



There were **35 people** on the phone bridge representing **20 licensees** for the STATION ANNIVERSARY PLANNING professional development call 4/19/06 at 3:00 pm ET. *(This is the largest number of participants on a Communication council call so far.)*

For your reference, here are the emails and phone numbers of the panelists. They welcome your calls or messages with questions/comments. Don't be shy:

Michelle DeRusha, NET Nebraska
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(402) 472 – 9333, ext 391

Mike "You're Ken Burns, aren't you?" McKenzie, Alabama Public TV
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Teri Sullivan, WKNO/Memphis
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NEBRASKA / Michelle DeRusha

NET's 50th anniversary was November 1, 2004. One year and two months prior to that day, a committee was formed to plan the anniversary celebration. (See "TIPS" section, following) NET's member magazine, called "Partners" is published 3x/year, and it covered the anniversary in three sections: 1950-1960s; 1970-1980s; and 1990 – the future. Historical articles on specific topics were mixed with people stories and lots of archival photos, including a pictorial timeline running along the bottom of the pages.

A PowerPoint presentation and 10-minute video were produced in house which senior staff (the *ad hoc* "speakers bureau") presented at many different locations state-wide throughout the year.

TV and radio interstitial testimonials from Nebraska VIPs and national public television personalities began airing in January 2003.

A colossal reunion of past and present employees was held in October 2003. Budget was minimal: an ad in CURRENT, a web page on the NET Web, an underwriting trade-out for food. Souvenir of the reunion was a CD slide show of hundreds of old photographs.

A major donor event was held in November 2004, which featured former Nebraska senators and governors, as well as the debut of an NET 'American Masters' production. It raised \$ 70,000 for NET.

A 50th anniversary logo was designed in-house and used on special letterhead, in all the print ads, the holiday card, and the on-air bug.

A media relations campaign created a CD with 20 historical images of NET, with captions and stories, which was sent to the state's newspapers and resulted in lots of press coverage.

ALABAMA / Mike McKenzie

The first public television station in Alabama went on-air in January 1955, but it wasn't truly a network (2 or more stations) until April of that year, so Alabama PTV celebrated the entire 2005 calendar year, wrapping it up with their November-December pledge drive.

They planned two special events: one to emphasize the network's educational service, and one which cast the network as "Alabama's Storyteller."

The education event was showcased at the McWane Science Center and Museum in Birmingham. APT bought-out (traded out) an entire Saturday at the center. Ready To Learn activities were highlighted, showing television as an active learning tool. Mr. McFeely from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood was on hand to meet and greet. In the news and journalism, kids could "be on TV" and record their own "Why I Love APT" and "Happy 50th" messages. At least 3,000 kids and their parents attended.

The "Alabama's Storyteller" event was held at the Birmingham Museum of Art. 500 people attended a festive evening which included live broadcasts from the museum, live music, ballet, and the women who were the famous QUILTMAKERS OF GEE'S BEND, as well as primitive artist Thornton Dial.

The budget for both events was approximately \$ 30,000.00

WKNO/Memphis – Teri Sullivan

WKNO's 50th anniversary is June 25...just 66 days away! Their 6-person planning committee has been working for 9 months on plans for this celebration.

The theme, "WKNO, 50 years because of you," puts the emphasis on the viewers/ supporters. They plan to launch the celebration on the anniversary date, and run through the end of the calendar year. In the meantime, everything about the station is branded with the 50th anniversary message.

WKNO's member magazine is published 10 times a year, with two double issues. 8 extra pages with color were added for the anniversary issue.

They solicited viewer memories of growing up with WKNO, and will receive proclamations of WKNO Day from the mayor and governor. The Open House on June 25th will have tours, costume characters, the actor who hosted "All Aboard with Mister B" in the early days, cake, ice cream, and balloons.

Congratulatory salutes from SESAME STREET, P. Allen Smith, Gwen Ifill, Ken Burns, and Memphis personalities will be broadcast as IDs throughout the period. There will be a WKNO booth at the many country fairs around the area this fall, and a WKNO float for holiday parades. A staff reunion of past and present employees is scheduled for September 30. A WKNO anniversary quilt is being made, and ground-breaking for their new facilities will take place under the anniversary aegis as well.

Teri estimates the budget at \$ 40,000 – most of which will be pulled from existing budgets of departments throughout the station.

TIPS:

Start early. Start early. Start early. Two years is not too early.
Think about your anniversary campaign's launch and culmination dates – what works?
If you're going to celebrate all year, start slowly and pace yourself.

Brainstorm with as many employees as want to be involved.
Then, create a planning committee of manageable size.
Involve your board in planning the major donor event.

Resources may be limited, but imagination and creativity can stretch the budget.

Organize your photo and video archives.
Use students, interns, volunteers to scan old photos into digital format.
Get underwriting to pay for \$\$\$ film-to-digital transfers.

Solicit testimonials, congratulatory messages from local and national personalities.

Use your viewer guide as a souvenir, a memento of the history, a signal of your growing value.
Emphasize the "institution" – people are willing to support an institution.

Become your station's historian – they need you, and it feels good.

The NETA Communication Council hosts professional development calls like this
on a variety of topics throughout the year. Here's what's coming up --

May 24th: 5 Reasons to Hold a Press Event
July 19th: PR 101 – The Basics
Sept 20th: Emergency Planning/Preparedness

The Communication Council's executive committee also produces sessions for
promotion / advertising / marketing people at the NETA annual meeting, which
will be held January 25 – 28 in Norfolk, VA at the Marriott Waterside.

Save the dates, and stay tuned for details!

NETA: We connect public television people with high-quality content and
ideas. <http://www.netaonline.org>