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General Manager's Report

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Inside this issue:

- FESTIVAL 2004 Began Saturday, March 6, on IdahoPTV
- Brief, Important Updates
- Governor Dirk Kempthorne Appeared on DIALOGUE
- DIALOGUE Examined Idaho Public Education System And Federal No Child Left Behind Requirements
- Proposed Constitutional Amendment to Ban Gay Marriage in Idaho Discussed on DIALOGUE

FESTIVAL 2004 BEGAN SATURDAY, MARCH 6, ON IDAHOPTV

—Annual On-Air Fund Raiser Is March 6-21, 2004

Idaho history and scenery, household hints, self-improvement, travel, and music of many kinds fill television screens statewide during FESTIVAL 2004, which began March 6 (Saturday), on Idaho Public Television.

The 16-day celebration will have a wide spectrum of musical concerts, a new Red Green performance, Idaho specials, and shows that range from household hints and self-improvement to baby animals and worldwide travel.

“With 63 percent of Idaho Public Television’s operating budget dependent upon private contributions and FESTIVAL being the single largest fund-raising event of the year, the success of this campaign is critical,” says IdahoPTV Marketing Director Kim Philipps. “Money raised during FESTIVAL helps pay for program acquisition and Idaho productions that are seen throughout the year.”

“FESTIVAL is also a celebration of the programming viewers enjoy throughout the year on Idaho Public Television and the most visible effort to attract new members,” Philipps says. “The annual event showcases this valuable statewide resource that belongs to you.”

BRIEF, IMPORTANT UPDATES

-On Monday, February 23, the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) approved IdahoPTV’s general fund budget on a vote of 16 ayes, 0 nays and 4 absent or excused. The JFAC budget recommendation for \$1,586,700 includes a 3.8% increase to cover such items as change in employee compensation (CEC), health benefits costs, and non-standard adjustments (rent, state fees, etc.). No funds were recommended for IdahoPTV’s transition to digital television.

-IdahoPTV Recognized

In early March, IdahoPTV was notified that several of our productions received national honors from the Telly Awards:

- Outdoor Idaho: “20th Anniversary,” Winner, Miscellaneous Programs and “White Clouds in Waiting,” Finalist, Documentary
- Dialogue for Kids: “Space Careers,” Winner, Children’s Programming
- Predators of the West, Winner, Information Program
- The Price of Power, Winner, Information Program
- Journey of Sacagawea, a production of Idanha Films and Idaho Public Television, Winner, Documentary
- Crown of the Continent, Finalist, Documentary
- Predator Legends, Finalist, Cultural Program

-Lewis & Clark: Crossing the Centuries, a new IdahoPTV production, airs Thursday, March 11 at 8:30 p.m. MT/PT and repeats Monday, March 15 at 8:30 p.m. MT/PT. Actor George Kennedy narrates this new IdahoPTV production that follows the Lewis & Clark route from the Missouri River to Oregon's coast. The special looks at the changes 200 years have brought and visits some places on the route that are barely altered. Also examined are the effects of that journey on the Native Americans and their place in history and today's world.

-On February 25, 2004, the chief executives of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and National Public Radio (NPR) testified at a CPB appropriations hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. Subcommittee members in attendance included Representative Michael Simpson (R-ID). Each Member of Congress who participated in the Q&A session after the testimony introduced the Capitol Hill Day participants in attendance (Peter Morrill was present) who were from their congressional districts.

Representative Simpson queried Bob Coonrod, Chief Executive of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, about whether CPB could address the prevailing economic conditions affecting statewide public television broadcasters' ability to provide local match for CPB digital equipment funds. Coonrod indicated that CPB would address this problem.

Overall, the questions were cordial and light in tone, allowing the witnesses to testify for the record on the progress of the digital conversion; why public broadcasting is more important now than ever before; why advanced funding for CPB is necessary; the need for congressional support for a new satellite distribution system; specifics on public broadcasting's educational mission and how it extends beyond television; and covering rural issues on radio and local television.

-On February 27, Peter Morrill met with representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utility Service (RUS) regarding the disposition of a grant request from IdahoPTV to replace seven aged translators, which rebroadcast the signal of IdahoPTV/KUID to digital.

-Morrill also met with representatives of the United States Department of Commerce's Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP) regarding future grant opportunities. PTFP offers competitive grants from Congress to aid in public television stations' mandated conversion to digital television. PTFP requires substantial local match (25%-50%) as one criterion for awards.

Morrill informed PTFP officials that a number of rural, statewide public television organizations (including IdahoPTV) have had substantial budget reductions because of declining state revenues in the last two years and are anticipating continued difficulties in obtaining local match for at least the next two years. Morrill requested that PTFP consider special dispensation for rural, statewide public television stations to allow for grant applications that would exclude the local match requirements.

-IdahoPTV Signals

- We are pleased to announce that through an agreement with Syringa Networks and Silver Star Communications, Idaho's digital television multicast services (IdahoPTV Learn, IdahoPTV Citizens, and PBS Kids) will be made available to their subscribers in the Star Valley, Wyoming area beginning in early spring. We anticipate future announcements with additional Syringa Network companies serving rural southern Idaho communities in the coming months.
- DishTV/Coeur d'Alene-Spokane carriage of IdahoPTV is scheduled to begin, according to company officials, on March 11, 2004.
- IdahoPTV has been invited to offer local service through DirecTV in the Coeur d'Alene/Spokane and Boise markets beginning sometime in the second quarter of 2004.
- The Cascade/McCall experimental digital translator project is moving forward. The translator manufacturer has indicated that they anticipate shipping the long-term loner experimental digital translator by April 1, 2004. When installation is completed in late spring 2004, we believe that this will be the first digital translator service in the Pacific Northwest.

-Recent Morrill Presentations

- February 3, 2004, presentation to the Blue Lakes Rotary Club, Twin Falls.
- February 23, 2004, presentation to Ken Ferree, Media Bureau Chief, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on IdahoPTV translator service to rural Idaho. The FCC is in the final stages of promulgating rulemaking for the conversion and operation of translators in the digital environment.
- March 3, 2004, presentation to the noon Twin Falls Rotary Club.
- March 5, 2004, presentation to the House Education Committee.

GOVERNOR DIRK KEMPTHORNE APPEARED ON DIALOGUE

—Aired Thursday, March 4 at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Repeated Sunday, March 7 at 5:30/4:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Archived at <http://idahoptv.org/productions/streaming.cfm>

Governor Dirk Kempthorne joined host Marcia Franklin on DIALOGUE to discuss his current legislative agenda and his new position as chairman of the National Governors Association. He also talked about his recent trip to Iraq.

Franklin and Kempthorne took calls from viewers.

DIALOGUE EXAMINED IDAHO PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM AND FEDERAL NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REQUIREMENTS

—Aired Thursday, February 26 at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Repeated Sunday, February 29 at 5:30/4:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Archived at <http://idahoptv.org/productions/streaming.cfm>

DIALOGUE examined The Federal No Child Left Behind Legislation and its impact on the Idaho public education system in a documentary special.

In the first year of testing under the law, the federal requirements placed 217 schools across the state in the failing category. Five experts talked about the ISAT tests, the State Board of Education's adoption of a new online teacher certification process, and the arguments pro and con concerning high stakes testing for high school graduation.

The half-hour film wove together footage of five education experts: Bob Barr, BSU Center for School Improvement; Don Coberly, director of curriculum, Boise School District; Kathy Phelan, president, Idaho Education Association; Randy Thompson, chief academic officer, Idaho State Board of Education; and State Senator Gary Schroeder, chairman, Senate Education Committee.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BAN GAY MARRIAGE IN IDAHO DISCUSSED ON DIALOGUE

—Aired Thursday, February 19 at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Repeated Sunday, February 22 at 5:30/4:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Archived at <http://idahoptv.org/productions/streaming.cfm>

DIALOGUE looked at varying issues surrounding the current proposal to constitutionally ban gay marriages in Idaho. Host Marcia Franklin talked with legislation sponsor Representative Henry Kulczyk, Eagle; opponent Bishop Harry Bainbridge of the Episcopal Diocese of Idaho; and political science professor Steve Shaw, Northwest Nazarene University.

Franklin and her guests took calls from viewers on a toll-free line.

Opponents of the measure say a ban on same-sex marriage is already codified in Idaho law. Proponents, however, say a recent ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Court striking down a ban on same-sex marriages indicates the need for an actual constitutional amendment, not just a statute.

The measure, HJR9, passed the Idaho House of Representatives with the necessary 2/3 vote, and was headed to a Senate committee. If the committee and the Senate approve the measure, it will be on the November ballot.