



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lucie M. Raposo
Public Information Manager
401-222-3636 x216
lraposo@ripbs.org

**WSBE Rhode Island PBS Announces Participation
in FCC Spectrum Auction**

Proceeds to fund needed technology investments, improved community and educational programming, and secures the future of local public television

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (April 13, 2017) – In a move to secure the future of public television in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts, WSBE Rhode Island PBS President David Piccerelli today announced the station's successful participation in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Broadcast Incentive Auction. WSBE Rhode Island PBS will receive \$94.4 million to move its signal from its current location to a location lower in the television spectrum.

Until recently, television stations were bound by confidentiality agreements prohibiting disclosure of information about their participation in the auction. The FCC lifted the restrictions on silence and has now announced the results of the auction.

“Guided by our board of directors, we are happy to be able to announce we took these steps in an effort to preserve the future of local public television. The results represent a new era in technological innovation and investment for Rhode Island PBS,” Mr. Piccerelli said.

The incentive auction is one part of the FCC plan to move all television signals down the broadcast spectrum to free up spectrum for wireless networks. Television signals currently span the spectrum, leaving small, random bands between channels. Consolidation is necessary to establish contiguous space higher on the spectrum to meet the demand for wireless broadband use to increase their capacity. The FCC asked television stations across the country to voluntarily sell broadcast spectrum.

Cable and satellite subscribers will continue to find the station's two channels at their current channel numbers. Over-the-air viewers will be asked to re-scan their television signals to find

- more -

WSBE Rhode Island PBS Announces Participation in FCC Spectrum Auction

April 13, 2017

Page 2 of 2

new channel assignments when the new transmitter is installed and operational, in about two years.

Proceeds from the auction will be held in a board-designated Rhode Island PBS Foundation endowment and will cover the significant expenses associated with the channel move, upgrades to the production and programming equipment, and needed repairs to the physical plant. Investments in these areas are overdue as no significant technology upgrades have occurred in more than 10 years. The balance of the proceeds will be invested in improving community services, upgrading the education services, and expanding the station's production, programs, and digital capacity.

"We serve a culturally rich community and we plan to invest in content that highlights the assets of our community. There is no shortage of great ideas and topics; however, until now we have been financially constrained from delivering on these," Mr. Piccerelli said. "Our lineup of local productions will be increased, and soon viewers will enjoy additional informative programs like *A Lively Experiment*, *Rhode Island Classroom*, and *Community Conversations*."

Although the results of the auction will allow Rhode Island PBS to meet the upcoming extraordinary financial demands on sound financial footing, the results do not change their fundamental needs. Ongoing program services and expansion of public media content will require the continued support of members, donors, and underwriters.

"These results will help Rhode Island PBS solidify our position as a leader in our community, increase the opportunities to better serve our community's informational and educational programming needs, secure the future of local public television, and allow us to be responsive to the rapidly changing media and technology landscape," Piccerelli concluded.

Now celebrating its 50th anniversary year, WSBE Rhode Island PBS is a community licensee, operated by the non-profit Rhode Island PBS Foundation. A viewer-supported member of the Public Broadcasting Service, WSBE uses the power of non-commercial media to educate, inform, engage, and inspire viewers of all ages in Rhode Island, southeastern Massachusetts, and eastern Connecticut. For more information about the programs, and education and production services at WSBE, visit www.RIpbs.org.

###