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To: Arkansas CARES Act Steering Committee

From: Courtney Pledger, CEO, Arkansas PBS

Re: ARPBS Tower Expansion

Date: March 11, 2021

The Arkansas PBS Tower expansion project approved by the CARES Act Committee last year will add five transmitters across the state. These added transmitters will increase our broadcast coverage from 76% to nearly 100% of Arkansas residents. Most of the new areas do not receive Arkansas specific broadcasts that are crucial for COVID updates and educational related programming.

The original proposal to complete this project was \$6.4 million. However, \$5.18 was awarded due to the time constraints on those funds.

Of the \$5.18 million, there remains \$3.24 million on hold with the Department of Finance and Administration. However, \$2,980,000 of those funds are obligated through purchase orders that will be coming due and payable prior to the end of fiscal year on June 30. The remaining funds of approximately \$298,000 will be required for site construction projects and will also be expended before the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

We expect the first of our new transmitters to be operational before March 30th (in Pope County serving the Russellville area) with two others on-line by June 30th (Hempstead County in SW Arkansas and St. Francis County in eastern Arkansas). We are still searching for the estimated \$1.22 million that will be needed to complete this project as originally envisioned.

We appreciate the Governor and the CARES Act committee for their continued work with us on this important project and respectfully request an extension for the expenditure of the remainder of our allocated funding.

Thank you for your consideration.