



## Educational Communications Board

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### EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING

ECB Board Room  
3319 West Beltline Highway  
Madison, Wisconsin  
April 21, 2017  
9:30 a.m.

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#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Gene Purcell

#### ***Federal Budget Update***

President Trump has proposed the elimination of funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in his FY18 budget proposal.

CPB funding comprises about 10% of ECB's annual budget, and if enacted, the elimination of CPB funding will diminish the ability of ECB to serve the state of Wisconsin.

While I am disappointed that the President chose not to support funding for public broadcasting in his budget, I am also encouraged by the support for funding within Congress and among the public.

The current Continuing Resolution (CR) which funds the federal government is due to expire in late April and the budget process for the remainder of the federal fiscal year remains uncertain.

#### ***State Budget Update***

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance has started its schedule of public hearings on the proposed 2017-2019 state of Wisconsin budget.

While the Governor did not approve ECB's request to restore some GPR funding to Wisconsin Media Lab, other GPR portions of the budget are essentially flat. Elsewhere in the ECB budget, we have projected increases of over 5% annually in program revenue from such efforts as TV and Radio membership, corporate support and the like.

I continue to meet with the members of the Joint Committee on Finance and others in the Legislature to brief them on the ECB budget and to renew our request for a restoration of some GPR funding for Wisconsin Media Lab's K-12 work.

While my visits with legislators have been largely positive, several months remain in the budget process and the final shape of the budget remains unknown.



It is expected the JCF will complete its work on the budget in May or June before sending it to the full Legislature for approval.

### ***FCC Spectrum Auction/Repack update***

Now that the FCC Spectrum Auction is complete, the work of moving TV broadcasters to new channels is just getting underway. The process of moving to a new channel is called “repacking” and ECB has learned that two of its five full-power stations will be repacked.

WHLA-TV in La Crosse will move from channel 30 to channel 15 and WPNE-TV in Green Bay will move from channel 42 to channel 25.

In general, the process of repacking involves the replacement of the television transmission system including a new transmitter, antenna line and antenna. The cost for repacking is designed to be reimbursed to TV licensees by the FCC from the proceeds of the spectrum auction.

Although we don’t have final costs yet, we estimate that repacking will cost between \$1 to \$2-million per site.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has set a timeline of less than 39 months for all stations throughout the country to complete the work of repack and has divided the work into a series of “phases” within that time frame.

The timeline clock will begin counting down upon official notification from the FCC which we expect to receive in mid to late April.

As you know, ECB staff has been planning for the administrative and engineering requirements of the repack for well over a year. This is a major undertaking for ECB’s engineering staff and it is being made more complex by the FCC timeline and the necessary coordination between broadcasters.

By the July meeting of the Board, I expect that we will be well into the repacking process and Board members will be provided with a full update on the status of the repack project then.

### ***Staffing updates***

- Terry Baun has retired as the Division Administrator for Engineering & Operations, a post he held since 2007. As you may know, Terry suffered a stroke at the end of January and I am



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pleased to be able to tell you that he is recovering well (and planning a retirement party in May).

Since Terry joined ECB in 2007, he led ECB's Engineering staff through a list of accomplishments to be proud of – a list that is far too long to reprint here.

On behalf of the agency, I'd like to acknowledge those accomplishments and thank him for his work at the ECB – he's been a tremendous colleague and all of us at the ECB wish him well on his retirement.

- Steve Bauder has accepted the position of Division Administrator for Engineering and Operations. Steve has worked for the ECB for nearly 32 years and for the last several years, he has served as the Director of Field Engineering for the agency.
- Hiring of a Finance team member is underway to fill a position which has been vacant since last fall.
- We have recently completed a hire for our Operations Center in based in Madison.