

**Educational Communications Board Meeting
January 19, 2007
Executive Director Report**

ECB staff and colleagues in the broadcasting Partnership have been focused on improving audience, teacher and learner public broadcasting and multi-media experiences through quality control efforts, stabilizing and expanding digital investments, and developing and delivering national-caliber programs. Our service to the people of Wisconsin starts with concentrating on their needs and meeting them. We are meeting our commitment to multi-casting in television and radio, deepening our multi-media educational offerings, and positioning our traditional role and responsibility in public safety communications. We focus on our mission, on our commitment to serving Wisconsin and on supporting one another to do the best work possible.

Service to Teachers and Learners, Listeners, and Viewers

Education Services (Lin Hanson)

Production Projects:

1) ***democracy it is!*** – Programs for grades 6 through 10 are in production and on target to meet the August 1 deadline. By the end of January, nearly one-half of the documentary pieces will be shot. Stories for this series come from locations in Wisconsin – DeForest, Green Bay, Madison, Beloit, Marshfield and Lac du Flambeau – as well as Marietta, GA; New Orleans, LA; Roseville, MN; Flagstaff, AZ; and Union, OR.

2) ***Into the Book*** – The series web site is in development, with the Prior Knowledge section completed in early January. Professional development workshops scheduled include the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) New Wisconsin Promise Conference: Closing the Achievement Gap in early January; the Wisconsin State Reading Association Annual Conference in February; Cooperative Educational Services Agency (CESA) #4 Make and Take Workshop for Teachers in March; and the Wisconsin Educational Media Association Annual Conference, also in March.

We received the following email from an Evansville teacher:

"I recently saw your show on PBS called, "Into the Book". At least, I think this was the title. It was 2:00 am so I might have been a bit foggy when it started. By the end of the show, I was completely awake and extremely motivated to implement several of the ideas conveyed on your show... I've been a reading teacher for seven years and I learned so much from watching your show. I'm actually thankful that I couldn't sleep that night and happened to turn on PBS."

Datacast:

Datacast equipment is up and running in 22 school districts and CESAs who are participating in the year one roll-out. Datacasts of instructional programming continue to schools on a weekly schedule. Since September, 136 programs have been datacast to schools.

Work continues with the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin to implement datacasting in six job centers. The education division and public television staff are working with job center staff to develop materials with datacasts expected to occur late spring.

Workshops and Conferences:

Education staff will be providing workshops at the DPI New Wisconsin Promise (Madison); Wisconsin Association of School Boards (Milwaukee); National Educational Telecommunications Association (Norfolk, VA.); Wisconsin State Reading Association (Milwaukee); Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies (Madison); and Wisconsin Educational Media Association (Madison).

Instructional Programming:

Throughout November, December and January, educators have the opportunity to preview 24 instructional series and provide feedback for future broadcast. Teachers will provide input at Teacher Advisory Committee Meetings at the end of February in Ashland, Turtle Lake, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee and Green Bay. This is a critical effort – using teacher-based decisions – that distinguishes ECB from other enterprises.

Outreach and Other Activities:

Staff is working with the production team of Hometown Stories at WPT to develop a K-12 component. The Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators Contest, a joint project with Wisconsin Public Television (WPT), entries are due at the end of March. Education staff is working with the Outreach team at WPT to provide educational outreach materials for a special on hip-hop in February. Soundwaves~ Wisconsin Youth Radio Festival celebrates its 34th year as a partnership with ECB and Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR). Entry deadline is January 31. Winners will produce their projects with WPR staff at the studios and the winning entries will air on Norman Gilliland's Old Time Radio show in May.

Combined Effort with WPR and WPT:

On Wednesday, January 31, the 2007 Bolz Young Artist Competition Finals will be performed at Madison's Overture Hall. The broadcast and educational marketing of this event is a first for the Education Division, WPR and WPT. The event will be broadcast live on WPR that evening and shown on WPT on Saturday, February 3. We are very proud of this effort and of working together.

Staff update:

Aparna Subramanian joined the education division as office operations associate. Kristin Leglar competed for, won and has accepted a permanent position as project director. Additionally, hot off the presses, Erin Buck has accepted the position of web developer – a joint position between Education and Information Technology Services.

Wisconsin Public Radio (Phil Corriveau)**Federal Funding:**

National Public Radio (NPR) Government Relations representative, Michael Risken, anticipates that overall funding for public broadcasting during FY '07 essentially will be the same as last year, at the \$400 million level. Since Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) has a 2-year advance appropriation, they have already received the \$400 million appropriation on October 1, 2006. Public Radio's priorities for FY '08 will include the need to replace the Public Radio Satellite System, at a cost of \$73 million over a three-year period.

2006 Election Coverage:

Wisconsin Public Radio's Sheryl Gasser and WPT's Kathy Bissen created a spreadsheet to track all election coverage for radio and television during the Fall 2006 elections. This is searchable by candidate and by issue. This will be a continuing effort into the 2008 elections and beyond.

Election coverage on the Ideas Network included inviting every ballot-status candidate for a statewide constitutional office and every candidate running for Congress in Wisconsin to appear on a Wisconsin Public Radio talk show at least once before the September primary (if there was a contested race) and at least once before the general election in November. All of these candidate forums were archived on a special section on our website so people could listen, at their convenience, to any that they missed. In addition, programs were produced featuring guests from different perspectives advocating for or against issues being debated on the campaign trail, including the proposed constitutional amendment defining marriage in Wisconsin and the advisory referendum asking whether Wisconsin should reinstate the death penalty.

The Wisconsin Public Radio/St. Norbert College Survey Center Poll for Fall, 2006, gauged public opinion on the races and issues on the November ballot. The results of the poll were released and discussed in late October.

Wisconsin Public Radio, and the other media partners in the "We the People: Wisconsin Civil Journalism Project", helped organize and broadcast two debates featuring the Republican and Democratic candidates running for Governor. In addition, Wisconsin Public Radio broadcast the only other debate agreed to by the candidates, sponsored by the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association.

Ideas Network producers Sheryl Gasser and Leo Duran produced the primary and general election night coverage broadcast on the Ideas Network both evenings, and talk show host Ben Merens anchored the coverage.

Fall Pledge Drive:

Wisconsin Public Radio tried some new strategies this year, including pitching on-air only 70% of the hours we normally pitch during a pledge drive, and we brought in 93% of what we normally raise. Less pitching gave the staff and listeners a break, and most of the comments we received were that the drive sounded good. We also had fewer premiums, so our net income was higher than usual. Nevertheless, we fell short of our \$1 million goal, so we will be closely tracking membership income during the next few weeks. We have raised 48% of our total revenue goal for pledge drives this fiscal year with 11 days of pledging. We currently have 14 more days of pledge scheduled for the year and we plan to add an additional day to the February pledge drive, which will run from February 22 – March 3. As indicated, though, we are closely monitoring our pledge drives because of our dependence on this revenue and will make adjustments either in days pitching or in expenses to ensure success.

Corporate Development:

Cash receipts for Underwriting are running 4% ahead of budget as of December 31, 2006. October and November, 2006, were two of the highest months ever for WPR Underwriting. Also, it is important to note how critical this revenue source is to Wisconsin Public Radio's financial health.

More Channels, More Service:

Consultants from Public Radio Capital have been working with ECB and UW representatives to analyze the public service potential of expansion through acquiring new stations to address coverage problems with the Ideas Network in Central Wisconsin, and the lack of a classical service in the Milwaukee area. The goal is to build a business model that could be used to analyze any potential affiliation or acquisition opportunity in the future. Public Radio Capital has worked with other public broadcasting entities around the country to provide market analysis and business model scenarios that include 10-year business and financial modeling. The consulting project is expected to conclude in Spring, 2007.

24-hour Classical Channel:

Wisconsin Public Radio is completing the technical and programming arrangements to be able to start field-testing the 24-hour classical music service which we intend to provide on the secondary audio High Definition (HD) channels of WERN, WHAD, and WPNE. We will be using Classical Public Radio Network (CPRN) initially as the source for the program feeds, with the service branded as one from Wisconsin Public Radio. As time goes on, we plan to use as much locally-produced classical music as possible as part of the service. The technical and programmatic quality of the service will be tested on listening groups in the Madison, Milwaukee and Green Bay areas, and if all goes well, we will begin promoting the service in late February, 2007.

In addition to the HD Classical service, WHRM has been testing its digital signal by placing the Ideas Network feed on the secondary audio channel of WHRM, thereby extending the reach of the Ideas Network in Central Wisconsin, particularly during evening hours when WLBL is forced to go to greatly reduced power.

Audience:

As we explained at the October, 2006, ECB Board meeting, the Spring '06 Arbitron data showed considerable WPR statewide audience erosion from Spring '05. Total Average Quarter Hour audience decreased from 25,900 to 20,900, and unduplicated cume audience decreased from 430,800 to 383,400, a loss of 11% in one year, and 5% as compared with a 5-year average. The NPR News and Classical Network showed a continuation of a downward trend, and the Ideas Network showed a reversal of an upward trend. This is an extremely important issue for us to solve.

The comprehensive program review conducted during FY '06 resulted in some significant program changes that took place during the Summer of 2006, immediately after the Spring '06 Arbitron survey period. We will have the first indication of the effect of those changes when the Fall '06 Arbitron book, which measured the period from September 21 – December 13, comes out. We expect to receive that data during the first week in February, 2007, and we hope that the program changes will slow down or reverse the erosion of audience that we have been experiencing.

Quality Control:

WPR's audience decreases during the Spring of 2006 reflect losses suffered by public radio nationwide beginning about two years ago. Most of those losses are attributable not to satellite radio or other new media, but to listener shifts to terrestrial commercial radio stations. The lesson is that we need to improve our products and bring our listeners back. The Spring '06 audience loss was prior to our July and September program changes, and we hope that those changes will help to reverse the trend. In addition to the program schedule changes, we are determined to do whatever we can to maintain and build audiences, and reduce tune-out.

The first step is to pay more attention to the details. We are going to redouble our efforts to correct our many technical, operational and programmatic errors. Each of these errors is an open invitation for listeners to tune away. We start with programming and how we behave on air. Then, we look at the technical aspects of our efforts. Wisconsin Public Radio is a very complex network, which relies heavily on technology at Vilas Hall, at ECB and throughout the state. Although that technology has enabled us to have a national, state and regional presence throughout Wisconsin with two networks, it also makes us more vulnerable to errors in the broadcast chain. Automation also plays a large role in our operation, and presents its own special challenges. We need to pay attention to every minute we are on the air, and do more critical listening to ourselves, including systematic air checking. This effort will involve the entire staff, and will be a high priority during the coming year.

Wisconsin Broadcasters Association Awards: (Note: *the awards information is embargoed* and is not to be distributed outside the organization until the awards are presented on January 24.)

Wisconsin Public Radio will receive several awards from the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association at its January conference.

First place: Documentary: Brian Bull: *Tsim Txom: Domestic Violence in Hmong Society*
Use of Audio: Gil Halsted: *Unique Ceremony Commemorates Lives Lost in War*

Merit: Use of Audio: Glen Moberg: *Prairie Chicken*

Special Interest: Primary Night Coverage

Wisconsin Public Television (James Steinbach, Interim Director)

December Pledge Drive:

The December pledge drive was the most successful December drive on record -- for both dollars raised and number of pledges, raising \$555,277 on 4,102 pledges.

For comparison, our average drive since 2000 typically raises around \$461,165 on 3,724 pledges. This December's drive is a 20% increase over the average for dollars, and a 10% increase over the average number of pledges. The previous high was \$525,043 on 3,972 pledges, set in 2002. Can you hear how excited we are!

Programming Update:

"*Wisconsin Young Artists Compete: The Final Forte*" will be broadcast on Saturday, February 3rd at 7:00 p.m.. This is the first television coverage of the Madison Symphony Orchestra's annual Young Artist's Competition. (The event is recorded January 31st.) This is a combined WPT, WPR and Education Services effort.

WPT and WPR provided live coverage of the Inauguration for Governor Doyle and other state officers. We also will cover the Governor's State of the State Address (projected for January 30) and the Budget Address, in February, 2007.

"*Game Over: Women in Prison*" was broadcast on Friday, December 1st, and had great press coverage, including articles in the "Wisconsin State Journal" and "The Green Bay Gazette". The program, produced for WPT by ETP NEW/ NEWIST (Dean Thomas and Eileen Littig, producers) was created from interviews and other footage shot by inmates at Taycheeda. Sandra

Kallio of the "Wisconsin State Journal" summed up her article by quoting "a woman whose voice is muffled from behind the segregation cell window, saying, 'Change your lifestyle before you end up where I'm at. This ain't life. This ain't life for nobody.'"

"*Way of the Warrior*", which explores the high rate of military service among Native Americans, is being considered for national broadcast by PBS.

Wisconsin *Hometown Stories: Green Bay* is well underway, with extraordinary community support for story development, funding and creation of educational materials. A local curriculum will be created with the assistance of the ECB Education Division and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Outreach:

Garden Expo is set for Feb. 9-11, 2007, at the Alliant Energy Center, Madison. The event includes educational presentations, demos, workshops and hundred of vendor booths. UW-Extension's Cooperative Education horticulture team takes part. We are anticipating attendance of about 20,000.

Community Forum on Race & Diversity: Thursday, Dec. 14, 2006. With nearly 60 attendees, the event (a part of the annual series of forums), which included a screening of the P.O.V. film *Waging a Living* and a facilitated discussion about the working poor in Dane county, was a success. An engaged audience and wonderful support from community partners made for a meaningful and thought-provoking night.

Parenting Counts: WPT has trained the Head Start Professional Development team - a new network of 27 Social Workers and Family Outreach Workers who will implement our Parenting Counts curriculum in their parent workshops and home visits. Since many of the trainers are bilingual, this will bring wonderful reach to our project! WPT has also received another grant from the Talaris Foundation to expand Parenting Counts in 8 Native American communities within the Great Lakes Tribal Council, partnering with their "Honoring Our Children" project. We're training 16 tribal educators, who will then share our curriculum with over 900 parents. We'll also use the funds to convene the "Infant Toddler Summit," a collaboration among WPT, the South Central Library System, Head Start, Even Start, and UW-Extension.

Support Services and Issues

Engineering and Operations (Roger Strand coordinated this report; Dean Andrewjeski serves as Interim Director from January to mid-February)

Datacasting:

Division employees continue to provide services in support of datacasting. Several schools are on line with more being added each week. Engineering staff are interfacing directly with school media technology personnel to facilitate installation of off-air receive equipment and computer-based receivers at each participating school. A specific success story was at CESA 12 in Ashland, where CESA and ECB personnel worked on a "receiving" installation that allows them to directly receive datacast programming from the ECB digital transmitter in Park Falls. CESA 12 serves many school districts in Northwest and Northern Wisconsin.

Disaster and Emergency Preparedness:

Engineering division personnel continue to provide planning, integration and technical support for the agency's wide range of disaster and emergency preparedness efforts. On November 9, 2006, ECB conducted an off-site exercise where we imagined a disaster where we had to leave the Beltline building and get to our recovery site. This exercise went very well except that we all thought Gene Purcell died when he simply had a heart attack (a pretend one) and lived. We learned a great deal from the exercise and are working on improving our preparedness. On Friday, January 5, 2007, the planning strategy for dealing with a pandemic was reviewed. Like all plans, the review showed that some fine tuning is needed. Both center and field engineering staff will submit revised proposals.

Educational Broadband Services/Instructional Television Fixed Service (EBS/ITFS):

The evaluation of the Request For Response (RFR) for potential leasing of excess capacity of EBS/ITFS spectrum currently is underway. As indicated in our last report, as historically with EBS's predecessor, ITFS, the ECB will reserve several core channels at each licensed location for educational and public safety use. The evaluation results go to the Executive Director who will report to the Board.

Digital Emergency Alert System (EAS):

As of January 2, 2007, all ECB digital transmitters have been upgraded with Digital EAS equipment that provides for statewide activation of EAS messages including the Amber Alert network. This is the digital television equivalent of what WPT and WPR currently broadcast on our NTSC (analog) TV and FM transmitters. Like all things in the digital realm it was not particularly easy. ECB Engineering staff were able to provide the necessary solutions to problems encountered.

HD Radio:

HD radio broadcasts are now active from WHAD and WPNE as of mid-November, 2006.

Equipment currently is being installed to provide the third HD audio service to the WHAD, WERN, WHRM and WPNE. We are expecting to have this service operational by the end of January.

Work began January 3rd at WPNE will rebuild the existing FM transmitting antenna to a reliable transmission facility. This work is expected to be completed during the first quarter of 2007.

HD Television for Northwest Wisconsin:

Equipment is on order for replacement of the existing microwave equipment that will allow for transmission of the WPT digital television signal by WPT affiliate WDSE-TV channel 8. This is a continuation of a long-term relationship that began in 1979 to distribute educational programming to schools in the Northwest part of the State. Pending equipment delivery and favorable weather for the tower work, we expect to be operational in the first quarter of 2007. We are currently writing bids for equipment that, once procured, will enable WPT to provide enhanced datacast broadcasts to Northwest Wisconsin.

WPR and WPT in Northeast Wisconsin:

Installation of new microwave equipment began January 3, 2007, for the digital upgrade of the microwave facility between UW-Green Bay and the WPNE transmitter site. The new system will provide upgraded capacity for TV, Radio and data content. A new fiber optic interconnect

system is also being concurrently installed at the Green Bay campus for ECB. Both projects should be completed during the first quarter of 2007.

Personnel Update: Long-time Regulatory and Compliance Director, Robert Wundrock, who officially retired on January 5, 2007, was honored for his years of service to the agency in the Board room on the same day. Until a new division administrator is hired, Bob's position will remain vacant, with his duties handled on an interim basis by various engineering staff members.

Recruitment to fill the vacant Engineering Division Administrator is underway. Applications will be accepted until January 10, 2007. Candidate interviews will be scheduled later in January.

General – all Support Services:

Personnel: On a personal note: as the Board knows, we experienced the sudden departure due to family circumstances and the not-so-sudden retirement of long-time division administrator, Dennis Behr. We offered an “opportunity” to our mid-level engineering managers to assist us during the transition to a new leader and the individuals who have served as Interim Director of Engineering and Operations (Steve Bauder, Jim Klas, Roger Strand, Peter Ives and Dean Andrewjeski) accomplished something they didn't think they could – they stabilized our operations, they learned, they worked as a team, they supported one another, and they taught all of us about themselves and their passion for broadcasting. We thank them for their service to us and to the people of Wisconsin. They did and are doing a superb job.

The Move: Staff from the Beltline facility's first floor moved to the fourth floor in early January, 2007. This move is a cost-savings measure. Great appreciation is extended to all who helped with the move (which was everyone in the building pitching in to assist) and to those directly affected. They now are envied because they've tossed so much old stuff. Special thanks is extended to Gene Purcell who coordinated the effort (a task only second in unpleasantness to assigning parking) and to Marv Engelke, our DOA facilities, Beltline guy. Without him, we would still be struggling up the stairs.