



## Educational Communications Board

3319 West Beltline Highway • Madison, WI 53713-4296 • 608.264.9600 • ECB.org

October 15, 2015

To: The Honorable Scott Walker, Governor of Wisconsin  
Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature  
Citizens of the State of Wisconsin

Thank you for the opportunity to present the 2013-2015 biennial report from the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board.

The Wisconsin Educational Communications Board was formed in 1971 with the mission of providing a statewide telecommunications system in support of education and public media. The ECB does so in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin and a variety of other partners.

In addition, the ECB plays important roles in acquiring, producing, and distributing educational media for K-12 education and in supporting public safety activities in the state such as the NOAA/National Weather Service transmitter network, the Emergency Alert System and Amber Alert.

This report covers activities from 2013 to 2015 and is augmented by a variety of web-based links throughout that will provide the reader with much more information about the work of the ECB.

In summary, the ECB operated four Divisions during the 2013-2015 biennium:

- 1) Wisconsin Public Radio – ECB oversees the operation of this statewide public radio service which provides public broadcasting services in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Extension. WPR provides a wide variety of programming including news, entertainment, and cultural material to most of the state of Wisconsin. The network operates three networks and also provides an internet based service.
- 2) Wisconsin Public Television – ECB oversees the operation of this public television network in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Wisconsin Public Television services much of Wisconsin with three separate streams of programming including instructional and educational programming geared towards K-12 students, as well as extensive news, public affairs, entertainment, and cultural programming. ECB cooperates with Milwaukee Public Television and WDSE-TV to ensure statewide broadcast delivery of educational media



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- 3) Wisconsin Media Lab – Wisconsin Media Lab is the Education Division of the ECB which acquires programming rights to vetted educational media content for K-12 educators and students in the state. In addition to rights acquisition, Wisconsin Media Lab staff also produces programming content which is specific to the unique demands of Wisconsin educators and students. Wisconsin Media Lab staff members work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and other educational organizations in the state.
  
- 4) The Delivery/Operations Division – This division of the ECB is charged with the responsibility of building and maintaining the technical infrastructure necessary to deliver public media programming throughout the state. ECB engineering staff operates the Operations Center in Madison and maintain public television and radio transmitters and associated equipment and infrastructure throughout the state. In addition, engineering staff maintain the 28 station NOAA/National Weather Service transmitter network and ensure the reliable operation of the state’s broadcast Amber Alert and Emergency Alert System (EAS).

Again, I appreciate this opportunity to highlight the important work of the ECB.

If you have questions or comments regarding this report or any of the work of the Educational Communications Board, please contact me at 608-266-9666.

You can also find additional information regarding the ECB’s work, its partners, and its goals at [www.ecb.org](http://www.ecb.org)

Sincerely,

Gene Purcell  
Executive Director



**Educational  
Communications  
Board**

## **2013 – 2015 Biennial Report**

**Gene Purcell  
Executive Director**

**3319 West Beltline Highway  
Madison, WI 53713-4296**

To: The Honorable Scott Walker, Governor of Wisconsin  
Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature  
Citizens of the State of Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Educational Communications Board (ECB) has the unique mission of delivering high quality educational and public media to the citizens of Wisconsin. While there have been many changes in technology since the founding of the ECB in the early 1970's, that essential mission of using technological platforms to deliver non-commercial public media remains unchanged.

During the 2013-2015 biennium, the ECB's mission continued to be to produce, acquire and deliver public media programming designed to support K-12 education as well as to advance the cultural and intellectual enrichment of all Wisconsin residents.

ECB meets these goals by utilizing a variety of technologies including public radio and television broadcasts and internet based platforms.

Here is a link to ECB's budget details for the 2013-2015 biennium:

<http://doa.wi.gov/Documents/DEBF/Budget/Biennial%20Budget/2013-15%20Executive%20Budget/225-2013-15ExecutiveBudget.pdf>

In the 2013-2015 biennium, the ECB provided educational and non-commercial radio and TV programming to residents throughout the state in a variety of accessible formats.

### ***K-12 Educational Media***

In the area of K-12 educational media, Wisconsin Media Lab continued to transition its technology and media production towards web based materials which provide a high degree of flexibility for educators as schools throughout Wisconsin are changing the way in which they utilize media technology.

Wisconsin Media Lab's production of "Wisconsin Biographies" is an outstanding example of contemporary, Wisconsin-focused K-12 educational media. This web-based series is customized for specific grade levels and provides interactive activities for students as well as support material for teachers.

"Wisconsin Biographies" also demonstrates ECB's commitment to collaboration with others to produce and distribute educational media for the entire state.

In addition to seeking the advice of teacher advisory groups, "Wisconsin Biographies" was funded in part by the Wisconsin Humanities Council and is used by others including the Wisconsin Historical Society Museum in Madison where the series has been included in the Museum's exhibits.

"Wisconsin Biographies" was recognized with a Midwest Emmy award in 2014.



Here is a link to learn more about Wisconsin Biographies: <http://wimedialab.org/biographies/>

In partnership with state educators and the state's Department of Public Instruction, ECB's impact on Wisconsin K-12 educators and students is substantial. ECB/Wisconsin Media Lab materials are also available for use by private schools and homeschoolers in Wisconsin. The need for educational media has been demonstrated by a steady increase in usage of Wisconsin Media Lab content.

Additionally, ECB's partnership in operating Wisconsin Public Television and its membership in PBS ([www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)) provides Wisconsin Media Lab with access to the high quality, vetted, and trusted instructional programming from public media sources from throughout the country and around the world.

As school budgets have tightened, the resources provided by ECB and the Wisconsin Media Lab (at no cost to educators and students) have become even more critical.

You can learn more about the work of Wisconsin Media Lab here: [www.ecb.org](http://www.ecb.org)

### ***Public Broadcasting***

ECB continues its commitment to its long-standing partnership with the University of Wisconsin – Extension to operate Wisconsin Public Radio ([www.wpr.org](http://www.wpr.org)) and Wisconsin Public Television ([www.wpt.org](http://www.wpt.org)).

Even as WPR and WPT both endeavor to bring the outside world to Wisconsin through affiliations with NPR ([www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)) and PBS ([www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)), the past two years have also seen WPR and WPT increasing their efforts to bring Wisconsin topics to the people of Wisconsin in ways that no other media can.

Whether it's the daily talk show coverage produced on the "Ideas" network of WPR, a focus on election coverage online at WisconsinVote.org; "Here and Now" with Frederica Freyberg on WPT; the "Wisconsin Life" series on WPR and WPT; or a unique glimpse of our state with "Wisconsin From the Air", WPR and WPT strive to bring high quality educational programming with a sense of place to the state's citizens.

ECB's specific functions related to public broadcasting are focused on guaranteeing efficient and reliable transmission to state residents via the Broadcast Interconnect system and transmitters located throughout Wisconsin.

In addition, by partnering with our public broadcasting colleagues at Milwaukee Public Television and WDSE-TV in Duluth Minnesota, ECB is able to ensure broadcast delivery of its Wisconsin-based programming to the entire state.

You can learn more about the work of those broadcast partners here: Milwaukee Public Television (<http://www.mptv.org/>) and WDSE-TV (<http://www.wdse.org/>)

**Public Safety**

ECB engineering staff is responsible for the efficient and reliable distribution of the state's broadcast-based Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Amber Alert, as well as operating and maintaining the 28 National Weather Service Transmitters which serve Wisconsin.

Here is a link which will provide you with more information about ECB's public safety responsibilities:

<http://www.ecb.org/services.html>

Together, WPR and WPT were utilized by nearly one-million people in Wisconsin on any given week during the past two years as well as by thousands of educators and we continue to have success in our efforts to broaden the base of financial support for both public radio and public television.

During 2013-2015, the ECB provided these services with 56.68 FTE, following a reduction of 5.50 FTE in the 2011-2013 budget.

The ECB has compiled many years of experience with flexible work patterns since the agency implemented its policies and procedures in the early 1980s. The ECB has also implemented policies on telecommuting and work-at-home. To better equip the agency for COOP responsibilities, the Agency continues to offer its employees permanent part-time positions, job sharing, flexible-time work schedules and other alternative employment arrangements.

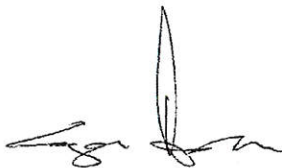
The goal of serving all of the state's citizens with public educational media is one that ECB, its predecessors and its partners have been striving to meet for decades. ECB accomplishes this goal through Wisconsin Public Radio; Wisconsin Public Television; delivering K-12 Educational media via Wisconsin Media Lab; along with our work in public safety.

All of us at the ECB are proud to be part of the fabric and culture of Wisconsin and believe our services are things in which the residents of Wisconsin can all take pride in.

As you have seen, this report is augmented by web links which will provide you with much more information about ECB, its services and its partners.

I encourage you to spend a few minutes exploring these resources and learning more about the important work of the Educational Communications Board.

Sincerely,



Gene Purcell  
Executive Director