue discussions, which accounted for 63% of all pieces.

Table 23								
Story or Program focus in Portland Election Related Public Affairs Programming								
	<i>KATU</i>		<i>KOIN</i>		<i>KGW</i>		<i>Total</i>	
Issues	3	38%	1	100%	6	86%	10	63%
Strategy	3	38%	0	—	1	14%	4	25%
Horse Race	1	13%	0	—	0	—	1	6%
Other	1	13%	0	—	0	—	1	6%
Total	8	102%	1	100%	7	100%	16	100%

The diversity of foci at KATU was due to the special edition newscast that covered a typical day of election stories, including pieces on candidate strategies and the horse race. Given the candidate or initiative focus of these public affairs programs, the preponderance of issue discussions is hardly surprising.

As can be seen in Table 24, the Presidential campaign accounted for less than half (44%) of the programming. All of these discussions were on KATU and a result of the Town Hall session as well as news stories in the special edition newscast. KGW addressed the greatest variety of races. The two pieces on the House of Representatives races represent two *Viewpoint* programs. One featured interviews with 1st district incumbent David Wu and his challenger Goli Ameri. The second followed the same format with 5th district incumbent Darlene Hooley and her challenger Jim Zupancic.

Coverage of the Portland mayoral race featured an hour long debate between candidates Tom Potter and Jim Francesconi. Finally, the mixed contest pieces stemmed from *Viewpoint* discussions of several races in Oregon and a few in Washington. Ballot Measure 36 was the subject of both a KGW *Viewpoint* program and a Town Hall program on KOIN.

Table 24								
Campaigns Discussed in Portland Public Affairs Programming								
	KATU		KOIN		KGW		Total	
Presidency	7	88%	0	—	0	—	7	44%
House of Representatives	0	—	0	—	2	29%	2	13%
Mix of several contests	0	—	0	—	3	43%	3	19%
Ballot Initiatives	0	—	1	100%	1	14%	2	13%
Portland Mayor	0	—	0	—	1	14%	1	6%
Electoral process	1	13%	0	—	0	—	1	6%

Overall, the 5.5 hours of public affairs programming yielded 2 hours, 14 minutes and 53 seconds of candidate air time. That does not include the candidate air time offered in the missing portion of the *It's Your Time* show. KGW offered the most candidate air time with 1 hour 51 minutes and 48 seconds. (That does not include the missing portion of *It's your Time*). KOIN aired 20 minutes and 30 seconds of candidate soundbites while KATU aired two minutes and nine seconds.