

FCC considers diversity issues at Columbus meeting

by Paul E. Kostyu

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Three of the five commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission heard this message clearly over and over: Ohio's minority population is not being well-served by policies that allow consolidation of media.

And two of the commissioners, Jonathan S. Adelstein and Michael J. Copps, agreed.

They and fellow commissioner Robert M. McDowell attended a Columbus town meeting on the "Future of Media" Wednesday night.

Copps criticized former FCC Chairman Michael Powell for operating behind closed doors and refusing to hold meetings outside of Washington, D.C., to listen to what the public wanted to say about media ownership. That's changed under Chairman Kevin J. Martin.

"This is the most important meeting in Ohio today," Copps told the several hundred people at a downtown church. "This goes to the future of the most powerful industry in America."

He said people should worry about the rapid consolidation of media ownership and how it has "homogenized" information and contributed to the loss of diversity.

"Where is the great tapestry of America?" he asked.

Copps said the most important issue in the America today is media ownership, because all other issues, such as education, health care, employment and the Iraq War, "filter through the funnel of the big media."

"It's time to reassert our ownership rights" of the airwaves, he said.

When Adelstein asked the crowd

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