

**Educational Communications Board Meeting**  
**April 17, 2009**  
**Executive Director Report**  
**Gene Purcell**

As the first quarter of 2009 comes to a close, many questions regarding state funding and the effects on ECB remain unanswered.

As you may know by now, the Governor's budget outlines a series of cuts and reductions in ECB's GPR funding for the next fiscal year that totals about \$564,000 or about 11%. It is possible that a good share of this will be restored by the addition of Federal stimulus funding, but even the remaining GPR cuts to ECB will be serious ones.

Other sources of funding also affected include ECB's Capitol Budget requests which have been delayed or shifted into all-agency funding.

At the same time, other sources of program revenue are being stressed as well. For example, public radio and television both have to work harder to raise funding from listeners, viewers and corporate supporters. This is particularly true in television which has had the added challenge of working through the transition to full-time digital broadcasting.

Of course, ECB is not alone; the economic challenges facing all of us are many and far from being resolved.

Having said all of that, we are working diligently to stabilize ECB's financial situation while continuing to move forward with the work of the agency and our partners.

Earlier in the year, I asked Division administrators to prepare plans for "best" and "worst" case budget scenarios following the release of Governor Doyle's budget. Those plans have been received and now we are waiting for the legislature and the Governor to finish their work. In the meantime, we have worked through a variety of scenarios and once the state budget becomes final, we will move quickly to finalize the ECB budget.

While we are waiting for the state budget situation to become clarified, we are not exactly idle.

Whether it's developing new ways of teaching students about state, tribal and local government in Wisconsin, completing the analog to digital transition in WPT; replacing aging infrastructure like the Highland tower; building a new FM station to serve WPR listeners or designing the next generation of the Broadcast Interconnect (BIC) there is plenty to do.

The details surrounding these and other projects follow in the next few pages and as always, if any of you have questions or comments, please feel free to ask.

**Education Division Update**  
**Lin Hanson, Division Administrator**  
**April 17, 2009**

**Project Updates**

- The *Into the Book* Web site for students received the 2008 NETA Award for best instructional media product and the *Into the Book* Web site for teachers received the 2008 NETA Award for best teacher resource.
- The Personal Financial Literacy Project now has a name – *Financial Literacy TEACH IT!* Future shoots are scheduled at Fennimore High School; D.C. Everest Jr. High in Weston, WI; Appleton East High School; Jefferson Middle School; and during the Appleton summer school program. Planning has begun for a parent component for this project.
- State, Local and Tribal Government Project – The Advisory Committee continues to meet and guide project development. This series will illustrate the process of government, focusing on the connections between state, local, and tribal governments in Wisconsin.
- PBS TeacherLine professional development courses are available for Wisconsin educators. Course catalogs are distributed at workshops and available online [www.ecb.org/education/tline.htm](http://www.ecb.org/education/tline.htm)
- CPB STEM Community Engagement Project – Work on this initiative continues with the project partners to develop an online clearinghouse of resources for all STEM-related educational/employment/career activities in Wisconsin. Partners include the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Engineers and Scientists of Milwaukee, The Center on Education and Work – UW Madison, Information Technology Association of Wisconsin (ITAWi), Wisconsin Technical College System, Department of Workforce Development, Wisconsin Science Network, and the ECB. A Webcast on February 2, hosted by Wisconsin Public Radio's Brian Bull, provided an overview of STEM education and introduced the collaborative initiative. [www.wistem.org](http://www.wistem.org).
- Blueprint: Designing Wisconsin's Future – A joint project between ECB and Wisconsin Public Television, this 30-minute program features four STEM-related projects in Wisconsin. Business-school-community collaborations were featured in segments on the First Lego League in Madison, the Brillion School District and Ariens Company, Westfield School District's biodiesel project, and the Biopharmaceutical Technology Center Institute school partnership.
- Sound~Waves: Wisconsin Youth Radio Festival – We received 98 entries from 13 schools. Judging on April 7 selected the winners who will produce their final projects at the Wisconsin Public Radio studios for broadcast.

### **Conferences, Presentations and Workshops**

- Education division staff presented sessions and had a booth in the exhibit hall of several conferences this spring including Wisconsin State Reading Association (WSRA), Milwaukee; Wisconsin School Counselors Association (WSCA), Stevens Point; Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers (WSST), Milwaukee; Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies (WSST), Madison; Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA), Madison; and Western Wisconsin Education Council (WVEC), La Crosse.
- Education division staff will be presenting a session about the personal financial literacy project and ECB's personal financial literacy resources at the National Institute of Financial and Economic Literacy on June 24, 2009 at Edgewood College in Madison.

### **Partnership Outreach Activities**

- Development of the curriculum materials for *Hometown Stories Manitowoc-Two Rivers* is underway. Teachers from the Manitowoc and the Two Rivers School Districts serve on the curriculum development committee.
- ECB staff is working with WPT Outreach to judge the Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators Contest submitted in the WPT coverage area.

### **Print and Web Publications**

- The Interconnect 2.0 newsletter is available at ECB's web site – [www.ecb.org/Interconnect20](http://www.ecb.org/Interconnect20). This monthly newsletter provides schedule information, program updates, and articles of interest to educators.

### **Instructional Programming**

- Teacher Advisory Committee Meetings were held in Ashland, West Salem, and Green Bay in February. ECB Liaisons met at the ECB in March to review current instructional programming and make recommendations for new programs for the 2009-2010 school year.
- The education division is working with a marketing consultant to develop a strategic marketing plan. The consultants are using focus groups, conversations with key stakeholders, and surveys of teachers and media specialists to gather information.

**Delivery Division Operational and Project Update**  
**Terry Baun, Division Administrator**  
**April 17, 2009**

**Division Staffing**

- One of our Operations Center staff accepted a new position in video engineering at WPT/Vilas in the first quarter of 2009. No other Division staffing changes were made during the quarter. There are now two unfilled FTE position in the Operations Center, which at present we have no immediate plans to fill. Should WPT wish to initiate 24/7 telecasting operations at some future date, we are prepared to reconsider that decision.
- In conjunction with our Division response to mandated ECB budget reductions and lapses we continue to leave unfilled the position of Director of Regulatory and Compliance, with those duties continuing to be shared by the Administrator and the Regional Technical Managers as currently assigned.

**Division Meetings**

- The Division monthly telephone conference call with all Regional Technical Managers continued throughout the past quarter. These have proven to be an economical and effective means of maintaining regularly scheduled Division communications without travel expense.
- A full Division meeting will be scheduled in Q2 of this year. We will also have an informal get-together during the WBA/SBE Summer Engineering Seminar in June if possible.

**Operational Items**

- Our Division study committee on our Newpoint TCAS remote control and monitoring system developed and instituted methodology allowing ECB engineering to assume full maintenance and upgrade responsibilities for the TCAS system beginning Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> when the Newpoint service contract terminated. We are currently having a planned and orderly upgrade of the field units for this system and all is proceeding well. Special note of thanks to Peter McLean for his tireless work on this project.
- Paperless on-line engineering reporting is working well, with all sites now using this on-line system. The reports are now, by request, also being distributed to all of the field engineers. In addition, paperless Purchase Ordering has been implemented, with sites sending e-mailed Purchase Order Requests and receiving confirmation of processing by return e-mail.

**Project Updates**

- The Delivery Division, in conjunction with our partners in WPT, completed the federally mandated analog television conversion by shutting down the five remaining WPT analog transmitters at midnight on April 5<sup>th</sup>. All WPT stations and translators are now broadcasting exclusively on their full power authorized DTV assignments. A major project still ahead for ECB is the responsible disposal of the legacy analog TV transmitters in accordance with state policy and environmental considerations.
- There are no new developments on the status of the ECB/UWEX combined 8 NCE-FM applications, but UWEX has received the Construction Permit for the new FM station in Ashland. ECB will handle most of the construction for this station, which will broadcast

from the ECB tower in Ashland, with programming originating from WPR's regional studios in Superior.

- Installation has been completed for the upgrade to HD radio transmission for our stations WHWC, WHBM, WHHI, WHLA, WHDI, and AM station WLBL. We are still awaiting installation of permanent high bandwidth microwave connections to Sister Bay to allow HD operation there. Additionally, we received Building Commission approval earlier this year to proceed with HD radio installations at ECB stations WHSA in Brule, WHND in Sister Bay, and the future WHAA in Adams. These three projects also received federal PTFP funding.
- A high bidder for replacement of the WHHI tower in Highland was selected, and we expect construction to commence within 30 days. Project Manager Pete Kingslien hopes to have the project completed by late fall or early winter.
- The Coloma FM project continues on a fast-tracked schedule. Tower studies have been completed and we are awaiting further negotiations with the tower owner concerning the timing of the necessary improvements. Project Director Dean Andrewjeski met with other staff engineers at the site late in March to plan physical changes at the site and confirm measurements and clearances for new equipment. Again, we are hoping for a late fall/early winter completion.
- A major project has been undertaken to explore how ECB will deliver signals to all stations in the future. Currently we lease fiber-optic and microwave facilities from a private company, whose contract will expire in 2010, with a same-cost one year extension to 2011. We are investigating alternative delivery systems, including partnering with DOT to use their microwave facilities in conjunction with our own "last mile" links to our sites. This Broadcast Interconnect Committee, chaired by Jim Klas, is exploring other alternatives as well and we expect to have a report by the end of the summer.
- We have let the final bids for the updating and addition of digital capabilities to our existing satellite uplink facility. When completed by this summer, this conversion will give ECB the ability to perform state of the art uplinks and downlinks in both digital and analog modes. We expect this upgrade will positively affect WPT's production capabilities by allowing easier scheduling of live interviews and background feeds on breaking news events.
- Spring and summer installations continue for small projects at the field sites, including air conditioning, roofing, paving projects, and other seasonal maintenance work.

**Wisconsin Public Television**  
**James Steinbach, Director of Television**  
**April 17, 2009**

**DTV Transition**

Wisconsin Public Television ended analog broadcast at midnight on Sunday, April 5. As of Monday the 6th, all of our stations broadcast in digital only. This is in advance of the June 12 mandatory analog shut-off date.

It's been a confusing time for television viewers as Congress and the FCC have revised the timelines and requirements. In February, Congress passed legislation allowing stations to continue conventional, analog broadcasts until June 12, in part because of problems with the availability of converter box coupons. Most Wisconsin commercial broadcasters weighed the situation and decided to end their analog signals on February 17, the date originally announced for the digital switch. WPT elected to continue providing our analog service past Feb. 17 in order to give additional time to viewers to make the transition.

Our decision to end analog broadcasts on April 5 balanced the value of the analog channels with the cost of maintaining them. For example, the electricity to power WPT's analog transmitters is more than \$25,000 per month, and some of our analog equipment was nearing the end of its life cycle. We didn't want an abrupt transmitter failure to add to public confusion.

WPT has made a major commitment to public education throughout the transition, culminating in a phone bank during the week of Feb. 17 when most stations in the state ended analog broadcasts. In three days, we received over 3,300 calls from viewers across the state requesting assistance -- and these weren't even WPT viewers since our analog signals were still on the air! To handle these calls, the FCC awarded us a contract which allowed us to increase our audience services staff, adding both Spanish and Hmong speakers. All WPT staff worked the phone banks, too (see additional notes below)

One specific note: As a service to analog viewers in Wausau, WPT took the unusual step of airing an evening newscast produced by a commercial station. The newscast aired nightly at 10p on our analog transmitter. The agreement reached with the commercial stations allowed them to switch to digital broadcasting only while maintaining a source for local news for over-the-air viewers with analog only receive capability.

**Community Engagement**

FCC DTV contract: In January, 2009, WPT was awarded a contract by the FCC to provide extensive community education on the upcoming analog to digital television transition. Since that time, over 250,000 informational materials have been distributed statewide, including via a partnership with the community Meals on Wheels programs. Station staff made 170 community site visits and presentations. An informational phone bank was staffed on and around February 17th, helping 1848 viewers through the process. In total, over 4,500 calls have been received since the start of the FCC grant period.

2009 Reading Rainbow Young Writers & Illustrators Contest: This year's contest has brought in nearly 780 entries from grades kindergarten through 3rd, a new record for this annual statewide contest.

**Development**

There was some significant membership recovery with a very strong December and solid February and March. March pledge with \$735,000 matched our average March pledge from recent years. However, it took more days to do that. Pledge results across the country were down. We'll soon have our 3rd quarter numbers which we know will be down but making some significant recovery from November.

We received a \$20,000 initial pledge from the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin for Hometown Stories: Wausau and receiving a very enthusiastic response in Wausau. Mark Bradley, among others, is taking a lead in connecting us with funders and the story tellers. We expect to continue fundraising through the summer and fall with expectation of launching the production in early 2010.

Continued work on the station's truck campaign. The campaign is still in a quiet phase and is nearing \$3 million toward the overall \$5 million for the truck and a program venture fund. Friends board members and a beyond-the-board Advisory Committee have advised a go slow educational phase as donors gain confidence in the economy. But the prospect of taking WPT production on the road to allow us to cover more cultural, performance and political events is being well received and we are cautious but enthusiastic going forward.

Garden Expo was down a bit but our biggest attendance ever overcame a good portion of the decline in vendor booth sales. Next big fundraising event is Auction. You are invited to join us. It's a great event to volunteer for or to visit on a tour. The Auction is the most involved television production / community event we do and its really fun to participate or just to see the madness.

### **Production**

January thru March was extremely busy in Production – and there was one week in particular that stands out. That one week we produced live coverage of the deployment ceremony of 3200 Wisconsin National Guard members at the Coliseum using our remote truck. Immediately afterward, the producer and director raced to the capitol to produce live coverage of the *Governor's Biennial Budget Address* that evening using a different portable switcher system. That week we also rented Milwaukee Public Television's high definition remote truck to produce *The Final Forte: Wisconsin Young Artists Compete*. This gorgeous, high definition production featured four of the best high school musicians in the state performing in Overture Hall with the Madison Symphony Orchestra. All of this happened the week of February 17, when most commercial TV stations in the state were shutting off their analog signals and we also ran a statewide phone bank. Of course, we had our usual weekly productions of *In Wisconsin* and *Here and Now* that week as well as two Badger men's hockey games. It was an intense week with a lot of amazing television professionals doing great work...but not a week we care to repeat anytime soon.

Additional productions during the past few months include coverage of the *Governor's State of the State* and the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration at the capitol. We had our weekly *In Wisconsin* and *Here and Now* productions as well as numerous University Place lecture tapings and *Sewing with Nancy* productions. Our Wisconsin Channel projects, *Directors Cut* and *30 Minute Music Hour* continue with great work featuring Wisconsin artists. During the course of the winter we covered 16 Badger men's hockey games under a client relationship with Badger Sports Properties. Our rights to broadcast hockey were extended to allow for next day broadcasts on the Wisconsin Channel and live Wisconsin Channel broadcasts of two playoff games. We produced two pledge specials including *On The Trail: An In Wisconsin Special* which was one of our top, per-minute, pledge programs in March; and a new *Wisconsin Gardener*. We created a new set for *Teen Connection* that debuted during the March broadcast.

## Spring Election Coverage

*Here and Now* did extended one-on-one interviews with all of the candidates for State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction. Those interviews were also streamed on the Wisconsin Vote web site and packaged together into a stand-alone special that ran on the Wisconsin Channel prior to the February primary. In March, the two candidates who made it through the primary participated in a broadcast debate jointly produced by WPT and WPR. The following week, WPT produced a debate with the two candidates for State Supreme Court as part of our *We the People* partnership. And, for the first time, we offered a Candidates Statements opportunity to all four candidates in those two races. Each was able to make an uninterrupted 7 minute statement to the people of Wisconsin. Those statements are also streamed on the Wisconsin Vote web site and were packaged into a half-hour broadcast program.

## Awards

Wisconsin Public Television won its fourth consecutive national USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism for its full compliment of election season programs and web projects. Judges said the award was for “covering issues via compelling stories about real people.” These stories were part of *In Wisconsin*. The judges called WPT’s campaign stories “as good as political coverage can get.”

In addition, WPT won 6 awards in the Excellence in Wisconsin Journalism competition, formerly known as the Milwaukee Press Club Awards. Those awards included:

- 1st place in Best Documentary or News Special for *Land Trust Stories*, an *In Wisconsin* Special
- 2nd Place in Best Documentary or News Special for *The Teachers New Temple*
- 1st place in Best Feature or Lifestyle Story or Series for the APT Flood segment that aired in *In Wisconsin*
- 2nd place in Best Public Affairs Reporting for *Immigration Farmer* that aired on *In Wisconsin*
- 1st place in Best Community Affairs Program for *In Wisconsin*
- 1st place for Best Video Journalism to Frank Boll for his wolf video

WPT has also won 4 Wisconsin Broadcasters Association 2008 Awards for Excellence but we won’t know whether they are 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place awards until the awards ceremony May 2. The 4 winning projects and categories are:

Peter Leidy Commentary that aired on *Here and Now* in the Editorial/Commentary category

Tiffany Train, an *In Wisconsin* report, in the News Writing category

Wolves in Wisconsin, a series of reports that aired in *In Wisconsin* in the Series or Documentary category

Be Part of the Picture: One-in-Ten in the Promo Announcement category.

*Shelter from the Storm*, a documentary about women and children in poverty produced by ETPNEW in partnership with NEWIST and Wisconsin Public Television, has received a 2008 Aurora Platinum Best of Show Award.

And finally, from the five-state Northwest Broadcast News Association we received two Merit Awards for:

Laos Bombs segment that aired in *In Wisconsin*. It was entered in the Hard Feature category.

*In Wisconsin* which was entered in the Talk/Public Affairs category

**Wisconsin Public Radio**  
**Mike Crane, Interim Director of Radio**  
**April 17, 2009**

**Update on Phil Corriveau**

WPR Director Phil Corriveau continues his recovery, and is beginning to develop plans for a gradual return to work. Our thanks to the staff of WPR for pitching in where needed to keep things going in his absence. We miss Phil and eagerly anticipate his return.

**Budget Update**

Work continues on estimating the impact of state budget cuts. For WPR the overall economic crisis is also a major concern. For the current fiscal year we are currently about \$150,000 behind in listener contributions: and a very strong performance during March actually closed a gap that had been closer to \$300,000 as of the end of February. On the other hand, we fell farther behind in underwriting income, and are now \$98,000 below year-to-date goal. We're busy identifying savings, including keeping jobs open, deferring maintenance and upgrades, etc, as well as working on creative ways to raise more funds.

**One Day Wednesday Pledge Drive**

This May 6 WPR will conduct "One Day Wednesday," seeking to raise the same number of pledges in one day that we'd ordinarily raise in seven! Stations around the country have added this strategy as a creative way to meet our fiscal goals. We're seeking 4000 contributions, with a financial goal of \$400,000. The campaign is a carefully planned and executed effort that includes on-air promotional announcements, emails, and regular mail in addition to the actual "pitching" on the day of the event.

**Work continues on Adams/Wisconsin Rapids Ideas Network station**

Preliminary work has begun on our new WHAA Coloma/Adams/Wisconsin Rapids station. We've completed a tower study that indicates we can place our antenna there safely, and additional engineering preparations continue. We hope to have the station constructed and on the air before snow flies next winter.

**WPR Programming announcements**

**Neale-Silva Young Artists Competition Winners, Sun. Apr. 26 12:30 p.m.**

Wisconsin Public Radio's Neale-Silva Young Artists' Competition was established to recognize young Wisconsin performers of classical music who demonstrate an exceptionally high level of artistry. This live concert will feature the six top performers from the competition. The competition is made possible by a grant from the estate of the late University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Eduardo Neale-Silva.

**Money Matters series work begun**

Working in partnership with WPT and the ECB Education Services team, WPR is rolling out a new Web site that features work done by the partners to cover the effect of the economic crisis in Wisconsin, and efforts to cope with the challenges. WPR's recent addition of the Kevin McKinley On Your Money segment of the Joy Cardin Show is a part of this effort to increase our response to the economic situation.

### **WPR in our Communities**

Through our regional offices, WPR is deeply involved in communities throughout Wisconsin. Here are just a few recent examples of our community connections:

Joint Finance Committee Live on KUWS Continuing a longstanding tradition, WPR's Superior, WI station KUWS broadcast gavel-to-gavel coverage of that region's meeting of the Joint Finance Committee.

*A Prairie Home Companion* comes to Appleton. Garrison Keillor's popular program traveled to Northeast Wisconsin for a live broadcast in March: the event was so popular that a second non-broadcast show was added.

Kennan Forum Earlier this month At Issue host Ben Merens hosted the annual Kennan Forum broadcast, focusing on "The U.S. and the Changing Global Order." WPR broadcasts the Kennan Forum in partnership with the UW-Milwaukee Institute of World Affairs and Milwaukee Public TV.

### **Other News**

National audience for public radio is at an all time high New NPR President Vivian Schiller reported recently: "At a time when all of our economics are under increasing pressure, it is affirming to know that we are more relevant to the audience than ever. According to just-released Arbitron ratings for Fall 2008, the total number of listeners to NPR member stations has grown by an impressive 6% in the past year, reaching an all-time high of 32.7 million weekly listeners. In addition, NPR programming and newscasts now reach 27.5 million weekly listeners on NPR stations -- that's 7% year-over-year growth."