Information please

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With more than a dozen local television stations, over 30 radio stations and scores of printed publications, Baton Rougeans' choice of media outlets is vast as the year 2000 approaches.

In the early 1950s, four radio stations — WJBO, WLCS, WAFB and WBF — offered music, sports and some talk shows. Two television stations — WAFB Channel 9 (then known as Channel 2) and WBF Channel 2 — were the only stations on the air. There were three daily newspapers, The Morning Advocate, the Baton Rouge Daily and the North Baton Rouge Journal. Today, not only has the quantity of media outlets exploded, but the technology of delivery has vastly changed.

Television stations prepare for the 2006 federally mandated switch from analog to digital signals, making it necessary for the television set, given the way to control remote keypads with more computing power than the guidance computers that NASA uses to put men on the moon.

At the dedication of WAFB in 1953, Governor Joe McKeithen, Baton Rouge Mayor-President Jesse Webb, LSU President Sumner L. Hill, Middle, and hundreds of local dignitaries gathered for the ceremony. It's known in its early years as Channel 28, the station became WAFB in 1960 and was owned by Guaranty Broadcasting Co. (In 1998, WAFB was sold to Bayou City Media Group.)

Two years later, on April 14, 1955, WBRN Channel 2 went on the air with the tallest television antenna in the world at 8,900 feet and became the first station in Baton Rouge to devote itself to a single audience in the hooper surrounding the building. This was big. Governor McKeithen commented at the WBRN opening ceremonies, "The United States and this State have a surprise in store for today."

Initial WAFB carried several networks — CBS, NBC, ABC and the Dumont Network. When WBRN came on line, it offered the lone NBC affiliate, with programming from ABC.

For nearly 20 years WBRN and WAFB were the only two television stations in Baton Rouge. In the 1970s, a new station, WXXT, began broadcasting.

In 1971, WRB-Channel 33 (now known as WVLB), owned by Welter Communications, signed on as the ABC affiliate. In 1979, the Louisiana Public Broadcasting Authority put Louisiana Public Broadcasting on the air, seen in Baton Rouge as WLPB and eventually growing to a network of six stations and a single affiliated station. In 1977, WXXT switched to ABC, while WVLB changed to NBC.

In 1979, WLPB was purchased by Cable Television, Inc., and in 1982, it became WBRN Channel 28 (now KBTV). WBRN was sold to Stone Communications in 1984, and in 1985, WBRN became KBTV.

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