

## Statement as to 2019 Silent STA and Off-Air Time Period

The station was forced off the air January 23, 2019, as a result of a lightning strike, which was later determined upon inspection, damaged the antenna, transmission line and the transmitter. A request for a silent STA pending repairs was filed with the FCC (file number 0000067646), and later approved and, of necessity, extended.

On January 31, 2019, the station's staff contacted a vendor to schedule a tower crew to inspect the antenna. The original crew retention fell through, so a search was made for another crew. A crew was found one which was able to schedule a visit on April 1, 2019. That date was the best possible as the television Re-Pack proceeding required many stations to change antennas which severely limited the availability of tower crews. The tower crew arriving on April 1 confirmed the lightning strike damaged the antenna and transmission line requiring both to be replaced and provided us a written report.

The University's station engineers assessed the transmitter for damage and located a dummy load as part of the process. After applying power through the dummy load and a thorough investigation, including dismantling the transmitter, they found it had been internally destroyed in the lightning strike and could not be repaired, or rebuilt because of the unavailability of manufacturer parts due to the age of the transmitter. Since the cost to restore operation exceeded \$25,000, the entire project also became an insurance claim.

The time to perform repairs was longer than anticipated as the University of Alabama, a State of Alabama entity, was required to obtain bids, follow the laborious bid procedures for a State entity, as well as work through the insurance claim process and allocation of funds from the University departments, all of which consumed time. The insurance process was handled by the University's *"Department of Risk Management."* The formulation and dissemination of requests for proposals and once responses were received, the bidding process for replacing the transmitter were handled by the *"University Purchasing Department."* The time for the RFP and time for responses from vendors was a significant factor. The items related to the tower (antenna, transmission line, and tower crew), were handled by the *"University Contract Administration Department."* The involvement of three different departments of the University prolonged ultimate resolution of the damage and return to on-air broadcasts.

Once bids were completed, orders placed, and replacement parts and equipment were on site, crews were scheduled to complete the installation. Two crews were needed, one for the transmitter installation and one for installing the antenna and transmission line on the tower. Again, the installation crews for the tower and the transmitter had to be scheduled around demands of other stations for equipment and tower crews due to the television Re-Pack. The station was eventually able to find a crew to complete the installation, however, another problem arose as the transmission line delivered was too short and had to be replaced with a new transmission line. The significant time required for delivery of a new transmission line necessitated the departure of the tower crew and a rescheduling for a later date adding to the delay.

The station's staff along with the staff of the University's College of Communications and Information Sciences, were successful in working through the challenges detailed above and the station returned to on-air broadcasting with its licensed facilities on December 12, 2019, and able to again provide service to viewers in the station's coverage area.