

No. R-369. House concurrent resolution honoring the heroic radio coverage and community service of WDEV radio during Tropical Storm Irene and congratulating the broadcaster on its 80th anniversary.

(H.C.R.245)

Offered by: Representatives Stevens of Waterbury, Ellis of Waterbury and Condon of Colchester

Offered by: Senators Illuzzi, Cummings, Doyle and Pollina

Whereas, Tropical Storm Irene slammed into Vermont on the night of August 28, 2011, and Waterbury Village experienced the maximum fury of the storm as the overflowing waters of the Winooski River ravaged the village, and

Whereas, in the midst of the havoc being wrought on this central Vermont community, the venerable Waterbury-based WDEV-AM/FM, the flagship stations of the locally owned Radio Vermont Group, aired coverage of the storm's statewide devastation, and, then as Irene reached Waterbury, WDEV valiantly remained on the air, providing its central Vermont listeners essential information and assistance despite dangerous flood waters rising around its building and other storm-related obstacles, and

Whereas, the disruption of electric power only briefly halted the WDEV emergency commercial-free coverage as the station quickly switched to its reserve generator to return to the airwaves, and

Whereas, with the loss of the station's Internet access, usually the primary external information resource for WDEV, News Director and General Manager Eric Michaels, with merely a moment's hesitation, announced his personal cell

phone number in order that listeners could phone or text him with crucial news updates, and

Whereas, meteorologist Roger Hill remained at the station far into the night to provide weather alerts, also relying on his cell phone to access new information, and

Whereas, although WDEV 550 AM normally operates at 1,000 watts at night, the signal remained at the daytime-authorized level of 5,000 watts in order to reach the largest possible number of listeners in need of emergency informational assistance, and

Whereas, in recognition of the outstanding community-oriented broadcasting WDEV aired during Tropical Storm Irene, the Vermont Association of Broadcasters chose WDEV as its 2011 Broadcaster of the Year, a well-deserved honor that coincided with the 80th anniversary of WDEV AM, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the heroic radio coverage and community service of WDEV radio during Tropical Storm Irene and congratulates the broadcaster on its 80th anniversary, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to WDEV President Ken Squier in Waterbury.