

WUNJ-TV Transition Plan Progress Report

The University of North Carolina (UNC-TV), Licensee of WUNJ-TV, Wilmington, North Carolina, is a governmental entity of the State of North Carolina. As a state entity, it is legally required to comply with certain state requirements, restrictions, and policies regarding construction projects and the purchasing of goods and services. UNC-TV's repack transition project for 11 full-power television stations is no exception, and UNC-TV will be required to abide by the applicable construction, contracting, and purchasing requirements, restrictions, and policies for all 11 stations, including WUNJ-TV. Significantly, as UNC-TV has previously reported—and bears reiteration here—while UNC-TV's project is considered 11 different projects by the FCC, to the State of North Carolina and its representative agencies it is considered one project. The two state government agencies that are extensively involved in UNC-TV's repack (the State Office of Purchasing and Contracts ["P&C"] and the State Construction Office ["SCO"]) are requiring UNC-TV to bundle together all 11 station repack transitions as one unitary project request to them.

To update the previous (first quarter 2018) transition report, significant transition issues have been identified with the site, and the process to address each of the issues is underway. The issues encountered included a significant flaw in the proposed baseline construction permit (CP) facility and the required transmitter was too large to be successfully installed in the existing building.

The proposed baseline CP facility was flawed because the TPO required to achieve the necessary ERP to replicate the pre-transition facility would exceed the current transmission line maximum power rating by nearly 20%. Also, the transmitter model necessary to achieve that power level is physically too large to successfully fit inside the existing building. The solution we developed is to increase the gain of the post-transition main antenna, which results in a larger post-transition main antenna. In turn, this required working closely with the FAA to obtain a new Determination of No Hazard to allow the requisite increase to the overall tower height by a few feet. The FAA process was complicated because the tower is located along a US route that is a designated fly-way, which results in significant airspace restrictions for the area. The newly approved tower height (with appurtenances) is just below the maximum height allowed for the area, and, significantly, the newly-approved tower height will allow the installation of a longer antenna—with the requisite higher gain—which results in the necessary reduction in transmitter output power. Two important results flow from this development: first, the TPO will not exceed the maximum power rating of the transmission line; and second, we can reduce the transmitter by one model size, which will also change the physical size of the post-transition transmitter so that it's more likely to successfully fit in the existing building. These transition plan changes are likely to result in an overall cost reduction for WUNJ-TV's repack project. More specifically, while the main antenna (with the higher gain) may be slightly more expensive than initially anticipated, such additional expense will be more than offset by the cost reductions resulting from (a) not replacing the main transmission line, (b) purchasing a one-size smaller transmitter, and (c) not needing to construct an addition to the building.

The completion of equipment purchase contracts is well underway. In mid-June 2018 the contract for the purchase of the transmitters was completed with GatesAir, Inc. Dialog has already begun between

UNC-TV's project designer, McKim & Creed, Inc.; GatesAir; and UNC-TV staff. These initial conversations have involved the plan for the physical space at the site as well as the electrical requirements the new transmitters will have.

The antenna system invitation for bid (IFB) responses were opened on June 12, 2018. The responses are in the process of being reviewed and we are cautiously optimistic that it would be reasonable to expect a contract to be executed by the end of July 2018. Once the contract is signed, the antenna and transmission line suppliers will be known. Information can then be shared with tower structural engineering firm, Tower Engineering Professionals, Inc. (TEP) so that they can perform the requisite tower structural analysis. Our transition plan calls for the tower work to be done in two parts. Part will be (a) the removal of an existing auxiliary antenna system and (b) the installation of the interim antenna system in the space previously occupied by the auxiliary antenna system, which will allow WUNJ-TV to timely transition to its post-transition channel using the interim facility operations. Part 2 will occur after the September 6, 2019, scheduled transition date. Part 2 will involve (a) the removal of the existing top mounted main antenna and (b) the installation of the permanent post-transition main antenna in the same location. Because there are two different load cases for the tower structure, both cases must be studied to confirm the tower structure meets the requirements of ANSI/TIA-22-G-2-2009 as required by the North Carolina Building Code. If the tower fails to meet the requirements in either case, TEP working with the antenna supplier will develop a recommendation on how to resolve the issue.

McKim & Creed, Inc., UNC-TV's project designer, after completing the building site survey has developed a report that defines the scope of work required for the project. As previously reported, the designer is responsible for creating a construction drawing package for WUNJ-TV's portion (and each of UNC-TV's other 10 stations' respective portion) of the project. These drawings include any modifications to the building including (but not limited to) those required for the electrical system to feed the new transmitters. Also included in the designer's "jurisdiction" will be the tower structural analysis showing that the tower still meets minimum structural specifications after the proposed load changes and tower modifications are performed. The designer's drawings will have to be reviewed by SCO, and only after receiving SCO's approval will construction be authorized under the law of the State of North Carolina to proceed. (The design/SCO review process is similar to a county or city planning / permitting process, but it occurs at the state level because these are state facilities. With this SCO process, city and county permitting is not necessary.) UNC-TV expects to receive SCO's approval in or around January 2019. Even without SCO's approval, other parts of the project can proceed, including the acquisition of certain equipment, which is discussed (in part) above.

UNC-TV will also be updating its FCC Form 399 budget submission very soon. The updates will be to accurately reflect the manufacturer, model number, and pricing for the equipment being purchased. It will also include updated pricing for project management, and other professional services as well. Further budget adjustments may be necessary after the tower and building reports are finalized. These reports will indicate any additional items that will require addressing for the project to meet the mandated State Building Code requirements.

While off to a slow start, as is inherent in the mandatory legal state procurement/design/construction process, we believe, as of this early July 2018 filing, that the Phase 5 August 2019 construction deadline remains achievable for WUNJ-TV. To reiterate, WUNJ-TV plans to begin its post-transition operations using an interim transmission system. This system will attempt to replicate as much as possible the population served by the proposed post-transition facility. When appropriate UNC-TV will be submitting a request for special temporary authority for WUNJ-TV to operate the interim transmission system for its initial post transition operations.

In short, UNC-TV's compound, complicated lodestar for this entire repack enterprise is timely completion of the repack with full compliance of all applicable state and federal regulation while—most importantly—keeping the station operating with as much coverage areas as possible with the least possible negative impact to viewers.