Board of Directors for Educational Telecommunications

**SDPB Executive Director’s Report**

March 16, 2021

The recently passed 2021 American Rescue Plan includes $175M in additional funding for Public Broadcasting Stations. Similar to last spring, the bill provides additional funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting with specific language referring to small and rural Public Broadcasters. While CPB has not released its plans for apportioning the dollars, I would expect it to be similar to 2020. At minimum I have been told this will mean an additional $450,000 in discretionary one-time dollars for SDPB. Most likely SDPB will receive money on top of the $450,000 due to the rural audience we serve.

Furthermore, the bill provides significant dollars for K-12 education and 6.1 billion dollars for learning loss. It also provides $135M to both NEA and NEH with 40% of the funds going to local and state arts and humanities organizations. Each of these could be a means of funding expanded content relationships between SDPB and our education, arts and humanities partners.

We have wrapped up phase one work around our CPB Coming Home Grant and are preparing to submit a program proposal to CPB by end of March. It will be a significant production grant request focusing on sculpture and how it shapes and informs who we are as South Dakotans. More on this at the meeting.

Staff has begun the strategic planning update process. Content departments have gone first. We are focusing on strategic intentions for the next 24 months. In the case of local content, we are utilizing the information gleaned from the CPB Coming Home community ascertainment to inform our planning and areas of focus. Additionally, both the Journalism and Entertainment groups are working through some modest reorganization within their teams. This will provide more upward mobility opportunities for staff, push day-to-day decision making and accountability further down and hopefully free up more time for Cara and Brad to build external partnerships and explore opportunities to further expand local content. More on this at the board meeting as well.

While none of SDPB’s budget requests were ultimately recommended in the Governor’s FY 22 budget, we did come through the 2021 Legislative Session with level funding. Our main request revolved around education and the need for a Director of Education. While our request was not approved, we are moving forward with plans to create a new position and have someone join our team hopefully by mid to late summer. This position will oversee our existing pre-school and K-12 education services as well as act as our primary liaison to the State Department of Education, PBS Education and NETA Education, and lead our educational datacasting efforts.

Changes are also coming to SDPB’s Programming and Marketing Departments. With Bob Bosse’s impending retirement in June 2021, Fritz Miller will be taking over a new role as Director of Programming and Communications beginning in April. This will be an opportunity to consolidate two Senior Management positions and expand mid-level management opportunities within the new department. The FTE freed up by this change will be re-deployed elsewhere within the department.

Friends has graciously agreed to fund a new Community Outreach and Engagement position. As we look forward to slowly returning to normal, planning will begin to re-open our SDPB public spaces for Film Screenings, events, outreach activities, program tapings, Friends receptions, etc. This position will report to Fritz and the new Programming and Marketing Department. It should take quite a bit of pressure off existing staff who plan and execute these events over and above their normal job duties. This change should also allow for greater pre-planning and cross planning between Friends and the Network.