**Executive Director’s Report**

Educational Telecommunications Board of Directors

October 31, 2019

**BIT Leadership:** In September, Heather Perry was named interim Commissioner for the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications. SDPB is a division of BIT. Commissioner Perry will serve in the position until a new permanent Commissioner is hired. Please join me in welcoming her to our board.

**Budget:** The budget process for FY21 began in August. SDPB requested 1FTE and a corresponding increase in general funds to fund the position for the purpose of supporting our SD.net activities related to open government. With the expansion of SDPB’s streaming service to include Boards and Commissions meetings as well as Governor task forces and agency meetings, SDPB invested over 2,800-man hours in support of SD.net services this past year. While some of these hours are billable, the majority are not. Due to budget constrictions at the State level, I do not expect the request to be recommended in the Governor’s FY2021 budget.

We also initially requested $250,000 in on-time capital funding to repair the transmitter building at KESD. In a very positive turn of events, the Office of State Engineers (OSE) offered to include SDPB buildings and other infrastructure as part of their overall state maintenance and repair budget. While our projects will have to be prioritized, it is a big relief to know that some of our larger capital asset projects will no longer have to be self-funded.

In recent weeks a directive has come out for agencies with general funds to look for possible mid-year reductions and 5% reductions to base budgets for FY21. SDPB is the recipient of most general funds the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (BIT) receives. We have been going through our budget to determine what, if any, cost savings measures we can put forward. A 5% reduction in general funds for SDPB translates to roughly $218,000/year.

The difficulty in finding $218,000 in on-going expenses that can be reduced is difficult for several reasons:

1. We have never recovered from the 10% plus budget reduction in FY12. In 2012, SDPB reduced its budget by more than $700,000 and FTE count by 10.3.
2. The only general fund increases since 2012 was $64,000 for legislative streaming (SD.net). Cutting SD.net services is off the table.
3. The only FTE (4) and significant budget increases ($350,000) have come from Friends of SDPB for local content support. I have held firm in not cutting local programming or content FTE as I feel it would be viewed by Friends of SDPB board members and donors as a breach of donor intent.

The process is on-going, and I would expect to have a more definitive direction by our board meeting.

**Strategic Planning:** Implementation of our strategic plan is well underway. Cara Hetland is heading up our journalism division. Brad Van Osdel has been moved up from Production Manager to head of the entertainment/story-telling division. They’ve been doing a terrific job of getting staff and beats organized and put out some excellent work around pre-school education, country music and high school activities to name a few. Bob Bosse now oversees all programming and scheduling for our four television channels, two radio channels and digital streams. His department will also be the lead on underwriting across platforms. The digital department has been split up and folded in to other parts of the organization. The digital content staff has been folded into the journalism and entertainment content teams. Kent and Laura are now part of Severn’s engineering and tech team. Kent and Laura will be focused on web and app development, SD.net streaming, analytics and digital support.

Job announcement for a Business and Community Development beat reporter is out. This will fill one of the two FTE we were awarded in FY20. We have made it through the first round of a possible Report for America grant. They’re looking to place 100 journalists around the country focusing on areas of interest to the “host” station. If selected, we will get to choose between 5 applicants. The ideal candidate would be a journalist focusing on Native American stories and issues. If we get the grant – and the journalist – SDPB will be responsible for half the salary.

Staff has also submitted a grant to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) as part of the rural America stories initiative. I think it’s a good first step. I’ve attached a copy of the grant proposal at the bottom of my report. I think you’ll find well done and a real opportunity to do some meaningful ascertainment.

We are moving forward on the education side. Larry will have much more to share in his report. We have engaged with a retired elementary school principal with a solid background and energy around pre-k education. Kevin Nelson will be working with Larry, myself and staff over the next 6 to 8 months, developing a pre-k strategic plan for SDPB. There is significant foundation and donor interest around this topic. We know there are significant educational resources available to us through our affiliation with PBS. We need a better understanding of what those resources are and how they can best mesh with South Dakota standards. We also need to strategize how we can most effectively organize and promote these resources to pre-school educators and care-givers across our state. Our intent is to have a pre-k education roadmap laid out prior to FY21.

Staff and leadership from each department of SDPB recently completed their own strategic planning sessions focused on goals and activities for the next 12-18 months. We plan to discuss this update in further detail at the board meeting.

These efforts are largely being supported through the Friends of SDPB Sound Vision Campaign. Phase II of the campaign is launched and doing well. Focus for the campaign committees and staff over the next 12 months will be on raising the $1.5M designated for SDPB’s strategic plan support.

**National:** The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) along with America’s Public Television Stations (APTS) have been pushing congress for a $50M increase in funding for public broadcasting. The request passed out of House with a lower amount recommended in the Senate. If congress can pass a budget, there’s confidence the increase or something close to that amount with go through. The chaos in Washington and fight over border wall funding could force another continuing resolution instead of a new budget.

CPB has also been working with PBS, NPR and WGBH to develop an integrated web/digital experience specifically targeted at joint licensees. Current technology is very different depending on whether your running a public radio station or a public television station. If you happen to do both, you’re forced to manage two separate systems in the back ground that don’t talk to each other. WGBH is currently doing the beta testing with roll out to stations like SDPB slated for some time late next year.

I recently attended the Organization of State Broadcasting Executives (OSBE) bi-annual meeting hosted by Mississippi Public Broadcasting. We began work on a strategic plan for the association. OSBE has been in existence since the mid 80’s and represents multi-station public broadcasting networks around the country. There are roughly 30 states that fit into this category. Of the 30, only seven mirror SDPB. OSBE member stations represent roughly one-third of the population in the U.S. and a significant majority of rural Americans. We’re attempting to re-focus our energies and harness our collective power to push for changes and improved service around education and local journalism.

**GRANTEE NAME: South Dakota Public Broadcasting (SDPB)**

**CSG GRANTEE ID NUMBER: TV – 1857 / Radio -1606**

**TOTAL PLANNED BUDGET: $42,448**

**PROPOSED PROJECT SUMMARY OF “COMING HOME: SOUTH DAKOTA”:**

With the goal of developing local, multiplatform productions for *Coming Home: South Dakota,* SDPB will build on our strong relationships with South Dakota’s rural communities and reach more deeply and intentionally into our total, statewide service area to methodically gather information from and about South Dakotans to better know the concerns and cultures that characterize everyday lives in rural South Dakota. Working closely with the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota, SDPB will develop information-gathering protocols to conduct surveys and multiple, state-wide listening sessions that will effectively and respectfully ask South Dakotans questions in order to promote SDPB’s organizational-wide understanding of the communities we serve, including who South Dakotans are, what we care about, and how and where we see – or don’t see – ourselves, our cultures, and our homeplaces represented in the media. Working with this information, as well as existing research and information, data analysts, rural studies sociologists, and representatives from South Dakota’s multivarious rural communities, SDPB will develop and refine story ideas and conceptualize suitable platforms to authentically represent and share South Dakotans’ stories. While the lived rural experience in South Dakota is not to be considered monolithic, SDPB will work to illuminate shared issues and values via individual voices that may be representative of stories and concerns throughout rural America.

**OPPORTUNITY**

**SDPB’s Connection to Rural Communities**

SDPB serves one of the most rural and remote states in the nation. South Dakota’s farms, ranchlands, and nine Indian Reservations comprise 77,811 square miles, (roughly the size of Senegal or Kyrgyzstan), and are home to 856,000 residents, making the state’s average population density 11.2 people per square mile – compared to the national average of 87.4 people per square mile. Only South Dakota’s two largest towns, Sioux Falls at 180,000 and Rapid City at 75,000, qualify as “Urban Areas” by the U.S. Census Bureau. SDPB is South Dakota’s only state-wide media organization. As a dual licensee with 20 radio transmitters and 15 TV transmitters, SDPB is sometimes the sole provider of radio and TV programming to isolated households in the state’s most remote rural and/or tribal communities. As part of our commitment to providing local content and services to South Dakotans, each year SDPB broadcasts or provides:

* 200+ hours of high-production high school athletic competitions and fine arts performances – providing a statewide stage for students to shine regardless of community size or resources;
* 200+ hours of state legislative coverage and SD.net, the South Dakota Network providing live access to state government;
* *Dakota Life* – monthly, 30-minute TV magazine showcasing SD’s people and places;
* *SD Focus* – live, weekly, 1-hour TV discussion series on issues affecting rural South Dakotans, from the future of farming, opioid addiction, and healthy aging to pre-school education, rural mental health issues, and domestic abuse;
* *On Call with the Prairie Doc* – weekly, 1-hour TV health discussion series on topics like diabetes and the American Indian, dementia, and training rural health providers;
* *Oyate Today* – weekly 30-minute TV interview program on history and living culture of Indigenous people in the Northern Plains and documentaries featuring Native American people, history and culture;
* *In the Moment with Lori Walsh* – daily, 2-hour radio program covering people and topics impacting rural South Dakotans;
* SDPB Education Specialist Steven “Science Steve” Rokusek, who travels extensively to K-3 schools and teacher trainings throughout SD to demonstrate fun science learning using readily available and inexpensive materials;
* Free, public screenings and discussions of local and national documentaries in rural communities, such as *Country Music* and *The Vietnam War; Vanished South Dakota: Towns of Yesterday,* and *Red* *Bow,* about Buddy Red Bow, a Lakota country music artist from Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; and,
* “Boutique” remote radio studios at three universities across the state for increased access to local stories and interviewees.

**SDPB’s Interest in Increasing Local Multi-Platform Production & Engagement**To increase SDPB’s local, multi-platform production and engagement, SDPB’s recent strategic plan implemented cross-departmental collaboration and workflows that bring content producers together by topic and need, rather than platform. Radio, Digital, TV and other departments cross-pollinate to find and develop local stories beyond the state’s primary population centers. Stories are shared across all SDPB’s platforms, but topics and sharing are also strategized to reach and engage targeted audiences.

**SDPB’s Interest in Regional/National TV Distribution as Part of Overall Strategic Plan & Service Model**

SDPB consistently strives to produce high-quality content that is accurate and representative of all of South Dakota’s communities. While many national, commercial media organizations may altogether disregard South Dakotans as living in the so-called “middle of nowhere,” or fall back on tropes that narrowly portray South Dakota in singular dimensions: a red state, land of stoic Midwesterners, our Indian Reservations as deserts of poverty and addiction, SDPB recognizes the multiple and nuanced threads of history and culture that create the modern-day fabric of South Dakota. Our content seeks to more fully represent South Dakotans as a service not only to those in SDPB’s service area, but to audiences outside the state. Via NETA, SDPB distributes on PBS Createour original series *Savor Dakota*, which explores the culinary landscape of South Dakota and the people producing food locally – from cattle ranchers and 2nd generation Vietnamese immigrants, to Scandinavian dessert makers and Indigenous horticulturalists working on food sovereignty. SDPB regularly shares content with adjoining states, such as *Dakota Life*, our monthly, 30-minute TV magazine program, which is shared with the Minnesota Channel.

Additionally, SDPB avails ourselves of opportunities to produce localized stories in support of regional and national programming to share not only across SDPB’s platforms, but on PBS and NPR digital platforms. For example, most recently SDPB produced local documentaries developed by collecting stories from:

* South Dakota’s Vietnam War veterans and by securing an exhibition of “The Wall That Heals” in conjunction with *The Vietnam War*;
* local writers and poets and their homeplaces as part of *The Great American Read;*
* local and historic space exploration stories for *Space Age South Dakota* in support of PBS’s *Summer of Space,* and,
* local musicians and original music content for both *Country Music* and NPR’s *Tiny Desk Concert.*

Additionally, SDPB’s support of the CPB initiative through our affiliation with CPB’s Organization of Statewide Broadcasting Executives (OSBE), including SDPB’s call for emphasis and support to increase the representation of rural America on public broadcasting platforms, demonstrates our commitment to regional/national TV distribution as part of the overall strategic plan and service model.

**ACTION PLAN**

**Researching New & Relevant Stories about “Home”**

Multiple narratives exist about South Dakota. Our state is often essentialized in national, commercial media as “a land of cowboys and Indians,” trailblazed by pioneers and gold-rushers, agriculturally forged into America’s breadbasket and inhabited primarily by a white, conservative, blue-collar workforce who are currently being left behind by brain drain and encroaching immigration and globalization – ultimately leading to the demise of Small Town Rural America.

These narratives about South Dakota’s lived rural experiences have varying degrees of accuracy and inaccuracy. SDPB believes rural narratives deserve to be told by the people living them. Working closely with the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota, SDPB will conduct surveys and listening sessions with South Dakotans throughout the state in order to better understand, gather, and share South Dakotans’ conceptualizations and stories about who we are, what we care about, and how and where we find ourselves, our cultures, and our homeplaces – in all their nuances and complexities – within national and global dialogues.

The Chiesman Center for Democracy, housed at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, supports research and civic education activities addressing on-going challenges to American democracy. The Chiesman Center facilitates public dialogue, active civic engagement, and the promotion of civic values. SDPB and Chiesman Center staff and students will develop and conduct:

* statewide surveys to help ascertain South Dakotans’ issues and opportunities and SDPB’s role in communicating these concerns statewide.
* nine (9) listening sessions with groups of 10 participants in communities throughout South Dakota, to include the three types of rural areas, as defined by the 2015 *Journal of Peasant Studies* research conducted by Jessica Ulrich-Schad (South Dakota State University) and Cynthia Duncan (Carsey School of Public Policy): 1) chronically poor rural areas, 2) transitioning rural areas, and, 3) amenity-rich rural areas. These communities will include two (2) South Dakota Indian Reservations and a Hutterite colony/community, both of which endure significant misrepresentation and under-representation in national, commercial media. A listening session will also be conducted in Huron, SD, population 13,000. Home to a large turkey processing plant, Huron’s schools and workforce are being impacted and influenced by immigrants from Asia, particularly ethnic minorities from Myanmar, and Latin America.

Additionally, in order to pursue relevant stories and voices who may not be at the table, SDPB will take opportunities at the listening sessions to draw upon community members’ knowledge and experience to help identify and reach out to local residents who are engaged culture keepers of their communities.

Assessing current issues being addressed by community and tribal newspapers, tribal radio stations and media networks, community and tribal organizations, and community and tribal social media groups will also add to SDPB’s understanding of stories and concerns throughout our statewide service area.

In tandem with this direct outreach, SDPB will consult with rural studies sociologist and SDSU professor Dr. Jessica Ulrich-Schad, whose research and teaching encompasses rural community, environment/natural resources, family, poverty and inequality.

While SDPB is aware that issues such as education, healthcare, workforce, and culture are important to a majority of South Dakotans, it is imperative the surveys, listening groups, and general research help us hone in on the issues that generate the most interest and greatest coverage gaps. Further, SDPB must learn from South Dakotans of a variety of ages and backgrounds how and where we are getting our information and stories about ourselves – particularly South Dakotans who may not be traditional users of SDPB-TV and SDPB Radio. Ultimately, to declare *Coming Home: South Dakota* a success, the content not only needs to be compelling, SDPB must seize the opportunity to broaden our reach and engagement.

**Developing a Final Comprehensive Proposal**

Throughout the research, survey, and listening group process, SDPB’s departments will meet regularly to provide input and response. SDPB will send content producers to listening sessions to conduct exit interviews with participants, as well as track and follow-up on resonant, relevant issues, individuals, and stories as they emerge.

In tandem with this process, SDPB will begin to build community advisory councils for story ideas and content production. These individuals will help keep SDPB informed of regional concerns, developing needs, issues, and stories from the heart of South Dakota’s rural communities.

Working cross-departmentally within SDPB and closely with data analysts from the Chiesman Center, SDPB will identify and assess the patterns and themes from the survey data and listening group responses. SDPB’s departments will use this essential information to guide the development process: assessing new and recurring story ideas for development, as well as incorporating an increased understanding of where and how South Dakotans consume media about themselves and rural America. While these local stories will be developed across platforms as radio stories, TV segments, digital shorts, blogs, and member magazine articles, SDPB will use this media-consumer data, as well as best story-telling practices, to develop targeted format and delivery.

**PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TASK | 1/20 | 2/20 | 3/20 | 4/20 | 5/20 | 6/20 | 7/20 | 8/20 |
| Identify and assign SDPB staff roles in pre-production & planning. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Early research phase along with Chiesman Center for Democracy to identify issues to discuss in surveys and listening groups, including, but not limited to: - poverty & transitioning local economies;  - population shifts: grown children leaving/returning to SD to work/raise families;  - relationships/issues with the land, natural habitats & ecosystems;  - rural healthcare;  - traditional & emerging agricultural economies;  - immigrants & refugees in rural communities;  - education & childcare;  - others as identified. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Identify local community partners that can identify focus group participants, meeting spaces and childcare providers. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Identify consultants and partners in research and for local listening group sessions. | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Arrange logistics and schedule space for local listening group sessions. | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Partner with Chiesman Center for Democracy to develop protocol for statewide surveys and statewide, representative listening focus groups/listening sessions, incorporating at least nine (9) regions throughout SD, including 2 media under-represented Native American Indian Reservations and one Hutterite Colony. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Procure incentives and resources for surveys and local listening group sessions. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Travel & conduct local listening group sessions. |  | x | x | x | x | x | x |  |
| Story scouting during travel and listening group sessions: identify individuals, families, and organizations who have stories/voices to lend to project. |  | x | x | x | x | x | x |  |
| Identify and recruit community representatives for community advisory councils for content. |  | x | x | x | x | x | x |  |
| Partner with Chiesman Center for Democracy to review data, identify patterns, themes and resonant, relevant story ideas. |  |  |  |  |  | x | x | x |
| Develop patterns and themes into TV, radio, digital content and engagement activities and Coming Home: South Dakota. |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x |
| Develop final comprehensive proposal for potential funding. |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | **PROPOSED BUDGET**  **Coming Home: Connection to Community** | | | |
| **Station Name: South Dakota Public Broadcasting (SDPB)** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Personnel** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| *Position Title* |  |  |
| *Position Title* |  |  |
| **Personnel Subtotal** | | **$0** |
| **Fringe (Benefits, Taxes, Payroll etc.)** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| *Position Title* |  |  |
| *Position Title* |  |  |
| **Fringe Subtotal** |  |  |
| **Travel and/or Events** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| - Per diem/lodging for SDPB/Chiesman Center staff-listening groups-5 people, 15 nights @ $55/room  - Per diem/meals for SDPB/Chiesman Staff-15 days per diem (w/travel), 15 days @ $32 dayx5 staff  -Travel/mileage for SDPB/Chiesman Staff—350 miles RTx9 @.55/mile | 4,125  2,400  1,733  2, 250 |  |
|  | 10,508 |  |
| **Travel and/or Events Subtotal** | | **$ -** |
| **Research** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| *Items* |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Research Subtotal** | |  |
| **Preliminary Shooting and Editing (Location, character scouting, etc)** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| - Lodging for follow-up interviews & footage, 2 SDPB staff  10daysx$55—1,100  -Per diem @ $32 dayx10x2 staff—1,100  -Mileage@350 miles RTx10 @.55/mile x 2staff | 1100  640  3850 |  |
| **Preliminary Shooting and Editing Subtotal** | | **$ -** |
| **Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| - Digital and print SDPB member survey printing/mailing—25,000 pieces@.414/piece  -Survey response giveaway—2x$500 VISA Gift Card  - Local listening session participation incentives--$50 VISA Gift Card x10x9  -Meals at local listening sessions--$25/personx90  -Child care at local listening sessions—@$100/hr@2hoursx9 | 10,000  1,000  1,000  4,500  2,250  1,800 |  |
|  | $25,500 |  |
| **Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement Subtotal** | | **$ -** |
| **Consultants/Contracted** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| Chiesman Student Research Time-- $10/hr x 100 hrs | 1,000 |  |
| Rural Sociologist, SDSU--$75/hr x 10 hrs | 750 |  |
| Content consultants/advisory council members--$250stipendsx15 | 3750 |  |
| **Consultants/Contracted Subtotal** | | **$ -** |
| **Supplies** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| Local listening group session supplies—pens, paper, nametags, etc. | 300 |  |
| **Supplies Subtotal** | | **$ -** |
| **Other** | **Notes** | **Total** |
| *Item* |  |  |
| **Other Subtotal** | |  |
| **Indirect Costs (Optional)** |  | **Total** |
| *Rate* |  |  |
| **Total** | | **$42,448 -** |

**Relevant Experience & Connection**

Two relevant examples of SDPB’s work that speaks to rural issues include:

1) ***The Shift --*** In-depth, cross-platform storytelling project of how South Dakota’s changing populations affect schools, business and hometown life.

*The Shift* won two (2) 2018 Regional Edward R. Murrow awards for in the categories of “News Series” and “Social Media.”

SDPB content producers traveled across South Dakota to visit residents in their homes, businesses, and education centers to learn and report how shifting demographics in rural communities affect their everyday lives. An in-depth look at the challenges of supplying people power for South Dakota’s small-town workforces to football teams, as well as the impact on nursing homes, health care, and public safety. Research, stories and discussions interviews were shared across platforms, including on SDPB-TV’s *Dakota Life* and *South Dakota Focus,* on SDPB Radio’s *In the Moment with Lori Walsh* and *SDPB Radio News,* as posts and digital shortsacross SDPB’s social media platforms, and online at SDPB.org/Shift.

For media, visit: <http://www.sdpb.org/blogs/shift/>

**2) *Early Learning in South Dakota Reporting Project***

South Dakota is one of only six rural states in the nation that does not publicly fund preschool education. South Dakota leads the nation in the number of mothers per capita who work outside the home yet bills to fund PreK have been introduced and defeated multiple times in the state legislature. SDPB conducted a months-long, multiplatform reporting project to examine prevailing attitudes, programs, and experiences around early childhood learning. SDPB reached out to parents to collect individual stories of how or why their young children attend or do not attend pre-school, visited three early learning programs in the state, including a Lakota Early Language Immersion program on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; a program that incorporates play into the curriculum in Sioux Falls, and a Head Start and local public school partnership working to create early learning resources in small, rural South Dakota communities. Research, stories and discussions interviews were shared across platforms, including on SDPB-TV’s *Dakota Life* and *South Dakota Focus,* on SDPB Radio’s *In the Moment with Lori Walsh* and *SDPB Radio News,* as posts and digital shortsacross SDPB’s social media platforms, and online at SDPB.org/PreK

For media, visit: <http://www.sdpb.org/prek/>