



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

### **The RLJ Companies Founder Robert L. Johnson Outlines Preliminary Business and Programming Model for Urban Television Venture with ION Media Networks** *Urban Television to Provide Unique and Creative Programming Content Mall*

**DECEMBER 8, 2008//BETHESDA, MD//** Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman of The RLJ Companies today outlined additional details of his proposed programming model for Urban Television, LLC, pending the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) approval of recently filed applications seeking share-time licenses that will enable Urban to broadcast programming on a digital channel of ION stations in 42 markets.

Johnson's plan is to develop a new and innovative broadcast model rather than provide programming under traditional broadcast models where programming, content, and advertising are solely controlled by the broadcast owner. His vision is to create a "content mall" where programming ideas would be solicited from the creative/talent community, as well as major advertisers. This model also includes an opportunity to align the broadcast programming content with an interactive Internet site which would provide for interactive programming, e-commerce, and more robust programming opportunity.

Mr. Johnson explained, "Think of this model as a creative television content mall where you find broad, mass-appeal content that serves as the anchor and niche' programming that fills out the channel. Using this concept, our 24-hour continuous programming will be designed to attract creative entrepreneurs and to meet the interests and lifestyle of a variety of urban viewers."

Johnson has taken proactive steps to contact members of the African American creative, editorial, and entertainment community like producer Tyler Perry, Linda Johnson Rice, President and CEO of *Ebony* Magazine, and singer and actress Beyoncé Knowles to inform them of the opportunity to participate in content and programming, as well as ownership.

"I have informed the entertainment community that if this is approved by the FCC, I will be able to provide distribution on Urban Television to provide them with another avenue to produce additional programs," Johnson stated. "If *Ebony* magazine wants to create programming that is based on their magazine content, or Beyoncé wants to showcase her fashion clothing line and tie in an e-commerce link, I could provide her with a programming time slot and she can produce and own her program," he added.

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Urban Television would invite program owners to identify advertisers and develop programming and Urban would share in the advertising revenue, as well as make the distribution and channels available. Mr. Johnson envisions that Urban Television have a public interest focus. Areas of public interest programming include an all-news, all-talk channel or a lifestyle and wellness channel focused on health, an issue that disproportionately affects African-Americans. ION Media Networks has experience with health and wellness programming through their 42 existing stations where these important messages can be delivered directly to 65 million people in our target audience.

Brandon Burgess added, "Our existing stations have a strong footprint in key urban markets, including New York, Chicago, and Boston and a host of other major urban markets. We have stations in all 20 of the top 20 markets and it is our goal, partnering with Urban Television, to add broader and more comprehensive content to our existing programming while at the same time offering diversity in programming and diversity in ownership."

**About The RLJ Companies :** *The RLJ Companies, founded by Robert L. Johnson, owner of the NBA Charlotte Bobcats and founder of Black Entertainment Television, is a diverse portfolio of companies in the financial services, asset management, real estate, hospitality, professional sports, film production, and gaming industries. An innovative business network, The RLJ Companies seeks to target undiscovered or underserved markets; then exercise solid management to achieve results. The RLJ Companies is headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, with operations in Charlotte, Los Angeles, Florida, and Puerto Rico. For more information, visit [www.rljcompanies.com](http://www.rljcompanies.com) Media inquiries to Urban Television should be directed to Traci Otey Blunt, The RLJ Companies for Urban Television, LLC 240.744.7858 or [press@rljcompanies.com](mailto:press@rljcompanies.com)*

**About ION Media Networks:** *ION Media Networks, Inc. owns and operates the nation's largest broadcast television station group, which reaches over 94 million U.S. television households via its nationwide broadcast television, cable and satellite distribution systems. The Company owns 59 of its 60 full-power broadcast television stations, including stations in each of the top 20 U.S. markets and 39 of the top 50. ION Media's flagship general entertainment network, ION Television, features a broad mix of popular television series and theatrical and made-for-television movies. Utilizing its digital multicasting capability, the Company has launched several digital TV brands, including qubo, a channel for children focusing on literacy and values, and ION Life, a channel dedicated to active living and personal growth. It also has launched Open Mobile Ventures Corporation (OMVION), a business unit focused on the research and development of portable, mobile and out-of-home transmission technology using over-the-air digital television spectrum. For more information, visit [www.ionmedia.com](http://www.ionmedia.com). Media inquiries to ION Media Networks should be directed to Amelie Tseng, ION Media Networks, Public Relations, 973.897.8868 or [amelie.tseng@comcast.net](mailto:amelie.tseng@comcast.net)*

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