



Friends of SDPB Report for the Educational Telecommunications Board of Directors

July 10, 2025

Submitted by Ryan Howlett

Friends of SDPB is in the process of wrapping up FY25, which was certainly our most interesting year to date. The advocacy project continues federally, but on a much different level. The ability to influence policy as is much less than it is locally in Pierre. We will begin outreach in the fall to the 2026 South Dakota Legislature.

As for the finances, we do not yet have our year-end books closed. We hope to have that done by the time of the meeting. I am happy to report that we will meet our obligations to the SDPB Network and are tracking to hit budget. Leading the way is Membership, which has been strong, buoyed by the turbulent political year. Donors have responded and the team of Kate Ryan, Molly Broin, Ellie Davenport and Hallie Thomas are very solid. They have a clear vision for where to take this program. We do believe that we are in the 12 months where we will hit one million in sustaining membership revenue. This has been a long sought after goal in the making. For reference, in 2012, the first year that I tracked this metric, \$72,000!

The rest of the organization remains fairly status quo. Corporate Support had a decent year. They just missed goal, primarily due to business decisions from clients pivoting to different opportunities or clients who typically underwrite with us have been directly affected by the federal changes implemented by the current administration. We have not had a client decline an opportunity due to uncertainty with SDPB, which is a good endorsement.

Leadership giving continues to bring new projects online with the content team with the hopes to inspire donors at a higher commitment level. South Dakota Women in Uniform, the SDPB Legacy Society, and a refresh of the equipment in the SDPB Mobile Studio (production truck) are three of the highlight projects staff is engaged in.

The Friends Board and Staff charted an aggressive course for the FY2026 budget. Friends continues to support SDPB indirectly through outreach staffing, finance, magazine, programming support, education and occupancy costs. The total is \$1,302,800 (increase of \$40,340 over FY 2025 budget). We will make our last payment to Chris Bro for the Black Hills Studio renovation, which is included in that indirect number.

The more aggressive side of the budget is the increase in direct transfers to SDPB, which total \$125,000. We structured the increase with upticks in the base transfer, support for PBS dues, and SDHSAA Camera Operators, which will be ongoing. The remainder of the increases are one-time directed towards special projects – local programming and to hire contractors to cover staffing shortages.

SDPB Transfer	FY 2026
Base increase	50,000
Local Programming - Special Projects	20,000
Local Programming - Journalism	15,000
Increase in PBS Dues	30,000
Camera Operators	10,000
Proposed Increase in Transfer	125,000