

Station Resource Group

2009

Annual Report of Activities



STATION RESOURCE GROUP | 301.270.2617 | www.srg.org
PO Box 5807, Takoma Park, MD 20913

Public radio stations

Give listeners better lives – more fulfilled in the pursuit of understanding, challenge, and personal growth; more thoughtful, useful, and joyful.

Work for the health of communities across many dimensions of public life – arts and culture, education, economics, the environment, and the sense of connection and responsibility to others.

Keep our democracy vital – the free flow of ideas that sustains a free society, accountability for those who govern, and information that helps citizens make wise decisions for themselves, their community, and their nation.

Accomplish these things across an unfolding array of technologies – from terrestrial broadcast signals that are omnipresent and freely available to pathways of the digital network age that are highly personal and interactive. On every channel and platform the shared ambition is to make great content more broadly and easily accessible, to engage people in meaningful ways with that content and with each other, and to merit continuing trust and support.

– Adapted from *Public Radio in the New Network Age*

Station Resource Group

2009

Strategic
vision

Knowledge,
and insight

Constructive
influence

Operational
excellence

Innovative
initiatives

Local
significance

The Station Resource Group is an alliance of public media organizations that operate leading public radio stations across America. SRG members serve their communities with a growing array of programming and services – on-air, across the evolving platforms of the networked digital age, and by direct engagement with individuals and organizations.

SRG gives its members sustainable public service strategies along with knowledge, insight, and inspiration. SRG assures a strong station voice in the evolving design of public media and fosters operational excellence and innovative initiatives that improves members' individual and collective efforts and their significance in the communities they serve.

Board Of Directors

Wayne Roth, *Chair*
KUOW, Seattle

Kathleen Pavelko, *Vice-Chair*
WITF, Harrisburg
(Through October 5, 2009)

Roger LaMay
WXPN, Philadelphia

JoAnne Wallace
KQED, San Francisco

Laura Walker
WNYC, New York City

Bill Davis
Southern California Public
Radio, Los Angeles

Marita Rivero
WGBH, Boston
(Elected October 5, 2009)

Tom Thomas (ex-officio)

Terry Clifford (ex-officio)

Staff

Tom. Thomas
co-CEO

Terry Clifford
co-CEO

Funders

Member stations are SRG's most important source of support. We also thank the following organizations that funded SRG activities in 2009:

Corporation for Public
Broadcasting

Ford Foundation

John D. and Catherine T.
MacArthur Foundation

Surdna Foundation

Forward looking station strategies for stronger public service

Develop analyses, strategies, and plans that help stations increase the value of their content and services, extend their share of the public's use of electronic media, advance their sustainability and effectiveness, and enhance their roles as robust and compelling locally-controlled institutions.

Grow the Audience Research Director

George Bailey
Walrus Research

Grow the Audience Media Technology Consultant

Skip Pizzi

SRG's most ambitious initiative in 2009 was *Grow the Audience*. SRG led a highly participatory process to create a broad strategy for greater use, value, and significance of public radio across the coming decade. Managers, board members, and senior staff at SRG members played leadership roles throughout the effort.

Launched in mid-2008, *Grow the Audience* included original research and analysis, extensive consultations with networks, national organizations, stations, and producers, and coordination with scores of individuals who shared their views in essays, interviews, working groups, and personal conversations.

The current phase of *Grow the Audience* culminated with publication of *Public Radio in the New Network Age*, a comprehensive report of findings and recommendations issued in January 2010. The recommendations frame a "portfolio strategy" that builds on public radio's broadcast assets, moves vigorously into the networked digital environment, and asserts aggressive paths for growth in journalism, public radio's music franchises, and the diversity of our audience.

Over the course of 2009 SRG

- Published *Public Radio 2.0 – Report from the New Media Working Group*, which pulled together thinking of 16 top professionals inside and outside public radio.
- Published a draft of the project's analysis and recommendations for system-wide review and discussion.
- Shared findings with board members, public broadcasting executives, and leaders from related fields sponsored by CPB and the Aspen Institute.
- Presented findings and led discussions at numerous industry meetings, including the IMA and DEI national conferences, a Ford Foundation meeting of public media groups, SRG's Annual Retreat, and regional gatherings.

Forward looking station strategies

Grow the Audience Consultant

Quentin Hope
Great Plains Strategies

Grow the Audience Consultant

Felice Tillin
GroupWorks Consulting

- Discussed recommendations with board members, executives, and staff in sessions with individual organizations, including NPR, APM, and stations such as WNYC, Vermont Public Radio, and Capital Public Radio.
- Conducted in-depth interviews with 21 top station executives, probing which recommendations were resonating and which not.
- Queried 14 leaders active in new public media ventures about specific proposals for next steps in the networked environment.
- Incorporated comments from over 75 individuals who responded to the draft report.
- Commissioned “Thinking Audience” pieces by Margaret Low Smith (NPR), Bill Thomas (Prairie Public) Rekha Murthy (PRX), Loris Taylor (Native Public Media), and Loretta Rucker, (African-American Public Radio Consortium).

We also began making plans to move toward action on Grow the Audience recommendations.

Making the Case. In partnership with DEI, public radio’s fundraising and marketing service organization, we will develop and test case statements for major new investments in public radio’s local journalism.

Leadership for Diversity. Working with public radio news stations in major markets with the largest numbers of African-American and Latino listeners, and executives from public radio’s major networks, we began brainstorming activities that will lead to greater diversity in the audience for public radio’s core news programming.

Shaping
national
policies and
structures to
advance and
protect a
growing public
radio system

SRG works to align the policies, plans, and arrangements of national organizations, networks, funders, and key vendors with the interests and needs of our members and the broader public radio community – through collaboration, negotiation, and vigorous advocacy.

Legal Counsel

John Crigler
Garvey, Shubert & Barer

SRG plays a continuing strong role in the development of policies at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. We consulted on a regular, ongoing basis with the executive leadership of CPB and key staff throughout the organization. We participated in several formal consultations on key policy and funding issues, including:

Principles and a formula that would guide the use of supplemental federal funds – both the case that would be made for such funding and agreement regarding how such funds would be distributed should they become available. Public broadcasting's request was subsequently funded by Congress and the new funds reached stations in early 2010.

Priorities and guidelines for CPB's \$36 million in digital investments – continuing transmission conversion in public radio and television and growing investments in digital content and services.

In addition to formal consultation meetings that brought together national organizations and panels, SRG regularly met with CPB's radio, television, and digital media staff over the course of the year to discuss Grow the Audience recommendations concerning priorities and investments in journalism, new media, and diversity.

SRG helped conclude a critical agreement for webcasting copyright royalties. Working with CPB and NPR in ongoing negotiations with Sound Exchange, the representative of the recorded music industry, SRG worked toward an arrangement that satisfies all station obligations through a single payment from CPB. With many SRG members among the largest public radio webcasters – and thus with the most at stake – SRG took an aggressive role on this complex negotiation that began in 2007 and concluded in early 2009.

Policies and structures for a growing public radio system

SRG Representative
Public Radio
Arbitron Team
Tim Roesler
Minnesota Public Radio

Important webcasting and music rights issues remain unresolved for public radio, including the so-called performance complement that limits the way in which material from single recordings can be presented.

At year's end SRG began discussions aimed at making headway on webcast reporting requirements for classical music stations and much larger issues with respect to the performance complement and its implications for the overall development of public radio's web-based content.

SRG supported the Public Radio Arbitron Team. We continued our multi-year effort to create stronger ongoing ties between public radio and Arbitron – building the foundation for a continuing “umbrella contract” for all of public radio, shaping a better understanding of public radio's particular needs at Arbitron, and exploring where Arbitron's overall software development and panel process can most strongly match public radio's priorities.

Working with Team Chair Vincent Gardino (WNYC), Tim Roesler (MPR), and Arbitron SVP Bill Rose, SRG built a detailed agenda for a Public Radio–Arbitron meeting. In July, the Public Radio Arbitron Team met with a dozen senior executives from Arbitron Inc – the first ever meeting of this kind. The discussions were open, positive, and productive. There was agreement to hold semi-annual meetings, with the next session targeted for early 2010.

SRG also joined with the Radio Research Consortium, DEI, and PRPD to pursue public radio representation on Arbitron's Radio Advisory Council. After a series of discussions over the course of 2009 between the Public Radio Arbitron Team, Arbitron executives, and the Radio Advisory Council board, public radio took a run at RAC's biggest market seat, “continuous measurement

Policies and structures for a growing public radio system

markets 1-50,” and Bill Davis from Southern California Public Radio (and an SRG board member) was elected.

Toward the end of 2009, with leadership from SRG member Dave Edwards who chairs the RRC board, the RRC took on the role SRG had played for several years of providing staff support for the Arbitron Team.

As 2009 began a new President and newly-elected Congress arrived in Washington – and with them came ambitions, within and outside our field, for a reformulation of public broadcasting as public media.

These impulses were first channeled in the direction of the **economic stimulus plan** that consumed national policymakers. SRG worked with two overlapping “centers” on public media proposals: a core public broadcasting constituency, led by CPB, which focused on a unified presentation of investment targets in technology, services, and station support, and a group more at the edges of public broadcasting – film makers, nonprofit digital media startups, media advocacy groups, and foundations and academics who saw some opportunities in the collective public broadcasting efforts, but also a chance to advance more targeted agendas with respect to public media.

Most of these plans did not come to fruition. But the larger themes have continued – a public media system that is more inclusive and diverse, more digitally nimble and accessible, more aggressive in its journalism, more meaningful in education, and more attuned to addressing social needs.

These conversations will carry forward, driving federal funding for public broadcasting, policy at the FCC, and decisions at leading foundations. SRG is vigorously engaged, working to assure a vibrant and sustainable member role in an ambitious and challenging future.

PRX – The Public Radio Exchange

Public radio's "born digital" network, a growing program marketplace, a leader and innovator in the transformation of public broadcasting to the networked digital age.

**SRG Representative
PRX Board of Directors**
Bruce Warren
WXPN

With the turn of the year **PRX began an exciting new phase as an independent organization.** SRG provided continuing stewardship of foundation funds committed to PRX activities such as launching and improving a new web platform and creating a content venture fund. We also provided ongoing consultation to the new organization through its first year of work.

SRG is proud of its role in conceiving and launching PRX – and of the significant assets with which it began this next incarnation of its work:

- An audio archive with tens of thousands of pieces ready for broadcast, presentation on the web, and individual listening
- Several thousand reviews and ratings, the largest body of critical writing about radio productions in the nation
- New generation core software, PRX 3.0, with features and functionality driven by stations' and producers' experiences and needs
- Leading roles in collaborative projects, such as the development of a shared public radio application for the iPhone
- GenerationPRX, a resource center and exchange for several dozen youth radio groups across the country
- Respect as an innovator and thought-leader within our field and outside it
- Core staff with talent and experience in both programming and technology
- A healthy cash reserve and a budget plan for 2009 in which most of the needed revenue was already committed or identified

Empowering leadership for stronger stations

Help stations achieve superior performance across their operations and work together to realize goals beyond the reach of any one station acting alone.

SRG's 2009 **Annual Planning Retreat** in Washington, DC included a high level of member participation and several guests from national organizations. This year's focus was on local journalism, diversity, the network space, and fundraising. We celebrated SRG's 25th anniversary with a wonderful dinner that included many "SRG alumni" who now play leadership roles at other public media organizations, including CPB, NPR, Public Radio Capital, and PRX.

We **consulted with individual SRG members** on both broad strategic plans and specific projects and initiatives, usually working with boards and senior management teams. Among the members we worked with in 2009 were Vermont Public Radio, Minnesota Public Radio | American Public Media, North Carolina Public Radio WUNC, Radio Bilingüe, Koahnic Broadcasting, and WNYC.

We continued work with public television's Affinity Group Coalition to frame and secure funding for a project to update public broadcasting's editorial principles, policies and practices for digital media.

SRG has always been generous in its **support of other national organizations in public broadcasting**. We seek to strengthen organizations that include many SRG members or that are especially important to members' work. Our efforts this year included:

- Meetings with NPR's new executive leadership to support their work with NPR members and activities that will strengthen their programming.
- Facilitation of Association of Independents in Radio's kick-off meeting for Makers Quest, in which producers are exploring new media production approaches.
- Work with NFCB to get non-CPB-supported community radio stations covered by the webcasting copyright royalty contract for public radio.

Working to the highest standards

SRG is an influential and highly-regarded leadership organization within public media, one that exemplifies the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in all its dealings and that is responsive and accountable to its members and elected leadership.

Audit
Halt, Buzas & Powell

Throughout the year SRG communicated with members on a wide range of topics and SRG activities and sought members' views on key issues through surveys, conference calls, and one-on-one discussions.

SRG's open website at www.srg.org features current and archived publications, reports, and presentations on a wide range of public radio issues for both members and others.

SRG is frequently sought out as a knowledgeable, authoritative, and accessible source of information – for interviews and background materials for industry publications, trade press, public radio programs, the general media, and academics on issues and events concerning both public media in general and developments at individual stations and organizations in the field.

SRG staff and board ended the year by developing a broad plan of activities in 2010 and beyond, drawing heavily on major themes from the Grow the Audience project and other key concerns and opportunities flagged by SRG's members.

SRG
members

SRG's mission is that America's strongest public radio stations better serve the public and thrive in a period of radical change.

These organizations participated in and supported SRG as members during 2009.

SRG member organizations operate over 220 public radio stations.

CHICAGO PUBLIC RADIO
Chicago, IL

COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO
Denver, CO

IOWA PUBLIC RADIO
Des Moines, IA

KOAHNIC BROADCASTING
Anchorage, AK

KERA | KKXT
Dallas, TX

KPBS
San Diego, CA

KQED
San Francisco, CA

PUGET SOUND PUBLIC RADIO
Seattle, WA

KUSC
Los Angeles, CA

KUT
Austin, TX

LOUISVILLE PUBLIC MEDIA
Louisville, KY

MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO
St. Paul, MN

NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC RADIO - WUNC
Chapel Hill, NC

OREGON PUBLIC BROADCASTING
Portland, OR

PHOENIX PUBLIC RADIO
Phoenix, AZ

PRAIRIE PUBLIC
Fargo, ND

RADIO BILINGÜE
Fresno, CA

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC RADIO
St. Louis, MO

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RADIO
Pasadena, CA

VERMONT PUBLIC RADIO
Colchester, VT

WBUR Group
Boston, MA

WDET
Detroit, MI

WGBH
Boston, MA

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO
Madison, WI

WITF
Harrisburg, PA

WKSU
Kent, OH

WLRN
Miami, FL

WNET
Buffalo, NY

WNYC RADIO
New York, NY

WOSU PUBLIC MEDIA
Columbus, OH

WPSU
University Park, PA

WRTI
Philadelphia, PA

WTMD
Towson, MD

WUWM
Milwaukee, WI

WXPN
Philadelphia, PA