

Greetings MBA members!

This will be another challenging year for Minnesota broadcasters (what year isn't?) and MBA is gearing up to provide support in a number of areas. Throughout the year we'll be updating you on a variety of issues and rolling out new and enhanced services. We'll have more information on all that soon. Meanwhile, your MBA Board members took the case for local broadcasters to Washington, DC this week. After thorough orientation on the issues from NAB lobbying staff, your team hit the Hill.

The urgent issue is securing funding for TV stations impacted by the FCC's broadcast spectrum auction. Almost every market reaching Minnesota viewers is impacted, requiring stations move to new frequencies to make room for wireless carriers after the auction. All are dealing with the 39-month deadline with Minneapolis/St. Paul and Rochester/Austin required to complete the move by summer 2019. The original Congressional allocation to cover costs to stations is \$1B short, freezing the stations from moving forward. NAB is working with members of both houses to secure additional funding required to get this done and keep these stations from going dark. The final 2018 fiscal year funding appropriation is moving through Congress now with only days left. This funding has to be part of that budget. HR 4986 and S 1632 have bipartisan support and we asked our Minnesota elected officials to get behind us. The offices visited indicated Minnesota broadcasters have their support and will work together to make this happen.



L to R: Mary Niemeyer, Rosanne Rybak, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, David Harbert

NAB took the leadership reins in DC, scheduling and joining every appointment on these important issues and our legislators responded. We have to do the same on state issues coming out of St. Paul now that we are back in Minnesota.
– David Harbert, MBA Board Chair elect
(KAAL-TV Rochester)

As we speak, Microsoft is making the Hill rounds hard, requesting broadcast spectrum. Their presentation is misrepresented, stating their grab will unlock spectrum for rural America. This is the same promise given to support their two prior

allocations. Microsoft, a \$700B company, did not participate in the spectrum auction and is now making a "private" request after the fact. It will put local broadcaster use of spectrum at risk under the guise of using unused "white space." Senator Klobuchar's office, among others, has been on the point of this issue and Microsoft's lobbying. Her office understood the issues at stake and that more appropriate means of addressing much needed rural broadband access are available.

The Fair Play Fair Pay Act and Promote Act are the latest initiatives pushed by large record labels to extract revenue from local radio stations. NAB and local broadcasters are rallying behind the Local Radio Freedom Act, a resolution which opposes new fees on local stations. This has strong bipartisan support in the House but can't be taken for granted. There is pressure to upset the long-standing relationship between local stations and recording artists and we must continue to make our case.

The FCC may soon conduct their long overdue quadrennial review. One of the key issues will be retransmission consent. Dish and ATT/Direct will push hard to rewrite the current rules of negotiation. Interestingly, the current rules worked well, without disruption, when negotiated in good faith. The two satellite companies have been the impasse in over 85% of the disruptions.

The NAB exceeded my expectations at this year's State Leadership Conference. Their support with our "visits on the hill" was beneficial to the MBA and time very well spent by the MBA board. – Rosanne Rybak (Twin Cities PBS)



L to R: Chris Fee, David Harbert, Greg Borgen, Rep. Rick Nolan, Mary Niemeyer, and Rosanne Rybak

Your Board delegation included brand new interim Executive Director Stephen Usery and, traveling largely at their own expense, members Greg Borgen (WDGY radio Twin Cities), Mary Niemeyer (Townsquare Media Duluth), Rosanne Rybak (Twin Cities PBS), Chris Fee (KROX radio Crookston) and David Harbert (KAAL-TV Rochester). The team met with Representatives Nolan, McCollum, Lewis and Emmer, along with Senator Klobuchar. We also reviewed the issues with the staff of Senator Smith and Representatives Peterson and Paulsen. Congressman Emmer even hosted the team on a very special after-hours capitol tour. The NAB hosted, scheduled and attended every MBA meeting, insuring maximum time with our Minnesota officials despite the lack of an Executive Director leading into the event.



L to R: Greg Borgen, Rep. Jason Lewis, Chris Fee, Stephen Usery

It was my first visit to Capitol Hill and I quickly realized how important this trip was. All the Minnesota politicians welcomed us and could see that we care about the topics we were discussing. I am proud to say I was part of the outstanding group of individuals from MBA that was working to help all broadcasters on some very important topics. – Chris Fee (KROX Crookston)

The energy and ideas flowing from other state association leaders was impressive. I look forward to what we can accomplish at MBA!
– Stephen Usery, interim Executive Director

Prior to the NAB State Leadership Conference, interim Executive Director Stephen Usery also attended the annual conference of the National Alliance of State Broadcasters Associations (NASBA). The NASBA conference featured a detailed session on best practices and discussion of numerous issues shared by broadcasters across the country. These included the difficulty of recruiting talent in sales and engineering, challenges in music licensing, and legislative

issues at both the state and national level. Stephen was provided incredible support from other state association leaders who committed to help us develop a strong future vision for MBA. Stay tuned!



L to R: David Harbert, Rep. Tom Emmer, Stephen Usery

