



Society of Broadcast Engineers

July 2003

Wisconsin's Amber Alert System Launched

By Fred Sperry

On April 30th of this year, Wisconsin's Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager held a press conference in Madison to present Wisconsin's child abduction alert program known as the Amber Alert system to the media and the public. The system presented is one that will likely be a model other states will consider following. Most will never know all the work and planning that went into this project — or the details behind what makes the system work.

Background

Early in 2002, State EAS Coordinator Gary Timm and John Laabs, the president of the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association (WBA), began discussions with Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) and the Educational Communications Board (ECB) about the possibility of using their network of stations as the EAS backbone for the Amber Alert system. Nine of the WPR/ECB stations throughout the state, along with WXPR in Rhinelander, already comprised the EAS state relay stations (SR) for statewide emergencies (a plan that was developed when EAS started). Early in 2002 the ECB was also in the process of finalizing plans for a digital broadcast delivery system to replace the microwave system that delivers signals to WPR and Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) stations throughout the state. The additional capacity available with the new digital interconnect would allow for a dedicated audio channel to be used to feed Amber EAS Alerts to the WPR SR stations from Madison.

By spring of 2002, Gary and John began to lead planning meetings to start the Amber Alert implementation process. Some states with Amber Alert plans have run into problems when all the players needed to make the system work were not involved in the initial planning process, so the plan never quite works as intended. Part of what makes the Wisconsin plan a success was the

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Next Meeting:

**Tuesday,
July 15, 2003**

**Taste of NAB
Road Show**

**Pizza & Soda
at 5:30 PM**

**Meeting and
Program
at 7:00 PM**

**at WISC-TV
Studio C
7025 Raymond Road**

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A "Double" Taste of NAB 2003 Road Show

Compiled By Steve Paugh

Larry Bloomfield, Chairman of the "Order of the Iron Test Pattern" fame and regular contributor to Broadcast Engineering magazine is touring the country with a presentation of 2003 NAB equipment and technical highlights. Chapter 24 is stop 24 of 36 venues scattered from coast-to-coast. The evening program for our July meeting will be entertaining and informative.

The Road Show sponsors have donated door prizes that will be drawn at each event and each attendee can

enter for several major door prizes that will be awarded at the conclusion of the tour, which wraps-up in Oregon at the end of August. You can learn more about the Taste of NAB road show and the major door prizes at <http://www.tech-notes.tv>.

As an additional inducement, local vendor reps Don Heinzen of Belden Wire & Cable and Pat Keller of Graybar will pick up the tab for the pre-meeting dinner! We thank them for their generosity in providing Chapter 24 with an additional "Taste" of NAB!

Here are a few words from Larry

himself on why he is making this program available to engineers nationwide:

"Tech-Notes has put together this Taste of NAB "road show" in an effort to afford those who couldn't make it to Las Vegas an opportunity to see and hear some of those services and products that were there in their own backyard. The response to this idea, to date, has been very positive. If the engineers can't make it to NAB, then the products and services at NAB should go to them! Obviously we'll not take the place of NAB, but we can bring a part of it with

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June Business Meeting Minutes

Chapter 24 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers met on Tuesday, June 17, 2003 at the Badger Prairie Park in Verona, Wisconsin for the chapter's monthly meeting. There were 14 members in attendance, 12 of whom were certified and 11 guests.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Chapter Chair Vicki Kipp. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published in the June issue of the newsletter.

Newsletter editor Mike Norton announced the deadline for articles for the July issue will be midnight, Friday, July 4th. The folding party will be held Wednesday, July 9th at 5:30 PM at WKOW-TV. Treasurer Stan Sarch reported that the chapter bank account was in the black.

Program Committee Chair Steve Paugh reported that the next meeting will be a Taste of NAB by Larry Bloomfield on July 17th at the studios of WISC. Food will be provided.

The membership chair Paul Stoffel reported that the chapter has a lot of nice members. Sustaining membership chair Fred Sperry reported there are 24 sustaining members. Recent renewals were Roscor and Sony.

There were no reports on certification, special events, or national news. Frequency Coordinator Tom Smith had nothing to report. There was no old business.

In new business, Chapter Chair Vicki Kipp reported on a number of nominations for SBE National Awards. They are:

- Best Regional Convention or Conference – Madison Broadcasters Clinic for 2002
- Best Chapter Frequency Coordination Effort – Tom Smith, Frequency Coordinator
- Best Chapter Newsletter – Chapter 24 Monthly Newsletter, Mike Norton, Editor
- Best Chapter Website – www.sbe24.org, Leonard Charles, Webmaster
- Best Technical Article, Book, or Program by an SBE Member –

The Secret Life of Timecode by Steve Paugh

Overseas Broadcast Adventures by Kurt Miller

NHL in HD by Andy Rothschild

Salt Lake City 2002: From Outside the Outside Fence
by Neal McLain

Wisconsin Amber Alert by Leonard Charles

EAS Rules Amended by Leonard Charles

AM IBOC Endorsed for Daytime Use by Mike Norton

Chair Kipp also reported that she had to withdraw the nomination of the Broadcast Interconnect by ECB for the Best Technology Award, as it was ineligible according to the criteria. The Best Technology Award is intended for a National Sustaining

(continued on next page)

SBE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ATTAINS HIGH RECOGNITION

By John L. Poray, CAE
SBE Executive Director

The certification program of the Society of Broadcast Engineers has been recognized by the National Skills Standards Board (NSSB). The U.S. Congress established NSSB in response to the explosion in the number of industry certifications in the marketplace. Individuals, employers, and policymakers are faced with the enormous task of identifying quality certifications that meet the needs of today's dynamic workplace.

NSSB Certification Recognition was designed to help users of certifications by identifying those that meet high professional and technical standards for quality assurance. To receive recognition, a certification must undergo a comprehensive review to ensure that it meets specific quality requirements.

The Society of Broadcast Engineers Program of Certification began in 1975 as an industry response to the reduction in FCC operator licensing. Since then,

the program has grown to include a group of sequential certifications that cover traditional broadcast engineering skills and knowledge, as well as certifications for television operators, radio operators and broadcast computer networking technologists.

While the broadcast industry has long accepted SBE Certification as a valid mark of an individual's skill, the SBE National Certification Committee has sought approvals from outside the broadcast industry to further the program's existing reputation.

On June 10, 2003, the NSSB granted its recognition of the following SBE certification levels:

- Certified Broadcast Technologist (CBT)
- Certified Broadcast Engineer (CBRE/CBTE)
- Certified Senior Broadcast Engineer (CSRE/CSTE)
- Certified Professional Broadcast Engineer (CPBE)
- Certified Broadcast Networking Technologist (CBNT)

- Certified Audio Engineer (CEA)
- Certified Video Engineer (CEV)
- Certified Television Operator (CTO)

"This achievement marks a significant peak for the Program of Certification," said Chriss Scherer, CSRE CBNT, chairman of the SBE National Certification Committee. "The SBE Certification Committee members-current and past members alike-devote a great deal of time and effort to the Program of Certification. This honor strengthens our belief in our own efforts and takes SBE Certification to a higher standard of excellence."

Troy Pennington, CPBE CBNT, president of the SBE added, "I'm pleased that the SBE Certification Committee has pursued and obtained this important recognition for the various certification levels within the Program of Certification. We're proud of the significance that SBE certification holds in the broadcast industry, and this honor further proves the value and significance that SBE certification provides."

June Business Meeting Minutes (continued)

Member or individual SBE member.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

The program this month was the chapter's summer picnic. Entertainment was provided by Kevin Peckham and Kevin Ruppert of *Trailing Edge Productions*.

Submitted by Jim Magee, Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Technology-based fields change rapidly, so you need to say ahead. There are some future broadcast conferences which offer educational opportunities for broadcast engineers.

To find out more about the scheduled sessions, visit the listed web site.

Broadcasters Clinic

Date: October 14, 15, and 16
Location: Madison Marriott West, Middleton, WI
Contact: Wisconsin Broadcasters

Association at (608) 255-2600
Registration: For more info go to <http://www.wi-broadcasters.org>

Iowa DTV Symposium

Date: October 28, 29, and 30
Location: Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines, IA
Contact: Karen Schaeffer
karen.schaeffer@iptv.org (515) 242-4139
Registration: Admission is free
Register online at www.iowadtv.iptv.org



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Amber Alert System Launched (continued from page 1)

inclusion of representatives from broadcast, law enforcement, emergency management, and the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) at these meetings right from the start.

There were other components of the Wisconsin Amber Alert planning that helped in its success. For example, Gary and John had already talked to broadcasters in other states where there were Amber Alert programs in place to learn from their experiences. The Victim Services Specialist from Wisconsin DOJ, Susan Whitehorse, had also made numerous contacts with her counterparts in other states to discover what they had learned. In addition, many of those in attendance at the planning meetings were individuals from law enforcement, emergency management, and broadcast from areas of Wisconsin that were already operating an Amber Alert plan at a local level. They were able to shed light on creating a plan based on their experiences.

From the information gathered, two important pieces of criteria were agreed upon by everyone up front. One was that there needed to be one point of contact for all alerts to go through. Second, it was critical that the system did not get over-used and lead to the possibility the plan could lose credibility with the public. In order to prevent against this, DOJ worked with the group to develop a stringent set of criteria as to what constitutes an Amber Alert. Gary worked with the ECB and WPR to work out the technical details that would allow for a regionalized system within the state. The group agreed it was important to only alert the public in the area of the abduction. It wasn't necessary for those living in Superior to be alerted to a child abduction in Milwaukee.

How the System Works

In the unfortunate event a child abduction takes place and is witnessed, the following events get put into action once the local authorities have been notified. Local law enforcement will gather the necessary information from witnesses regarding the abduction, such as a description of the child, suspect, and/or the suspect's vehicle. The initiating law enforcement agency then contacts the Dane County Public Safety Communication Center (DCPSCC) in Madison to request an Amber Alert activation. The DCPSCC supervisor on-duty will then verify the Amber Alert criteria with the reporting/initiating agency. In order for an Amber Alert to be initiated, it must meet the following criteria:

- Child must be 17 years of age or younger;
- Child must be in danger of serious bodily harm or death;
- Initiating agency must have enough descriptive information about the child, the suspect(s), and/or the suspect vehicle(s) to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help locate the child.

If an Amber Alert is approved for activation, the on-duty supervisor at DCPSCC will create an EAS Amber Alert coded with the Civil Authority (CIV) originator code and the Child Abduction Emergency event code (CAE), along with a voice announcement with known details regarding the abduction for the "Amber Area" of the state to be alerted (see Figure 1). More than one Amber Alert area may be included in the alert if authorities have reason to believe the suspect is traveling with the child towards another Amber Alert area of the state, or an abduction takes place

near the border of two adjacent Amber Alert regions.

Here is how the system is set-up to work from the technical end. The coded EAS Amber Alert message that has been created by the DCPSCC supervisor is sent via a radio link between DCPSCC and the ECB's Telecommunication Operations Center (TOC) in Madison. A phone coupler is also in place between these locations to serve as a back up to the RF link. The EAS coded message is received at the TOC and routed through an EAS unit at this location that is strictly dedicated to Amber Alerts. This EAS unit forwards all properly coded Amber Alert EAS messages from DCPSCC to all the state relay (SR) stations via a dedicated audio channel on the ECB's distribution network.

The EAS unit at each SR station receives all Amber Alerts and filters them as appropriate. If the alert is not for a given area, the EAS unit at that site will simply log the event but not relay it. If the alert is for a given area, the SR station airs the alert as soon as it is received. All stations in that Amber Alert area that are participating in Amber (participation by broadcasters is voluntary but encouraged) and are monitoring their assigned SR station will receive and broadcast the alert. The Amber Alert will broadcast every 30 minutes for the first two hours, then every hour for the next three hours. Each of these subsequent alerts will be initiated by DCPSCC, which will include any updated information regarding the abduction.

In addition to using the EAS broadcasts as a means to relaying

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Amber Alert System Launched (continued)

Amber Alert information, a fax service has been set-up to alert broadcasters, law enforcement, and others to any Amber Alerts. Highway signs will also be used to display alerts to the public. More information on these services and the Amber Alert plan in general can be found on the Amber Alert website at www.amberalertwisconsin.org.

Conclusion

Thankfully, since the Amber Alert system went on-line in Wisconsin it hasn't been used for an actual child abduction, but from a system-wide test that was conducted on May 28th of this year the system appears to be ready if it is needed. This system-wide test will

take place each year during the week of May 25th, which is National Missing Children's Day. In addition to this test, the link between the DCPSCC, the TOC, and the SR stations gets tested twice a month.

Even though the Wisconsin Amber Alert system is on-line and operational, work continues to extend the scope of the project. DOJ is working with neighboring states to set-up contacts and procedures to allow states to assist each other in the event of a child abduction. For example, should a child abduction take place in Minnesota and it is believed the suspect is travelling towards Wisconsin, authorities in Minnesota could request through DCPSCC in Madison that an Amber Alert be initiated in Western Wisconsin for this abduction.

Thanks to all those involved in the Wisconsin Amber Alert Committee, the broadcasters of Wisconsin, Wisconsin law enforcement, emergency management, the DOJ and many others, Wisconsin has an Amber Alert system it can be proud of.

Many people put a lot of work into making this system a reality; however, I would be remiss if I didn't make note of all the time and effort Gary Timm put in as a volunteer in the position of State EAS Coordinator to meet the final goal of this project. Despite the success of this project in the end, getting to this point wasn't without some hardships along the way. This system wouldn't have been possible without the commitment Gary had to this project.

*Sources: State of Wisconsin Amber Alert Plan; Wisconsin Amber Alert Website
www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org*

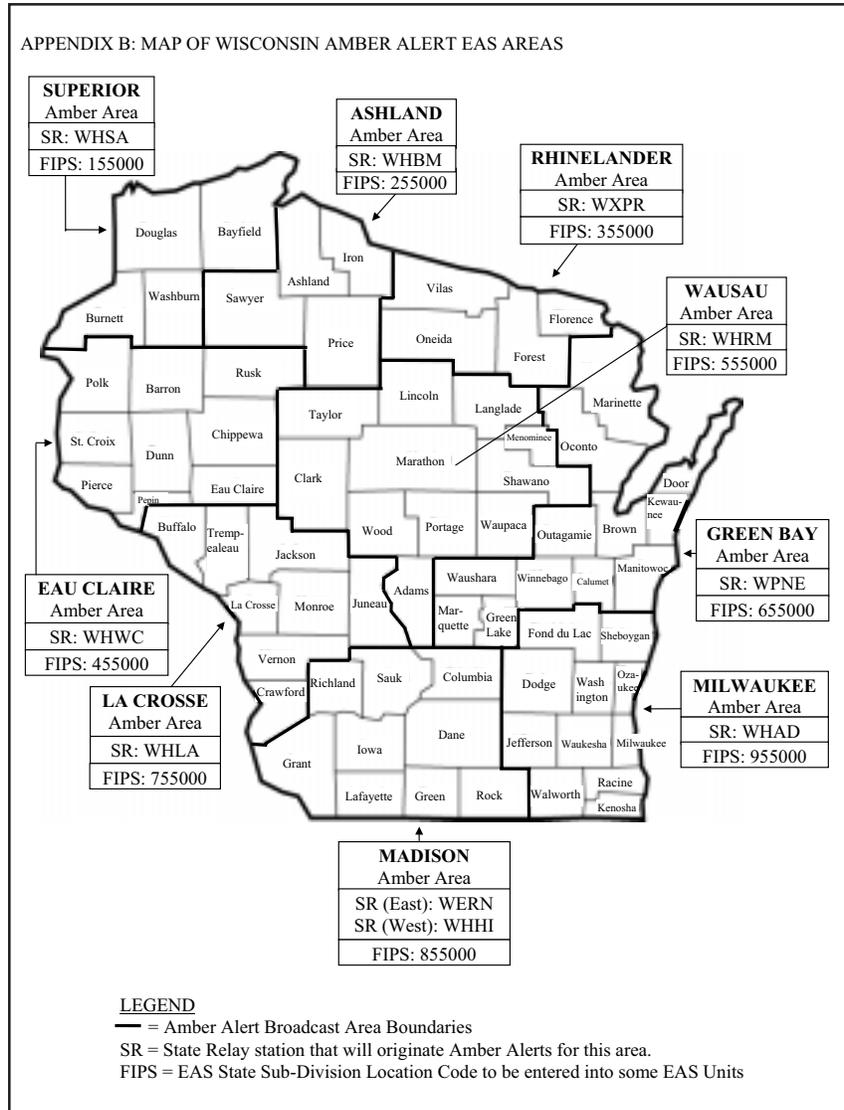


Figure 1. Alert Areas as listed in Appendix B of the Wisconsin Amber Alert Plan.

www.belden.com

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SBE Short Circuits – July 2003

**By John L. Poray, CAE
SBE Executive Director**

**SBE ADOPTS FIXED LINK
COORDINATION POLICY**

In response to recent rulings by the FCC, the Executive Committee of the Society of Broadcast Engineers on June 14, 2003 adopted a policy concerning the frequency coordination of fixed-link BAS facilities. All SBE volunteer frequency coordinators are asked to read and adhere to this new policy, which provides guidelines to coordinators and will help to minimize liability exposure. For more information, contact SBE Frequency Coordination Director, David Otey, CSTE, at dotey@sbe.org.

Volunteer Coordinators associated with SBE will be informed immediately, using all available information dissemination means, that:

1. As of October 16, 2003, or such later date that the FCC may subsequently specify, all new and modified fixed link BAS facilities, except those at 2 GHz, are subject to the Prior Coordination Notice (PCN) procedure set forth in Part 101 rules.

2. "Local Coordination" as SBE coordinators have practiced it until now, has not involved the PCN process, which is time consuming and substantially more complex, requiring, among other things, specialized software.

3. As the result of the foregoing, SBE suggests that local SBE coordinators assist broadcasters seeking new or modified fixed BAS facilities by referring them to a commercial microwave frequency coordination service provider. In so doing, SBE coordinators should not

recommend any particular coordinator, but rather should refer the broadcaster to a list of known commercial coordination service providers on the SBE web site.

4. If SBE coordinators wish to provide volunteer PCN services to broadcasters seeking new or modified BAS fixed facilities, they should provide to the broadcasters appropriate disclaimers so as to limit potential exposure to liability. Such disclaimers will be provided by SBE for coordinator use.

5. SBE coordinators should continue to coordinate all mobile, temporary fixed, itinerant and all 2 GHz BAS facilities, as they have done all along in their local markets. All event-related and temporary operation is subject to local coordination exclusively. No broadcasters involved in these events, or for mobile, temporary fixed, itinerant, or any 2 GHz facilities, should be referred to commercial microwave coordinators.

6. It is important for local SBE coordinators to continue their involvement with broadcasters (and licensees in other services which operate in shared BAS bands) as regards coordination in all BAS bands, as well as event-related or mobile, temporary fixed, itinerant or any 2 GHz operations. This will allow SBE coordinators to keep their databases current with new or modified fixed links, even if the SBE coordinator is not the one who coordinates those fixed links.

7. The SBE frequency coordination program derives its credibility, in part, from the fact that it is a volunteer program. Acceptance of payment for local coordination services potentially creates some measure of exposure to

liability, should interference occur following an act of coordination. Given these factors, SBE's policy that local coordinators shall not accept payment for coordination services is affirmed. SBE chapters are free to solicit donations to offset costs of administration of the coordination program. SBE will enter into agreements with event sponsors providing for reimbursement for local coordination efforts at and for that event, except in instances in which a broadcaster is the sponsor of an event or where broadcasters request the coordination services.

8. It is and has been SBE policy that local coordination consists of facilitation of licensee-to-licensee contact and database administration incidental to that core function. Interference analyses are not part of the traditional model of SBE frequency coordination. However, the increasing complexity of BAS spectrum occupancy dictates in certain instances a greater involvement by local SBE coordinators in interference analyses and operating parameter recommendations. SBE does not object to this function at the discretion of the local coordinator, subject to use of appropriate disclaimers and subject to the recognition of the voluntary nature of the local coordination process for Part 74, and broadcasters' participation in it.

CANDIDATES ANNOUNCED

The SBE Nominations Committee has announced candidates for the 2003-2004 national officers and directors of SBE. More information is available in the June issue of The SBE Signal. The slate of candidates is as follows:

(continued on next page)



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Thanks to WKOW-TV for providing copying and folding facilities for the Chapter 24 newsletter!



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Short Circuits (continued)

President – Raymond C. Benedict, CPBE, Washington, DC

Vice President – Samuel E. Garfield, CPBE, Raleigh, NC

Secretary – Ralph R. Hogan, CPBE, Pullman, WA

Treasurer – Robert “R.J.” Russell, CBTE, Yuma, AZ

The Nomi nations Committee has developed a slate of 12 candidates for the six available board seats. All candidates run on an at-large basis. The six candidates receiving the most votes will be elected. In alphabetical order, the candidates are:

- Ralph Beaver, CBT, Tampa, FL
- Paul T. Black, CSRE, Pleasant Hill, CA
- Dominic L. Bordonaro, CSRE, Stratford, CT
- Peter Boyce, CPBE, CBNT, New Albany, IN
- Andrea B. Cummis, CBT, Roseland, NJ
- Dane E. Ericksen, P.E., CSRTE, San Francisco, CA
- Clay Freinwald, CPBE, Seattle, WA
- Jeffrey R. Hugabone, CBRE, CBNT, Chicopee, MA
- David Hultsman, CSRE, Birmingham, AL
- Mark S. Olkowski, CPBE, New York, NY
- Henry B. Ruhwiedel, CPBE, Merrillville, IN
- Andrew D. Suk, CPBE, Nampa, ID

Taste of NAB (continued from page 1)

us. Our van isn't that big, but something is better than nothing. Our sponsors have promised that their local reps will be present in many of the venues to assist in answering questions. For those engineers who are able to make it to NAB this year, the trip will serve to be reinforcement of what they saw.

"Why me and Tech-Notes? Many engineers know me through Broadcast Engineering magazine over the past several years, and through other writing efforts such as the Tech-Notes. This will be a two way street: I'll also get the opportunity to meet and speak with many of my peers, to hear their stories and share some of NAB with them. "

– Larry Bloomfield

Thank you to the following individuals for everything they did to make the recent Chapter 24 Picnic a success:

Denise Maney and Steve Paugh for organizing the picnic, grilling the brats and burgers, and cleaning up the shelter afterward; Kevin Peckham and Kevin Ruppert from Trailing Edge Productions for providing entertainment; Kevin Peckham and Sony for donating contest prizes; and Leonard Charles for facilitating a Food Sign Up List on the Chapter 24 web site.

CHAPTER 24 SUSTAINING MEMBERS

RECENT RENEWALS:

- Ross Video
- Sony Broadcast
- Token Creek Productions

THANKS TO ALL OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS:

- Alpha Video
- Belden Wire and Cable
- Broadcast Richardson
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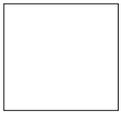
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Newsletter edited on Pagemaker 7.0 by: Mike Norton
Contributors this month: Jim Magee, Steve Paugh, John Poray, and Fred Sperry.
Thanks to Leonard Charles for his work on the Chapter 24 WWW page.

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JULY MEETING and PROGRAM



**Society of Broadcast Engineers
CHAPTER 24 MADISON, WISCONSIN
Tuesday, July 15, 2003**

THE "TASTE OF THE NAB" ROAD SHOW

If you didn't make it to NAB this past year, be sure to attend to catch a glimpse of some of the big show. The Road Show sponsors have donated door prizes that will be drawn at each event and each attendee can enter for several major door prizes that will be awarded at the conclusion of the tour, which wraps-up in Oregon at the end of August. You can learn more about the Taste of NAB road show and the major door prizes at <http://www.tech-notes.tv>.

As an additional inducement, local vendor reps Don Heinzen of Belden Wire & Cable and Pat Keller of Graybar will pick up the tab for the pre-meeting dinner! We thank them for their generosity.

**Pizza & Soda at 5:30pm
WISC-TV Studio C**

Enter through "Stage Door" entrance on South side of the main building

**Meeting and Program at 7:00pm
WISC-TV Studio C
7025 Raymond Road**

Visitors and guests are welcome at all of our SBE meetings!

2003 UPCOMING MEETING/PROGRAM DATES:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Program</u>
Wednesday	August 13, 2003	Richardson Broadcast
Thursday	September 18, 2003	WMMM-WOLX Studio Tour
Wednesday	October 15, 2003	Broadcasters Clinic

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