

# **strategy advocacy and innovation for public radio**

**STATION RESOURCE GROUP  
2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF  
ACTIVITIES**

**STATION RESOURCE GROUP | 301.270.2617 | [www.srg.org](http://www.srg.org)  
6935 Laurel Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912**

**PRX: PUBLIC RADIO EXCHANGE | 617.576.5455 | [www.prx.org](http://www.prx.org)  
50 Church Street, Suite 3, Cambridge, MA 02138**

**SRG – STATION  
RESOURCE  
GROUP**

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**2008**

**STRATEGIC  
VISION**

The Station Resource Group is an alliance of leading public radio organizations across America. SRG members are emerging as significant community institutions through the strength and character of the content they create and present, their evolution toward multiple services and technologies, and their active engagement with those they serve.

**LOCAL  
SIGNIFICANCE**

SRG members aggregate funds in pursuit of insight, inspiration, and sustainable public service strategies, to assure a strong station voice in the evolving design of the national public radio system, and to foster operational excellence and innovative initiatives that improve their individual and collective efforts. Stations join SRG because the organization helps strengthen their significance and effectiveness in their own communities. They invest in SRG because it advances public radio's service to the nation.

**CONSTRUCTIVE  
INFLUENCE**

**OPERATIONAL  
EXCELLENCE**

**KNOWLEDGE  
AND INSIGHT**

**INNOVATIVE  
INITIATIVES**

In 2008 we focused our thinking and work on three large and critical themes. This report opens with a reflection on these themes, and then turns to activities in our key strategic areas.

**Strengthening stations' core broadcast services.**

Public radio generally and SRG members in particular have continuing unrealized opportunities to achieve higher levels of service, capture greater financial support, and attain greater importance in their communities through more effective and competitive work in core broadcast operations. *Grow the Audience*, a broad-based planning effort to widen the use and deepen the value of public radio is the most important venue in which we are exploring these opportunities. But the notion extends to most every area of our work – policy and funding discussions with CPB, station consultations, efforts to protect and enlarge broadcast spectrum at the FCC, and interviews with the trade and general press.

This is a crucial organizing principle for SRG activities, one that is not necessarily shared throughout the field. An example of another perspective was the “base case” for the future presented by NPR at its members’ meeting in March 2008 – one of flat or declining broadcast audiences, flat station-based revenue, and public radio growth centered on NPR content creation, centralized digital delivery, and national sponsorship revenue. Our challenge has been to move thinking and action in the broadcast arena beyond static or defensive postures toward fresh views and a willingness to act.

### **Embracing new channels and platforms.**

We still feel at some distance from being able to articulate and pursue a compelling and sustainable station-based digital strategy. Performance metrics for most SRG members indicate very modest traction online. Revenues from digital activities are scant. The distinctive service visions for public media have yet to emerge. But we are getting closer.

A central task for SRG has been to insert stations firmly into the ever-evolving digital public media conversation.

We consistently and vigorously assert the enormous opportunities that community-connected, audience-focused, operationally-secure station organizations can bring to an emerging digital public media enterprise in which much of the focus has been on geography-free, producer-centric start-ups. We have been actively pushing back against the tendency of networks, policymakers, funders, and media activists to look past stations as they envision the digital public media future.

At the same time, we have been working to bring station leaders into the tough work of planning, experimentation, evaluation, and fundraising for their own digital future – not at the margins of their work but as a central element of their service and organizational plan.

An effective and sustainable digital strategy is essential for our member organizations' future. Progress on this front has been difficult to achieve, but we believe it is critical as a continuing core SRG theme. PRX has provided SRG with a concrete, visible vehicle and natural pathway for our inclusion in digital future discussions. We will build on that visibility and standing as we move forward.

**A meaningful commitment to diversity.**

The pace of demographic change in America, especially on the dimensions of race and ethnicity, is accelerating. Public radio does not have a coherent response. Over the past year we have worked to surface this issue in an organized and disciplined way.

*Growing the Audience* gave us an opportunity to document the current performance of public radio in serving African American and Latino listeners across different formats. Conversations about next generation leadership for the field with CPB opened the conversation in a different framework. Our work at PRX with Generation PRX, the Public Radio Talent Quest, and content development is yet another angle.

Our aim in raising the issues of diversity has been to foster a frank and forward-looking conversation that is grounded in the realities of current service, shaped by the discipline of what we know about success in public media, and bold and expansive in long-term goals.

Our aim across all three of these areas is to be at once visionary and pragmatic, to push ourselves and others to the highest aspirations while giving steady, close attention to fact-based assessments of current performance and the plain hard work of doing better.

– Tom Thomas and Terry Clifford

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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- Wayne Roth, *Chair*  
KUOW, Seattle
  
- Kathleen Pavelko, *Vice-Chair*  
WITF, Harrisburg
  
- Roger LaMay  
WXPB, Philadelphia
  
- Torey Malatia  
Chicago Public Radio  
(Through August 18, 2008)
  
- Joan Siefert Rose  
North Carolina Public Radio:  
WUNC  
(Through June 19, 2008)
  
- JoAnne Wallace  
KQED, San Francisco
  
- Laura Walker  
WNYC, New York City  
(Elected August 11, 2008)
  
- Bill Davis  
Southern California Public Radio, Los Angeles  
(Elected November 12, 2008)

**FUNDERS**

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- Corporation for Public Broadcasting
  
- Ford Foundation
  
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
  
- Surdna Foundation
  
- Google, Inc.

**STAFF**

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- Tom. Thomas  
co-CEO
  
- Terry Clifford  
co-CEO
  
- Kerri Hoffman  
Business Manager &  
PRX Associate Director
  
- PUBLIC RADIO EXCHANGE  
Jake Shapiro  
Executive Director
  
- John Barth  
Managing Director
  
- Matt MacDonald  
Technical Projects Director
  
- Andrew Kukiewicz  
Technical Director
  
- Robert DeBenedictis  
Systems Administrator
  
- Rekha Murthy  
Director of Projects and  
Partnerships
  
- Jones Franzel  
Generation PRX Coordinator
  
- Genevieve Sponsler  
Administrative Associate
  
- Emily Corwin  
Administrative Associate

**HELPING  
STATIONS CRAFT  
INNOVATIVE  
PUBLIC MEDIA  
STRATEGIES TO  
SERVE THEIR  
COMMUNITIES**

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*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.*

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**Grow the Audience  
Research Director**

George Bailey  
Walrus Research

**Grow the Audience** is a system-wide planning project, led by SRG, to design a broad public service strategy and a results-oriented implementation plan to increase listening to public radio. Launched in April, it was SRG's most ambitious special initiative in 2008. The project has included original research and analysis, consultations with networks, national organizations, stations, and producers, and coordination of several dozen individuals who are advising the project, writing essays, and participating in working groups. We have involved SRG managers, board members, and senior staff in leadership roles throughout the effort. As part of *Grow the Audience* SRG

- Published four major research reports, *Situation Analysis*, *Listening by Black and Hispanic College Graduates*, *The Performance of NPR News Stations*, and *The Performance of Classical Music Stations*.
- Presented findings and led discussions at the DEI and PRPD national conferences and SRG's annual planning retreat.
- Assembled two meetings with a distinguished Task Force of national and station leaders that has framed the broad questions of the inquiry and shaped final recommendations.
- Met individually with the board or senior executives of most of the national networks and organizations in the field to discuss the roles in audience growth of their respective organizations.
- Created project web pages with reports, resources, and commentary.

In the development area, we published ***Individual Giving to Public Radio: Analysis, Theory, Proven Practices and Good Ideas to Raise More Money***. The report presented analysis of trends and issues in public radio's individual giving programs, together with recommendations from leading development advisers throughout the field.

**SHAPING  
NATIONAL  
POLICIES AND  
STRUCTURES TO  
ADVANCE AND  
PROTECT A  
GROWING PUBLIC  
RADIO SYSTEM**

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*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.*

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**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, the Radio office, and key staff in other areas of the Corporation. We participated in several formal consultations on key policy and funding issues, including:

- Guidelines for CPB’s digital investments – transmission conversion in public television and radio, emerging investments in digital content and services, and launch of a pilot phase for “The American Archive.”
- Community Service Grant eligibility questions that arise as stations add multi-channel capacities and open the possibility of offering both public service and other content simultaneously.
- Leadership development needs as the character and scope of public broadcasting evolves.

We worked closely with CPB on the development of their second National Leadership Conference, held in March, 2008. SRG helped plan the agenda and led sessions, (featuring staff and board members from three SRG members) on the strategic imperatives, resource allocation, and the organizational structure necessary for developing new platforms and services in the digital age.

CPB also invited SRG to participate in their 2008 board of directors’ retreat, which was largely devoted to exploring CPB’s possible roles in digital media.

When **the FCC** issued several “localism proposals” SRG saw it as inside-the-FCC political quid pro quo for media consolidation, with unfortunate potential for collateral damage to public radio in the form of significant costs, duplicative and sometimes conflicting

**POLICIES AND  
STRUCTURES FOR  
A GROWING  
PUBLIC RADIO  
SYSTEM**

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requirements to those already imposed by Congress and CPB, and threats to the sustainability of stations in remote, less populated areas. The FCC's initial timetable called for an extraordinarily rapid adoption of these proposals. SRG helped lead a successful effort by both commercial and noncommercial broadcasters to adopt a reasonable timetable and helped organize several in-person meetings between public radio and Commissioners and their staff. The rulemaking is ongoing.

**SRG supported continuing activities of the Public Radio Arbitron Team throughout the year.** At the close of 2007 the Public Radio Arbitron Team, the RRC, and Arbitron had agreed in principle to an agreement that would achieve public radio's goals of an umbrella contract, realistic pricing, and respondent-level data. Translating the agreement into a contract took several more months. Assuring that software was in place to deliver respondent-level extended to October. It was only then that the Public Radio Arbitron Team could finally claim accomplishment of its goals for a new public radio contract.

Looking beyond the contract now in place, the Public Radio Arbitron Team recommended that public radio pursue a seat on Arbitron's Radio Advisory Council. SRG made a formal request for such representation in October and were joined in our efforts by PRPD and DEI. The request was under consideration at year's end.

The Arbitron Team's final recommendations were to maintain the Team as a standing group, available for action as needed and for SRG to coordinate this transition. In the meantime, the SRG's board named Tim Roesler of Minnesota Public Radio|American Public Media as SRG's representative on the Public Radio Arbitron Team.

**POLICIES AND  
STRUCTURES FOR  
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Throughout 2008, SRG worked with CPB and NPR in ongoing **negotiations with Sound Exchange to establish a public radio rate and other arrangements for webcasting copyright royalties** that would satisfy all station obligations through a single payment from CPB – work begun in mid-2007. These complex negotiations were still in progress at the end of 2008, although clearly at an end stage

## PRX – THE PUBLIC RADIO EXCHANGE

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*Bringing new and compelling programs from a wide array of producers to a significant audience.*

*Helping public radio stations enrich their service to their communities and share each others' work in innovative ways.*

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### Co-Founder and Creative Counsel

Jay Allison  
Atlantic Public Media

PRX – The Public Radio Exchange is an online marketplace for distribution, review, and licensing of public radio programming. PRX is also a growing social network and community of listeners, producers, and stations collaborating to reshape public radio.

At the end of 2008, SRG completed over seven years of development and stewardship of PRX, moving activities to a new, independent non-profit organization. PRX leaves SRG as a strong and vital service and a catalyst for innovation and change within public radio. Since its launch:

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- Public radio stations have downloaded over 28,000 radio pieces for broadcast to millions of listeners.
- We have distributed over \$800,000 in payments to over 1,000 content providers.
- Stations and producers have uploaded over 24,000 pieces to PRX – creating the largest catalog of public radio programs available on-demand for broadcast and digital use.
- The PRX Editorial Board and listeners have written over 7,600 reviews of pieces on PRX – the largest collection of critical writing about public radio work in existence.
- 51,000 users are registered on PRX – station staff, independent producers, other public broadcasting professionals, and listeners.
- Generation PRX – a project for youth media – has become a key resource and distributor for broadcast and digital channels for over 50 youth radio groups.
- PRX pioneered in podcasting, creating custom tools for stations and offering curated “feeds” of pieces from PRX’s catalog through iTunes and other sites.

## PRX – THE PUBLIC RADIO EXCHANGE

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*Extending over time the use and value of unique, high quality programming through a highly accessible and searchable archive.*

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- PRX has attracted over \$6.5 million in grants, contracts, gifts, and direct revenue, including significant support from an “A list” of funders.
- PRX has become a leader in industry discussions and forums, helping define and advocate for a new public media model that leverages the social and network effects of the Internet and digital media.
- For these accomplishments and more, PRX received the 2008 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, the “genius award” for organizations awarded to a select group of nonprofits worldwide each year.

### **Innovation for public media**

At a time of rapid and fundamental change at the intersection of media and technology, PRX has grown as a nimble, entrepreneurial team, harnessing cutting-edge ideas and tools and putting them to immediate use in the public media field.

PRX has been ahead of the curve in focusing on key concepts that have now become priorities for emerging models across broadcast and digital media industries:

- *The Long Tail*: PRX recognized that there is tremendous value in efficiently aggregating and distributing a large content catalog through digital access.
- *Trusted filters and recommendation*: PRX created a tiered review system that employs professional reviewers on an Editorial Board, open comment and rating by users, and recommendations that draw on these reviews and correlate usage data.
- *Search*: PRX created a custom search engine that mines producer-contributed metadata to find relevant pieces for station and reviewer queries.

## PRX – THE PUBLIC RADIO EXCHANGE

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*Leveraging the values and program assets of public radio into the unfolding platforms and channels of emergent digital public media.*

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- *Social network:* PRX added a social dimension to the PRX service as a way of building trust and an architecture of participation that enables new connections and networks to form. Each user gets a public member profile, can contact other members, and can search and browse the membership directory in addition to pieces and reviews.

Our early attention to these features helped put PRX at the forefront of media and technology development not only within the public radio system but in the broader “web 2.0” movement.

PRX’s core technology asset is the web application and related systems that are integral to its distribution, review and networking services. In 2008 PRX developed and launched version 3.0 of this custom software. This version moves to a new, more flexible open source code base, incorporates many upgrades to the site’s functionality, and supports changes to the PRX station/producer economy in licensing and payments.

PRX has also been a vehicle to advance a broader public radio digital strategy. In January, PRX, Public Radio Capital, and NPR made presentations to the Ford Foundation’s board of directors on important trends in public media. In the following months SRG and PRX staff took visible roles in a series of conferences and meetings on the juncture of public radio and digital public media.

### **Election Audio Curator**

Nathan Lane

### **BallotVox Curator**

Katherine Bidwell

In conjunction with public broadcasting’s Election Project collaborative managed by NPR, PRX aggregated content from stations, independent producers, and new sources outside public broadcasting into an election archive, gathered content from citizen journalists, podcasters, nonprofits, minority and international sources; and curated user-generated content produced across the Internet.

**PRX – THE PUBLIC  
RADIO EXCHANGE**

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We have organized the just-getting-started project to develop public radio iPhone applications, in which PRX is taking the lead, to maximize collaborative capacities with NPR, PRI, and APM and to realize efficiencies that come from shared standards.

**Launching the next phase.**

On December 31 Public Radio Exchange activities moved to PRX, Inc., a Massachusetts-based nonprofit created by SRG in anticipation of this move.

The “new PRX” is governed by a station-experienced board chaired by Laurie Ahern, former chair of Seattle’s Puget Sound Public Radio. Other board members include Henry Becton, former President of WGBH, Boston, Torey Malatia, President of Chicago Public Radio, and Ashton Peery, who has served as a General Partner of Lucent Venture Partners and as the Chief Strategy Officer and corporate head of Business Development for Lucent Technologies. PRX Executive Director Jake Shapiro is also a member of the board.

PRX leaves SRG with its talented staff intact, a healthy cash reserve in the bank, and a budget plan for 2009 in which most of the needed revenue is already committed or identified.

**EMPOWERING  
LEADERSHIP FOR  
STRONGER  
STATIONS**

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

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SRG's 2008 **Annual Planning Retreat** in Sedona, Arizona, attracted a high level of member participation and several guests from national organizations. One long-time member wrote:

“A terrific retreat – smartly planned, articulately presented, and smoothly executed, all in a spectacular locale. The SRG retreat remains the one public radio gathering that feeds the mind and recharges the spirit, far from the daily distractions and discouragements, reminding us all what is possible.”

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 2008 were KUOW, KWMU, WITF, North Carolina Public Radio WUNC, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Radio Bilingüe, WGBH, and WNYC.

SRG has always been generous in its **support of other national organizations in public broadcasting**. We seek to strengthen the capacities of organizations that include a substantial number of SRG members or that are especially important to members' work. Our assistance is most often on a *pro bono* basis and this year included:

- Advising the Association of Independents in Radio (AIR) as the organization refocused its work following a leadership change.
- Thinking through plans with Public Radio Capital as it updated its strategic plan and launched the Public Radio Fund.
- Advising the integrated Media Association as it reviewed and revised its structural arrangements,

**EMPOWERING  
LEADERSHIP FOR  
STRONGER  
STATIONS**

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Helping the Public Radio News Directors (PRNDI) with *Telling Our Story*, a project to showcase top performing news efforts at public radio stations on the PRNDI web site.

- Working with NFCB to get non-CPB-supported community radio stations covered by the webcasting copyright royalty contract for public radio.

We began work on a project to **update public broadcasting's editorial integrity principles, policies, and practices**. Working with public television's Affinity group Coalition we have developed a framework and proposal for the project, identified a Steering Committee of station leaders, and started the work of indentifying funds to support small group discussions, research, and a national conference.

## WORKING TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

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*SRG is an influential and highly-regarded leadership organization within public radio, 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.*

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### Strategic Planning

Quentin Hope  
Great Plains Strategies

### Audit

Halt, Buzas & Powell

SRG's primary focus is on the strength of its members and the quality of the services they offer to their communities. But we also give close attention to the ways in which we do our own work and how we build and manage SRG itself

We began a round of planning for SRG that will update our strategic focus and define key activities for 2009 and beyond. A survey of SRG members highlighted activities stations most value and priorities for future work. A board retreat in May identified major themes for SRG to pursue and refined plans for PRX's transition to independent operation. The Annual Planning Retreat sharpened the sense of member priorities.

The SRG bylaws received a thorough review at mid-year, followed by several amendments to bring organizational procedures firmly into the electronic age and sharpen procedures of the board of directors.

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

SRG's open website at [www.srg.org](http://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 MEMBERS**

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*SRG's members operate over 220 stations.*

*They reach a weekly audience estimated at some 9 million listeners through their own stations – and millions more through national distribution of programs they produce.*

*They invest over \$340 million a year in their services, about 40% of all public radio station dollars.*

*They produce the majority of public radio's national programming and provide homes for some of the field's most distinctive talents.*

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**CHICAGO PUBLIC RADIO**  
WBEZ Alliance  
Chicago, IL

**COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO**  
Denver, CO

**CONNECTICUT PUBLIC RADIO**  
Connecticut Public Broadcasting  
Hartford, CT

**IOWA PUBLIC RADIO**  
Des Moines, IA

**KOAHNIC BROADCASTING**  
Anchorage, AK

**KERA**  
North Texas Public Broadcasting  
Dallas, TX

**KJZZ/KBAQ**  
Maricopa Community College  
Phoenix, AZ

**KPBS**  
San Diego State University  
San Diego, CA

**KQED**  
Northern California Public  
Broadcasting  
San Francisco, CA

**KUOW**  
University of Washington/Puget  
Sound Public Radio  
Seattle, WA

**KUSC**  
University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, CA

**KUT**  
University of Texas  
Austin, TX

**KWMU**  
University of Missouri  
St. Louis, MO

**LOUISVILLE PUBLIC MEDIA**  
Louisville Free Public Library  
& University of Louisville  
Louisville, KY

**MICHIGAN RADIO**  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI

**MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO**  
St. Paul, MN

**NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC RADIO**  
Concord, NH

**NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC RADIO - WUNC**  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, NC

**NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC RADIO**  
Fargo, ND

**NORTHERN PUBLIC RADIO**  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL

**OREGON PUBLIC BROADCASTING**  
Portland, OR

**RADIO BILINGÜE**  
Fresno, CA

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RADIO**  
Pasadena, CA

**VERMONT PUBLIC RADIO**  
Colchester, VT

**WBUR**  
Boston University  
Boston, MA

**WGBH**  
WGBH Educational Foundation  
Boston, MA

**WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO**  
University of Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Educational Communications  
Board  
Madison, WI

**WITF**  
WITF, Inc.  
Harrisburg, PA

**WLRN**  
School Board of Miami/Dade County  
Miami, FL

**WNED**  
Western New York  
Public Broadcasting  
Buffalo, NY

**WNYC Radio**  
New York, NY

**SRG MEMBERS**

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**WOSU PUBLIC MEDIA**  
Ohio State University  
Columbus, OH

**WPSU**  
Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA

**WRTI**  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, PA

**WTMD**  
Towson University  
Towson, MD

**WUWM**  
University of Wisconsin System  
Milwaukee, WI

**WXPB**  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA