

Arkansas PBS (AETC) Progress Report

March 22, 2021

Lee Mountain (Russellville, AR area)

The antenna and transmitter installation has been completed and is ready to go to air. Waiting on FCC to issue call sign, transport stream ID, and to confirm a virtual channel assignment.

Yancy

The broadcast antenna and transmitter systems have been delivered into storage as well as the radio equipment for the microwave link. This site requires the installation of an equipment shelter and services at the Yancy site to support the installation of the transmitter. That had to go through the State of Arkansas design approval and bid process which caused unexpected delays. Arkansas PBS (AR-PBS) will be sharing a tower managed by the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) who had to negotiate an expansion of the compound at the base of the tower to accommodate our equipment shelter. Site work and the antenna installation are about to commence with site completion and transmitter commissioning expected by the end of June.

Forrest City

All the equipment for this site has been delivered and is in storage. The installation at this site was also delayed by the State of Arkansas design approval and bid process. The ADEM tower requires structural upgrade to accommodate the additional load that AR-PBS will be adding with the broadcast antenna. Site construction and structural upgrades are about to commence in preparation for the installation of the broadcast transmitter and antenna system. Estimating a July completion.

Gaither

All equipment has been supplied. There are two microwave hops, Marshall and Tar Kiln needed to link program out to Gaither. All three are ADEM sites that need tower structural upgrades to accommodate AR-PBS antenna loading. The installation process was exacerbated by the change in the Telecommunications Industry Association code "H" upgrade in 2020 which now requires these three sites to have substantial tower modifications. The structural upgrades and site construction required at Gaither required for the transmitter equipment shelter have just completed State of Arkansas design approval and bidding with contractors about to start work. Because of the amount of tower upgrade work required, the route to Gaither will have the longest construction time with an estimated completion in August.

Buck Knob – Rich Mountain (Mena, AR)

AR-PBS is looking at an alternate site Rich Mountain which is one ridge west of Buck Knob because access to Buck is proving to be logistically too difficult to install a shelter for the AR-PBS transmitter. The broadcast and microwave towers to link program out to Rich Mountain are on land administered by the US Forestry Department. AR-PBS has not been able to complete State of Arkansas design approval and project bidding because of delays in US Forestry permitting. Estimating a September completion because of US Forestry delays.