



## Educational Communications Board

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### **EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING**

**ECB Board Room  
3319 West Beltline Highway  
Madison, Wisconsin  
October 13, 2017  
9:30 a.m.**

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#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

**Gene Purcell**

#### **State Budget Update**

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker signed the 2017-2019 state budget into law on September 21.

The budget as signed by the Governor includes a 3% reduction in GPR for the ECB over the biennium and projects an 11.9% increase in program revenue over the same period; it is essentially the same budget as originally proposed by Governor Walker last February.

As I have mentioned previously, the GPR reduction is due in part to the fact that ECB is a smaller agency than it was two years ago. The 11.9% program revenue increase is a number which was included in ECB's budget submission last fall. That projection reflects the best estimate of our ability to raise outside funding while meeting essential agency functions.

I'd like to acknowledge the many legislators who supported the ECB budget throughout this year's process, particularly those legislators who serve on the ECB including Senator Luther Olsen, Representative Amy Loudenbeck, Senator Fred Risser and Representative Dave Considine.

Sen. Olsen and Rep. Loudenbeck also sat on the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance and served as strong advocates for the ECB's work during this year's budget debate.

#### **Federal Budget Update**

The Federal budget continues to be a work in progress as members of Congress will be working to finalize the FY2018 appropriation bills.

To date, funding for public broadcasting has been approved in both the House and Senate with some differences which remain to be worked out.

In both the House and Senate, full funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) was approved, as well as funding for Ready to Learn. The main difference between the House



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and the Senate legislation is that the House did not approve funding for the replacement of the “interconnect” while the Senate approved an annual appropriation for this project.

The “interconnect” is the technical system which delivers PBS programming to stations throughout the country.

While the news for public broadcasting has been mostly good so far, that early success cannot be taken for granted and we will be watching this process very closely.

Currently, the federal government is operating on a Continuing Resolution which will expire in early December 2017.

### **It’s almost time for ECB’s annual financial audit**

Work on the annual financial audit of the ECB is already underway in-house, with auditors scheduled to be on-site in November.

A reminder that ECB is required to undergo an annual financial audit in order to remain qualified for funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The formal opening meeting of the audit process was held last week with ECB staff and the audit team from Baker Tilly.

I expect the audit will be complete by February 2018 to meet CPB deadlines. Once completed, I will provide Board members with the audit results and the audit will be formally presented to the Board during its April meeting.

### **Malcolm Brett to retire**

Malcolm Brett has announced his intent to retire in early 2018.

As you know, WPR and WPT operates as a partnership between the ECB and the University of Wisconsin. Specifically, the ECB works directly with Broadcasting and Media Innovations (BAMI) which is a division of UW-Extension and Colleges. Malcolm has led BAMI since 2006 and in that position works closely with the Executive Director at ECB to oversee the operations of WPR and WPT.



Here is an excerpt of Malcolm's note to BAMI staff sent on October 2:

*We serve the most important constituency there is, the people of Wisconsin. And we're fortunate to have a mission and the resources to do that well. As I look forward, I see a very bright future for BAMI that builds on and surpasses our first 100 years. I see ICS, WPR and WPT along with our partners at ECB as being poised to create and discover new ways to serve Wisconsin. We enjoy exceptional support within the community and the University. We provide essential services and we continue to evolve to meet every new challenge and opportunity. There are many new and exciting projects that are now launching or maturing. That's why I believe that this is a really good time for me to recognize that the time has come for me to move on. And come next spring, I will be retiring from my position as Director of BAMI.*

*This hasn't been an easy decision. There are exciting projects yet to be completed and yet to be undertaken and many important milestones ahead. And there always will be. So, while I have aspirations of seeing some projects through to completion, I've concluded that there won't be a better time to step aside.*

*I have been fortunate to always know that I work with exceptional and dedicated colleagues in every corner of the organization who are clearly and fully motivated by a shared sense of mission and commitment. I've admired your passion, creativity, smarts and accomplishments which have all been beyond any reasonable expectations. In every corner of BAMI and at ECB your commitment to the work and to each other, your spirit of discovery, your enthusiasm and aspirations for service are and have been remarkable and I applaud, admire and thank you. I will miss being part of it all.*

I will add here that he will be missed at ECB.

During my time at ECB, Malcolm has been the only Director of BAMI that I have worked with and I couldn't have asked for a better partner as I learned the job of Executive Director.

During his career, Malcolm brought a commitment to public service, a focus on Wisconsin and a well-earned reputation as a leader at the national level to his work and his tenure here has been to the benefit of BAMI, WPR, WPT and the ECB and the people who rely upon our service.

WPR, WPT, BAMI and ECB are all well poised to deal with a challenging media landscape as a result of his work and I hope you will join me in congratulating Malcolm on his many contributions to public broadcasting.