

General Manager's Report  
Mendocino County Public Broadcasting  
KZYYX Listener Supported Community Radio  
1 May 2017  
Jeffrey Parker

## Overview

Now that new board is in place, and I've been on board for five months, we'll be embarking on a strategic planning process – our first since 2006 – and will be setting some ambitious operational and financial goals with the aim of, among other things, strengthening our broadcast infrastructure, improving our local newsgathering and embracing a range of technologies for attracting new listeners, improving listener loyalty and expanding membership and financial donations. We'll be taking a fundamental look at the mission of our station and the services to community that we provide, and we'll be engaging members and listeners in this process. We already are digesting the results of the Community Advisory Board survey that was included with the annual election ballot. We thank everyone who shared their views through that survey.

We've faced our share of challenges, but the KZYYX staff, volunteers and community have always stepped up with expertise and insight, extra donations of money, and shoulders to help carry the load.

## Membership

Using a new membership management software called Allegiance that was financed in part by a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, we are learning more about our membership and improving our capacity to mine valuable information from pledge drives. We reported briefly on the February drive at the last board meeting, but Allegiance is showing real strength both in member loyalty and our ability to attract new members. In the February drive we recruited 109 new members. And though we have systems in place to help with renewals through the year, the pledge drive brought in 200 renewals and 112 returning lapsed members. In all categories, between 20% and 35% of these members took monthly or sustaining membership, which generates steady, predictable cash flow.

Our next pledge is scheduled for 3-11 June, just one month from now, and we'll be focusing intensely on the importance of membership and generous financial support to support our mission of keeping independent media strong – and now more than ever as the new administration in Washington has launched a full-blown attack on independent media and the Congressionally mandated federal financial support through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting that for five decades has supported community radio, especially in rural areas like Mendocino county.

## Staffing

A big thank you to **Bookkeeper Dan McDonnell**, who left in April after giving us three strong years of support during a tumultuous period. To succeed Dan, we've recruited a seasoned accounting professional, Steve Winkle, whose experience and expertise will add great value to our strategic planning process as well as daily operations. **News Director Sheri Quinn** deserves a special expression of gratitude. As you may have heard, while reporting an extraordinary series called Hearing from the Homeless, Sheri's own house burned to the ground, adding her name to the ranks of our Mendocino homeless. Remarkably, this personal disaster seemed only to steel Sheri's dedication to her work leading our KZYYX News operations, and we're developing plans to improve and expand our news coverage. **News Reporter Valerie Kim**, busy on leave with her first child, is gradually returning to work. She volunteered to host a panel discussion at Mendocino College that was aired in our new

entrepreneurship program Mendocino Works, and she's been putting in hours in the membership department.

### **Programming**

The quality, depth and breadth of our local programming have seen important improvements, and I'm particularly happy to see – and encourage – a resurgence of interactions between our public affairs programmers and the news department. On Earth Day, Sherry Glaser and Tim Bray captured audio reports from the March for Science in Fort Bragg that added depth to our Community News reports. New board member Ari Minson and I called in live reports from the Earth Day celebrations in Hopland, and Alma Latina host Lorena Calvo-Evans conducted an extensive Earth Day interview in Spanish during her show. Cannabis Hour host Jane Futcher has provided extensive reporting about Mendocino's cannabis transition to the Community News team, and always includes pictures for our website. We're recruiting young, fresh voices across the spectrum. Ruthie King has taken over the Farm and Garden Report and Hannah Bird is bringing strong reports to the Ecology Hour. Valerie Kim hosted the premier episode of Mendocino Works, a collaboration with Mendocino College and West Company. Veteran programmer Cal Winslow's series "Where Are We Now" set a new benchmark for short series.

### **Operations**

A component of our 91.5 MHz transmitter called an exciter failed on 27 March, silencing our signal in Ukiah, Willits and Lake County. A backup exciter that we hauled up to Laughlin Ridge also failed, so we made an urgent trip to Napa to fetch a loaner exciter that now is transmitting 91.5 while the primary and backup exciters are repaired. We regret the 27-hour outage, which proved that backups are not always reliable. We are excited about news that AT&T can offer a fiberoptic connection to our Philo studio, which has potential to bring greater stability to the network that brings broadcasts to Philo from our Mendocino and Willits studios, and allow us to switch to voice-over-internet telephone, which offers superior audio quality at substantially lower cost. We hope members will appreciate the great efforts we've made to improve our new website, which was implemented in late January. Much work remains to be done, but the site is gradually becoming more integrated with our broadcasts, offering useful information about past and future programs as well as detailed information about KZYY and Mendocino County Public Broadcasting. The archive of financial and other station documents is nearly complete.

### **Mendocino College collaboration**

As noted through this report, our collaboration with Mendocino Community College is taking on momentum. We now have three students involved in various aspects of operations, including recording and broadcast as well as website development and management. Some episodes of the Mendocino Works program will air directly from the College, using student engineers and, over time, student producers and even hosts. We are exploring a collaborative program for broadcast journalism training and production that promises to substantially broaden our Community News coverage by involving students in the newsgathering, production and broadcast processes.