ET Board of Directors

**Executive Director’s Report**

September 15, 2022

**Strategic planning** has been a primary focus for the past 8 months. SDPB contracted with Ted Krichels, formerly with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to facilitate our planning process.  We conducted a series of Zoom Strategic Visioning Sessions around the topics of local content, education, and technology.  Panelists were experts in their fields and represented other public broadcasting stations from around the country, national organizations like PBS, NPR and CPB and public media consultants.  Staff was very engaged throughout the process, and we enjoyed a high level of participation.  At the conclusion of the open sessions, the core planning committee met for a few days in Rapid City to construct the framework of our new strategic plan.  Since then, SDPB senior leadership has further refined that work and has focused in on strategies and tactics for the next 12 months.  Much has been accomplished already with more to come in the months ahead.

**SDPB’s KESD tower serving communities in east central South Dakota has suffered significant damage.**  The late spring derecho that went through the eastern part of South Dakota, caused significant damage to our tower and antenna at KESD/Hetland.  The over 800ft tower is our oldest at over 60 years.  It was given to us by KELO after they dismantled it in the 50’s.  It was inspected in May prior to the storm and again after.  The second inspection showed significant twisting of the metal starting at 100ft.

We have been working with FEMA to get approval for disaster grant funding to replace it.  Our current read is somewhat promising.  FEMA could potentially provide 75% of the funding needed to replace the tower and related infrastructure.  We are estimating the project to be in the $4.3 to $4.5M range.  We are currently awaiting another full tower inspection and further information from FEMA.  I am certain Severn Ashes, Director of Engineering, will have further updates on this matter in his report.

**Chief Financial Officer to be hired.** SDPB and Friends of SDPB are currently in the interviewing process for a new CFO to manage the financial affairs of both organizations.  The position will be a Friends of SDPB position thanks to support from the Friends of SDPB Board of Directors.  The new position will report to the Executive Director of the Network and oversee all financials, CPB grant management, Federal and other grant management, fiscal and fundraising forecasting, audit management and budgeting.  We hope to have someone hired within the next few weeks.  Deb Larson, former SDPB Business Manager, has agreed to train in the new hire.  The Commissioner and the Bureau of Finance and Management are supportive of this move.

**FY24 Budget Process has begun.** SDPB/BIT are in the early stages of next fiscal year’s budgeting process.  SDPB is asking for the matching dollars to support the replacement of KESD/Hetland should FEMA grant our request.  We have also requested a much smaller amount to update our current Emergency Alert System Software (EAS).  SDPB is the primary originator for EAS information to the radio broadcasters across the state amongst other commercial providers.  Our current software is outdated and does not meet current standards.  Lastly, we are requesting several million to upgrade our current interconnection system.  CPB and stations worked with FEMA to get a new grant program funded for public broadcasting infrastructure projects.  Congress approved funding this year and CPB and FEMA have been working to establish the grant rules and procedures for $40M in funding appropriated.  The grants, if awarded, will provide 50-75% funding for local infrastructure projects.  A preference will be given to those who serve rural, minority, and underserved populations.  We anticipate applying early 2023.