

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT
Marta S. Bechtol

New Director of Radio

Heather Reese and I are thrilled to have the new director of Wisconsin Public Radio on board this week. Sarah Ashworth emerged out of a strong national pool, impressing the hiring committee with her 25-year career in media, her communication style and her leadership skills. Her background includes producing, reporting, and editing roles at Minnesota Public Radio, New Hampshire Public Radio and Vermont Public where she was deeply involved in implementing major organizational change. As Sarah defined *how* she led and worked with others, it became clear that she has critical skills that will guide us as we move forward with changes to our networks. We are confident that she will be a successful partner to staff and leadership at WPR, WPM, ECB and the WPRA in the months and years ahead.

Happy *Real* Retirement, Tom

We are deeply appreciative to Tom Luljak for sharing the first (nearly) two years of his career retirement with us as the interim director of WPR. Tom arrived at an emotionally difficult time for the organization and embraced the challenge of researching our staff, audience and marketplace to identify future directions for WPR. The important work he's accomplished here has teed up Sarah and the WPR staff for the big decisions and project implementation ahead. We are most grateful to Tom for his time, energy and commitment and we thank his lovely wife, Wendy, for her generosity and patience.

State Budget

We are pleased with the timely passage of the state's [2023-2025 biennial budget](#) (pp. 28-29) and are grateful to the governor and the state legislature for accommodating ECB's budget request.

20.225 DEPARTMENT TOTALS		
GENERAL PURPOSE REVENUE	6,385,900	6,638,600
PROGRAM REVENUE	15,501,600	15,512,800
FEDERAL	(-0-)	(-0-)
OTHER	(15,349,100)	(15,359,800)
SERVICE	(152,500)	(153,000)
TOTAL-ALL SOURCES	21,887,500	22,151,400

Our capital funding falls within the Building Commission's "All Agency" allocation which has yet to be determined. Agency funding letters are typically sent in late summer or early fall.

Federal Budget

With only a few weeks left in session before the August recess and then a month before the fiscal year ends, Congress will move quickly to finalize the FY24 budget.

We understand the House is drafting its budget back to FY22 spending levels. Those

figures are represented in millions below:

	FY22 funded	FY23 funded	FY24 request
CPB (2-year advance funding)	\$525	\$535	\$575
Interconnection	\$20	\$60	\$60
Ready to Learn	\$30.5	\$31	\$31
Next Gen Warning System	\$40	\$56	\$56

There will be much more to come on this front and we'll be paying attention.

20th Anniversary of AMBER Alert

Wisconsin Public Broadcasting was pleased to be recognized by the Department of Justice on the 20th Anniversary of the implementation of [Wisconsin's AMBER Alert Program](#). ECB has been an official partner of the AMBER Alert program from its beginning, an expansion of our role as the state's Emergency Alert System broadcast relay. There have been 57 AMBER Alert activations since 2003. In over 50% of the cases, the AMBER Alert broadcast itself played a role in the recovery of the child(ren).

AMBER Alert programs were put in place across the United States after Amber Hagerman, 9, of Arlington, Texas, was abducted and murdered near her home in 1996. The AMBER Alert program is in memory of Amber Hagerman, however, the AMBER in the alert name stands for *America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response*.



From left: Marshall Ogren and Melissa Marchant from the Department of Justice; Marta Bechtol, Adam Hargrove and Kemper Maas representing Wisconsin Public Broadcasting.

Broadband Access

The third year of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access concluded at the end of June. It has been gratifying to be part of conversations that have worked to define the complexity of broadband access and quality in our state and have shaped the recommendations that will facilitate its buildout. The governor announced the Task Force's FY23 report in a [press release](#) on July 10. The full report is linked [HERE](#).

Equity & Inclusion

ECB's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee is taking on the work required by the Department of Administration's Bureau of Equity and Inclusion to create a three-year plan outlining the steps taken to comply with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action requirements. Currently the committee is creating a comprehensive workforce analysis on which to ground the new plan which is due in September. It will be posted on the agency's website after it has been finalized and approved.

We are hosting our second ever summer intern in our Broadcast I.T. unit as part of the State of Wisconsin Student Diversity Internship Program. We have also taken on an intern in our Operations Center through the Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

In order to ensure we are operating in ways that meet the needs of all staff, ECB has been collecting annual employee engagement data using surveys and interviews. We have made improvements in the last year, although staff agree that there is (and should always be) room for improvement. The results give us confidence that we are taking appropriate actions and moving in the right direction. A summary of this year's survey is included in the meeting materials.