

## **PNB National Technical Director Report - July 2007**

### **Objectives for 2008**

#### **Needs assessments and Hardware Inventories**

Pacifica needs to proceed with the much-needed technical hardware inventories and needs assessments for each unit in the network. This network wide needs assessment should include a four-sided strategy encompassing broadcast and web/internet technologies well as programming, finance and outreach. A team from the national office staff would work with the management and department heads at each station to assess technical, operational, programming and marketing strategies for the coming year, evaluate the financial feasibility of these goals, create a realistic budget, locate possible funding and draw up a timeline for the implementation of these projects. Discussions of the training and support materials that would be needed to instruct the staff in the use of present and new procedure and technologies would be included as part of the needs assessment.

The hardware inventory is an integral part of the technical side of the needs assessment and would allow Pacifica to keep detailed records about the technical infrastructure at each unit, providing information such as the make, model, cost, condition, date placed into service, repair history, mean-time failure rate and planned replacement date for each piece of equipment. This information would be updated as new equipment is purchased and added to a local database, which would be consolidated into a national database integrated with the national operations and finance department records, allowing the stations and the national office to plan its technological future.

#### **National technical staff oversight of local units technical budgeting**

The national technical staff needs to be included in the technology related aspects of each station's budgeting process. That would allow the national technical staff and national management to understand and guide the plans for technological improvements at each station specifically and the network's technological future as a whole. Putting this plan into action would give national operations insight into how the more technically able stations are implementing their technological goals and also enables them to help the stations that are still in the early stages of upgrading their technology.

#### **Pacifica Support WIKI for training and support materials.**

The National Technical Director intends to allocate at least one day per week to adding material to and updating the Pacifica Support Wiki at: <http://www.techport.org/wiki/> This site is planned as a repository for written and multi-media "how-to" training materials, for the current Pacifica/FCC/CPB policies

and also for other technological support information. If properly maintained it will become an important resources for the sister stations and affiliates.

### **Network Technical staff meetings**

It would be advantageous to have the National Technical Director and the technical heads of each station (and the PRA) to have regularly scheduled telephone meetings to discuss the status of current and upcoming projects. These meetings will help build and strengthen the relationships between the six technical departments in the network, facilitating the building of a unified network, and allow us to assist each other with problem solving.

### **Recent upgrades to Pacifica's KU distribution system**

Pacifica's main method of distributing live content is through our KU band satellite system. The KU satellite operates two separate program signals (discreet left and right channels) on a single KU band frequency. The left channel is for regularly scheduled programs and right channel is for special programs.

Pacifica needs a reliable backup system to provide for the occurrence of occasional KU uplink or downlink problem. Recent upgrades to both Pacifica's KU satellite and Pacifica's Internet-based program distribution system providing single-point-of-failure redundancy are outlined below:

Currently Pacifica has been providing 64Kb Internet streams-casts of both the KU left and KU right channels for our affiliates and sister stations. The audio source for these streams (generated by the KPFA in-house server) in the past came from the output of a KU receiver at KPFA. It now feeds directly from the output of the routing switcher at KPFA and is processed by a DBX limiter to ensure proper gain levels.

Two Barix Instreamers have been purchased to replace the KPFA server based streams, which will produce higher bit-rate (128kb) streams. They will be placed into service shortly. In addition, two more Barix Instreamers will be placed at KPFT and will use as an audio source KPFT's KU satellite receiver. This will provide backup streams in case KPFA has any Internet connectivity problems. Each stream (right and left channels, coming from both KPFA and KPFT) will be sent to two different Pacifica servers providing redundancy in case one of Pacifica server Internet Service Providers has problems. Additionally, a new RF transceiver purchased by KFCF has been placed in service at the KU upload site in Berkeley. The old transceiver was 30,000 hours past its replacement time.

These augmentations to the KU system will provide a more reliable way for Pacifica to distribute their live content with redundancy at almost every point in

the program chain.

### **Arbitron's Portable People Meter system**

Arbitron, the company that analyses and sells reports on radio listener-ship, is using a new system to collect data. A unique inaudible code identifying a radio station using this system is sent through their broadcast signal that can be identified and the incident recorded by beeper sized receivers worn by people selected as data samplers by Arbitron. This will be the only way Arbitron will collect radio station data in our Sister Station's markets by the end of 2008. Even if Pacifica is not currently purchasing the reports from Arbitron, the system would need to be implemented (at each station) if we want to be included as part of Arbitron's data collection system.

KPFT in Houston was part of the pilot program and has had the encoder device installed in their studios for three years now.

WBAI:

The implementation rollout period for New York is slated to start during the summer of 2007. The last report from the old "diary" system will be during December 2007.

There will be 3,720 of these receivers in your market.

KPFK:

The implementation rollout period for Los Angeles is slated to start during January/February of 2008. The last report from the old "diary" system will be during Fall of 2007.

There will be 3,275 of these receivers in your market.

KPFA:

The implementation rollout period for San Francisco is slated to start during April/May of 2008. The last report from the old "diary" system will be during Winter of 2008.

There will be 3,275 of these receivers in your market.

WPFW:

The implementation rollout period for Washington DC is slated to start during the summer of 2008. The last report from the old "diary" system will be during December 2008.

There will be 1,775 of these receivers in your market.

"Arbitron will provide encoding equipment *at no cost* for each eligible station that chooses to encode. Stations are eligible to encode their signals, and to receive encoding equipment, regardless of subscriber status. "

More info: [http://www.arbitron.com/portable\\_people\\_meters/thesystem\\_ppm.htm](http://www.arbitron.com/portable_people_meters/thesystem_ppm.htm)