

WUNG-TV Transition Plan Progress Report

The University of North Carolina (UNC-TV), Licensee of WUNG-TV, Concord, North Carolina, is a governmental agency 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 WUNG-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 (second quarter 2018) transition report, the execution of purchase contracts for major equipment is complete. The transmitter purchase contract was awarded to GatesAir, Inc. The GatesAir systems engineers have been working with UNC-TV's project designer, McKim & Creed, Inc. as well as UNC-TV staff to develop a building space plan that will accommodate the installation of new transmitters while maintaining the current pre-transition operations. As a result of the size of the transmitter building, there is sufficient room in the building to install both the new main and auxiliary transmitters during the same crew mobilization. This will reduce the amount of time required for transmitter equipment installation.

The antenna system purchase contract has been awarded and the contract was signed with Radio Frequency Systems (RFS). RFS is working with UNC-TV's project designer, McKim & Creed, Inc. as well as UNC-TV staff to develop a work plan for the site. The tower load changes have been shared with the tower structural engineering firm, Tower Engineering Professionals, Inc. (TEP) so they can perform the requisite tower structural analysis. Our transition plan calls for the tower work to be done in two parts. Part 1 will be (a) the removal of an existing auxiliary antenna system (which cannot be retuned to WUNG-TV's post-transition channel) and (b) the installation of an interim antenna system (antenna and transmission line) in the space previously occupied by the auxiliary antenna system. New transmission line will be installed to connect the new main transmitter to the interim antenna, which will allow WUNG to timely transition to its post-transition channel using 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 main antenna system (which cannot be retuned to WUND-TV's post-transition channel) and (b) the installation of the permanent post-transition main antenna system in the same location. Because there are two different load cases for the tower structure, both cases are being 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., as the project designer is creating a construction drawing package for WUNG-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 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.

UNC-TV has also submitted budget updates for FCC Form 399. These updates reflect the correct manufacturer, model number, and pricing for the equipment being purchased. Submittals were also included to summarize pricing information to better explain how antenna and transmitter pricing have been impacted by the station's signal maximization. Further budget adjustments may be necessary after the tower analysis and building construction drawings are finalized. These two documents will identify any additional items that must be addressed for the project to meet the mandated State Building Code requirements.

We believe, as of this early October 2018 filing, that the Phase 5 August 2019 construction deadline remains achievable for WUNG-TV. To reiterate, WUNG-TV plans to begin its post-transition operations using an interim transmission system. This system will attempt to replicate as much as practically possible the population served by the proposed post-transition facility. When appropriate, UNC-TV will be submitting a request for special temporary authority for WUNG-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.