**Executive Director’s Report**

Educational Telecommunications Board of Directors

June 5, 2019

**National Update:**

America's Public Television Stations (APTS) continue to hear reports that there could be action on public media funding in both the House and Senate in June. The Senate Appropriations Committee is working to write its appropriations bills, and APTS expects the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (Labor-HHS-Education) Appropriations Bill to be marked up in June.

It is important to note that the Senate will likely be starting from a lower overall spending level then the House, making it more challenging to secure increases in the Senate bill.

In anticipation of possible Senate Appropriations action in June, this week stations with Senators who serve on the Appropriations Committee received an action alert asking them to weigh in with their Senate Appropriators to highlight the importance of increased federal funding for their station.

The House Appropriations Committee was very busy in May, reporting eight of the 12 appropriations bills to the full House.

House Democratic Leadership would like to bring all the appropriations bills to the floor in June. Given that the Labor-HHS-Education bill was the first bill reported out by the House Appropriations Committee it could be one of the first bills considered by the full House of Representatives.

During floor consideration it is possible that an amendment could be offered to negatively affect the public media funding in the bill. We are not aware of any specific threats at this time.

A new budget deal setting the overall federal spending level is needed by January 2020 to prevent automatic sequestration cuts from dramatically reducing federal funding for both defense and non-defense programs.

In May, budget deal negotiations between the administration, Senate Republicans and House Democrats moved forward, but it's unclear how quickly a deal will be reached. The final budget deal will affect how many increases can be provided in the final FY 2020 appropriations bills, including the increases APTS has requested for public media.

It is possible that the budget deal negotiations and the FY 2020 appropriations process could drag on late in the calendar year.

**Local Update:**

It’s been a busy spring at SDPB wrapping up the high school events season, the 2019 legislative session and finalizing the 2019-2024 strategic programming and fundraising plans.

As I type this report, we are preparing for the all-staff roll out of the new plan this afternoon, June 5, 2019. While we will discuss this in far greater detail at the board meeting there are a few key points I want to highlight.

This plan is not comprehensive in that we did not take deeper dives into field engineering, marketing, education or operations. Instead, it’s an addendum to the work in 2016 with Dennis Haarsager. Our focus has been on programming and local content and the supportive resources tied to them.

The establishment of three content working groups and emphasis on certain beats has paid off in quality content and increases in audience over the past three years. However, some short-comings in management, structure and consistency prompted a second look and the need for some revisions to the plan.

To that end, we intend to collapse the number of content working groups to two. Employees in the working groups will report to the manager assigned to head each group. Content managers, along with Larry Rohrer and myself will establish deadlines and deliverables for each group including short term projects as well as long-lead projects.

These changes should help marketing and programming better prepare and plan to promote and schedule our content.

Furthermore, programming acquisition and scheduling for TV, Radio, Digital will be consolidated into a singular programming department. The Digital department has been divided up with digital content staff moving into the working groups and digital infrastructure and maintenance staff moving in the Network Operations area.

It is our hope that a closer, more integrated working environment between programming, digital back end and operations will result in better strategies for content deployment across our existing properties as well as new platforms.

Bottom line: We want our precious resources in local content creation to focus on just that. We want all the staff supporting those efforts to work together to ensure the largest possible audience can access the content we’re creating.

Launch is set for July 1, 2019. We have been working with the Bureau of Human Resources as we’ve worked through the plan. Our intent is to give staff three months to settle in to the new normal before we officially change organizational charts and job descriptions. This should give us a window of time to make some changes if necessary.