

WUNJ-TV Transition Plan Progress Report

Consistent with the extended deadline for Phase 5 (necessitated by Hurricane Dorian), WUNJ-TV in the early morning hours of September 11, 2019, ceased operation on its pre-transition channel and began operating on its post-transition channel, channel 21, utilizing an interim facility. The interim facility is the licensed auxiliary facility for WUNJ-TV (LMS File No. [0000081301](#)).

Consistent with the use of a post-transition interim facility, UNC-TV received a grant of a tolling waiver request (LMS File No. [0000120273](#)) to extend the previously granted CP tolling waiver request (LMS File No. [0000107044](#)). That request was an extension request of a previously granted CP extension request (LMS File No. [0000074594](#)) for WUNJ-TV's Construction Permit (LMS File No. [0000025131](#) as modified by LMS File Nos. [0000034442](#) and [0000075396](#)) ultimately extending the construction deadline to December 21, 2020.

As mentioned in previous reports, the WUNJ-TV building modifications and transmitter installations have been completed. The most significant item remaining is the main antenna system installation.

This work includes (a) the removal of the existing main antenna (which cannot be retuned to WUNJ-TV's post-transition channel) and (b) the installation of the permanent post-transition main antenna system in the same location. This work was originally rescheduled to be completed in June 2020. As previously reported, the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted that construction timeline.

The WUNJ-TV main antenna system installation has been currently rescheduled to begin in mid-October with a scheduled completion about 4 weeks later in mid-to-late November 2020. Beyond potential construction delays that could result from the evolving COVID-19 situation, there is also the Atlantic hurricane season that could potentially have an adverse impact on the schedule as well. The WUNJ-TV site is located about 25 miles from the North Carolina Coast, which makes it particularly vulnerable and susceptible to the effects of hurricanes, tropical storms, and other heavy rain and wind events. As of the date of this report, there have already been 26 named storms during the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane season (the 2nd most active season on record). Completion of the project and the antenna system installation is a top priority. At the same time UNC-TV is attempting to look prospectively at the timeline and the scope of the project and how the site's location could impact the project.

If necessary, UNC-TV may submit additional budget updates for FCC Form 399. Among other things, these updates may reflect costs to address unforeseen issues, and additional professional services costs. Further budget adjustments may be necessary as this project continues.

As of this early October 2020 filing, the completion of the installation work and commencement of final post-transition operations utilizing the station's main facility is, as referenced above, mid-to-late November 2020. However, there is uncertainty of that completion date primarily due to the uncertainty of the duration of the necessary closings and restrictions that have been put in place to limit the spread of and attempt to mitigate—locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally—the effects of the COVID-19 virus. Beyond that, it is believed the biggest remaining issues are (i) the availability and scheduling of the necessary skilled manpower required to properly and safely perform the remaining tasks, (ii) the availability and scheduling of the specialized equipment required to safely perform the work, and (iii) the weather

conditions to allow completion of the required work at the site. While UNC-TV's objective is to have the project completed as soon as possible, certain elements of the project – including the COVID-19 pandemic and weather – are beyond UNC-TV's control.

To reiterate, WUNJ-TV is operating on its post-transition channel using its licensed auxiliary facility on an interim basis until the main antenna system installation can be completed. Consistent with UNC-TV's North Carolina state statutory mission to provide noncommercial educational service to the residents of North Carolina, the interim system currently being used attempts to replicate as much as practically possible the population served by the final, full post-transition facility. When appropriate, UNC-TV will file the required license to cover application for its proposed post-transition facility.

It bears repeating that The University of North Carolina (UNC-TV), Licensee of WUNJ-TV, Wilmington, North Carolina, is a governmental agency 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 is 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 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 and the State Construction Office) required UNC-TV to bundle together all 11 station repack transitions as one unitary project request to them. While the 11 repack projects (including WUNJ-TV) have so far progressed in a manner that is consistent with the Commission's nationwide transition expectations, UNC-TV's position within the State Government of North Carolina should remain an important consideration for the Commission as these projects continue to progress toward completion.

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 regulations while—most importantly—keeping the station operating with as much coverage areas as possible with the least possible negative impact to viewers.