



Maine Public Broadcasting Network

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MPBN to lay off up to 10 employees due to Federal sequester

(Portland/ Lewiston/ Bangor) – The Maine Public Broadcasting Network announced [today](#) that it is making employee layoffs to address the effects of the unexpected shortfall in Federal and State funding this year. MPBN received word that funding for fiscal year 2013 will be over \$100,000 less than expected due to both the Federal budget sequestration and additional curtailments by the State of Maine. This decline in funding is in addition to MPBN’s State appropriation being reduced by \$260,000 in 2013. In addition, the challenges of a slow economic recovery in the philanthropic community have led to an overall projected shortfall of over \$400,000 by the end of this fiscal year.

“We knew the State Appropriation was going to be a quarter-million dollars less this year over the previous year and we were already tightening our belts to accommodate that shortfall,” stated MPBN President and CEO Mark Vogelzang. “However, the impact of the Federal sequester was the tipping point for us as it has been for federal and state agencies and non-profits and organizations across the entire state. This additional unexpected shortfall simply can’t be absorbed in our already tight operating budget and it is truly unfortunate that this will affect our team.”

MPBN identified its in-house video production unit for staffing reductions as this is one of the most significant cost drivers within MPBN’s operations. In total, up to 10 positions may be eliminated, the majority within that area. MPBN will place the weekly news program *Maine Watch* on hiatus through the spring and summer while MPBN recovers from these funding issues. All other MPBN programming, both on radio and television, as well as other local television production including the *Maine Capitol Connection* and High School Basketball coverage will not be affected.

Vogelzang said, “We explored a number of cost reduction options and concluded that this path will achieve the necessary savings while retaining the programming we need to have for a more stable future. The severity of our cuts in funding – especially the Federal funding piece – really tied our hands. These cuts are incredibly difficult for our organization and for those directly affected. We are losing some good professional people and we will do everything we can to soften their landing and help them find employment.”

MPBN has informed its Staff Union, The MPBC Employees Association, an affiliate of the Maine Education Association (MEA), of the cutbacks and the specific positions that will be affected. MPBN plans to provide resources to support displaced employees. It is MPBN’s expectation that these cuts will result in a healthier financial footing for the organization and ultimately avoid additional staffing reductions later in the year.

About the Maine Public Broadcasting Network:

The Maine Public Broadcasting Network operates five television transmitters (WCBB-TV - Augusta - 10, WMEA-TV - Biddeford – 26, WMED-TV - Calais – 13, WMEB-TV - Orono – 12, WMEM-TV - Presque Isle – 10), and seven radio transmitters (WMEH-FM - Bangor - 90.9, WMED-FM - Calais - 89.7, WMEP-FM - Camden - 90.5, WMEF-FM - Fort Kent - 106.5, WMEA-FM - Portland - 90.1, WMEM-FM - Presque Isle - 106.1, WMEW-FM - Waterville - 91.3) reaching households in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Atlantic Canada. MPBN also delivers content to a worldwide audience via its website, www.mpbn.net.

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