

Quick Takes

Stations' towers narrowly escape Los Angeles fire

Broadcast towers atop Mount Wilson in California had a close call this week when wildfires threatened to silence dozens of signals, including six of public stations, and to destroy the famed Mount Wilson Observatory. The fire, which scorched some 154,000 acres, was called the Station Fire because it started near a ranger station in the Angeles National Forest.

The mountain is visible to some 10 million L.A. Basin residents on a clear day, according to tower expert and Rochester, N.Y., pubcaster Scott Fybus. Broadcast gear for six public stations was in jeopardy: pubTV's KOCE and KCET, the city school district's KLCS-TV, Pacifica Radio's KPFK, classical KUSC-FM, and news station KPCC in Pasadena.

Technicians scrambled to arrange backup transmission options. KUSC and KPCC had previously discussed sharing KUSC's backup tower on another peak, Mount Lookout, KPCC programmer Craig Curtis told *Current*. When the fire began, KPCC Chief Engineer Lance Harper and two other engineers raided an equipment closet, borrowed an unused KUSC transmitter and installed it as a backup for their station on the KUSC tower. They used remote-broadcast Comrex Access equipment to send the signal to the backup tower.

The threat to the Mount Wilson towers, Curtis said, was limited because most of the tower area had been cleared of vegetation that could fuel a blaze. Most worrisome was the integrity of three power lines snaking up the mountain. Two went out.

Several publiccasters ramped up news coverage of the fire. On Aug. 31 KCET began airing reports on the fire every half-hour; *SoCal Connected*, its local public affairs series, created a special website for wildfire news (kcet.org/socal). To expand coverage, KPCC brought in one reporter from sister Minnesota Public Radio and another from San Diego's KPBS. KPCC created a website for updates at kpcc.org/fire.

PBS quickly scheduled the 2008 documentary *Operation Wildfire* for Sept. 4.

NBC will try Yank version of *Prime Suspect*

NBC has ordered a two-hour pilot remaking the popular Scotland Yard homicide-detective series *Prime Suspect*. The series became enormously popular on Britain's ITV network

and PBS's *Masterpiece Theatre* in periodic runs over 15 years. Hank Steinberg, creator of the CBS missing persons drama *Without a Trace*, will write the pilot.

The new program will be co-produced by ITV and NBC's sister Universal Media. Angela Bromstad, head of primetime entertainment for NBC and Universal Media, said in a statement, "We want to carefully choose a couple of iconic titles this year to reinvent, and our intention is to create another classic television show from this brilliant original format."

Rebecca Eaton, e.p. of *Masterpiece*, told *Current* that she finds it flattering that NBC would want to pick up the show. "It'll be interesting to see a new take," she added. *Masterpiece* itself is in the remake business, Eaton pointed out. "We've done classics over and over again. And this signals that in modern television, *Prime Suspect* is a classic."

The show, with a cast led by Helen Mirren as the heroic but far from perfect detective Jane Tennison, won five Emmys, a Peabody and a BAFTA during its PBS run.

Denver station pledges 9/11 conspiracy docs

When Denver's KBDI went on air in 1980, one of its founding objectives was "giving voice to independent, under-represented and frequently unpopular perspectives and views." And that's what the station did last month, said Marketing Director Marcia Simmons, by airing 9/11 conspiracy-theory programming. KBDI, the smaller of two PBS stations in the area, bills itself as "Denver's bold, diverse and independent PBS station."

America: Freedom to Fascism, 9/11: Press for Truth and *9/11: Blueprint for Truth* ran as pledge programming the weekend of Aug. 15 and had other airings as early as May. Staffing the phones last month were volunteers who adhered to the programs' assertions that the federal government intentionally allowed the terrorist attacks that brought down the World Trade Center in 2001 and has covered up the deed ever since.

The programs prompted a viewer complaint to the *Denver Post*. Columnist Joanne Ostrow noted in her blog Aug. 21: "I'm with the viewer who cancelled his KBDI membership and wrote, 'What's next on the KBDI hit list, films about President Obama being a citizen of Kenya or about how health-care reform wants to kill your grandmother?'"

Simmons explained to *Current* that KBDI "wanted to present the other side of the story told by mainstream media, that hasn't received coverage." Viewer reaction has run about 4-to-1 in favor of airing the films, she added, with more than 250 blog comments since May.

The station often uses volunteers interested in the specific pledge programs, Simmons said—for example, environmentalists answering phones during a rainforest doc. She said the August pledge drive was one of the station's most successful this year and the films will be repeated during a mini-pledge Sept. 19-20.

The Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth website praised KBDI Membership Director Shari Bernson, who chose the docs, for the "gutsy" selection.

Classifieds

Continued from previous page

cruiting, Training & Diversity at sfetterman@tpt.org or call 651-229-1438.

Director of Content KNME-TV, Albuquerque, NM

KNME TV, the Public Broadcasting station for Albuquerque/Santa Fe, serving northern and central New Mexico, has a full-time opening for Director of Content. The Content Director is a senior staff position at KNME and directs all broadcast operations, rights management, content distribution and development of local content on four broadcast channels, one cable channel, and all new and emerging media platforms. Manages the creation, acquisition and formatting of content. Directs planning and implementation of linear program schedules and the traffic system that translates those schedules for on-air programming. Oversees the development and production of local content; works directly with KNME development staff to secure local production funding. The Content Director is responsible for digital asset management (content archives). Maintains an organizational structure and staffing to effectively accomplish the organization's goals and objectives; oversees recruitment, training, supervision and evaluation of unit staff; develops annual operating budget and provides fiscal direction to the unit. Oversees station marketing and communications department. Ensures all units are in constant communication with the constituencies they serve in order to provide superior service. Please apply online at <http://unmJobs.unm.edu> under "staff positions."

Engineering/Technology

Director of Engineering and IT WHUT-TV, Washington, DC

WHUT-TV, Washington, DC is looking to hire a Director of Engineering and IT, salary commensurate with qualifications. The purpose of this position is to provide the guidance and management of the Engineering and IT department of the station. You must submit an official Howard University appli-

cation for employment by the closing date. Resumes are accepted as a supplement to the official application which is available at: www.hr.howard.edu/employment/forms.htm. For more information, please visit this website: www.hr.howard.edu/employment/careers.htm.

Marketing/Development

Director of Marketing Native American Public Telecommunications, Lincoln, NE

Native American Public Telecommunications is looking to hire a Director of Marketing to develop, implement and evaluate marketing plans and strategies for Native NAPT products and services. Plan and manage marketing budgets and campaigns. Oversee the design and publication of all promotional materials. Develop and implement market analysis strategies. Assist with fundraising strategies. Bachelor's degree in marketing, advertising, communications, business or related field plus 2 years' marketing or related experience in industry or business required; equivalent education/experience considered. Internet marketing necessary. Marketing campaign management essential. Must have excellent writing skills. Prefer knowledge of Native American cultures and fundraising. Position is grant-funded. Excellent benefits, including staff/dependent scholarship program. Criminal history background check conducted. Review of resumes will begin Sept. 21. View requisition 090463 at <https://employment.unl.edu> for additional details and to apply. UNL is committed to a pluralistic campus community through affirmative action, equal opportunity, work-life balance and dual careers.

Dir. of Development & Major Gifts WFCR-FM, Amherst, MA

WFCR-FM, public radio for western New England, licensed to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, seeks a Director of Development & Major Gifts to lead the fundraising efforts of one of the nation's most successful mid-market public radio stations. The WFCR Director of Development is responsible for the development efforts that raise over \$3.1 million in annual support from individuals and businesses through personal solicitations, direct mail, telemarketing,

PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY RADIO

BROADCAST SERIES 2009-2010

"...makes my Sundays around the house a better place..."

"...makes my day at the workplace more pleasant..."

"...reminds me there are good things in the world..."

Actual comments from listeners of Pittsburgh Symphony Radio.



CLASSICALLY
AUSTIN 89.5

Classical 89.5, KMFA
Austin, TX

Director of Individual Giving and Philanthropy