



**January 2007**

# **Society of Broadcast Engineers Newsletter**

**Chapter 24  
Madison, Wisconsin**

## **In this Issue**

Minutes .....	2
Amateur Radio News .....	3
FCC Rulemakings .....	5
Closed Captioning Notice .....	5
SBE Notes .....	6

## **Next Meeting**

**Tuesday, Jan. 16**

### **Transitioning to HD Radio**

Doug Thompson, District Sales Manager for the Upper Midwest of Harris Corporation, will give us a presentation on making the transition to HD radio. Harris graciously offered to provide pizza for the meeting; serving will begin at 6 p.m. in the ECB boardroom.

*Pizza at 6 p.m., compliments of Harris Corporation  
Meeting & program at 7 p.m.*

Wisconsin Public Broadcasting  
Center  
3319 W. Beltline Highway  
Madison

## **Upcoming Events**

- Thursday, Feb. 15:** RF Path Predictions & Nominations
- Thursday, March 15:** TBD/ Nominations
- Wednesday, April 11:** TBD/ Elections

## **Ownership Inquiry Continues *FCC rushing timeline***

*By Tom Smith*

The FCC continued its current rulemaking inquiry into the broadcast ownership rules throughout December. The month began with the second public hearing on the subject in Nashville. On December 11, four of the commissioners met with representatives of the music industry and local broadcaster representatives at Belmont University in Nashville. The proceedings were scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. and end at 9 p.m., with a 20-minute break at 5 p.m. The hearing video is available on the Owner-over eight hours

The four who attended were Chairman Commissioners Jonathan Deborah Taylor sioner Robert unable to at- a brief state-

The subject was Issues Af- Industry and people made up sion: artists Big

Rich of Big and Rich, Singers Dobie Gray, George Jones, Naomi Judd and Porter Wagoner; Harold Bradley, vice president of the American Federation of Musicians; Rick Carnes, Songwriters Guild of America; Sharon Kay, G.M WFSK-Fisk University; Jenny Toomey, executive director, Future of Music Coalition; Bud Walters, president, Cromwell Radio; Craig Wiseman, songwriter and publisher; Christopher S. Yoo, professor of law and director of the program on technology and entertainment law, Vanderbilt University Law School; and Luke M.



the FCC Web site ship Page and is long.

commissioners the hearings Kevin Martin, Michael Copps, Adelstein, and Tate. Commis-McDowell was tend, but did issue ment.

of the first panel fecting the Music the following the panel discus- Kenny and John

*continued on page 4*

## Chapter 24 Officers

### Chair

Clifford Groth (Clear Channel Radio)  
W: 274-5450  
cliffordgroth@clearchannel.com

### Vice Chair

Dennis Baldrige  
W: 489-3999  
baldrige@mwt.net

### Secretary

Tom Smith (WHA-TV)  
W: 263-2174  
smithtc@vilas.uwex.edu

### Treasurer

Leslie Franzen (WMTV-TV)  
W: 274-1515  
lfranzen@nbc15.com

### Past Chair

Jim Magee (Avid Technology Inc.)  
W: 288-5152  
jim.magee@avid.com

## Committee Appointees

### Program Committee

Steve Paugh 277-5139  
Fred Sperry 264-9806  
Steve Zimmerman 274-1234

### Membership

Paul Stoffel  
stoffel@vilas.uwex.edu

### Sustaining Membership

Fred Sperry  
264-9806  
fsperry@ecb.state.wi.us

### Certification & Education

Jim Hermanson  
836-8340  
jhermanson@wisctv.com

### Frequency Coordination

Tom Smith  
263-2174  
smithtc@vilas.uwex.edu

### National SBE Chapter Liasion

Leonard Charles  
W: 271-4321  
F: 271-1709  
lcharles@wisctv.com

## December 2006 Meeting Minutes

On December 14, 2006, members of Chapter 24 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers meet at Fitzgerald's in Middleton for the chapter's annual Holiday Dinner and get-together. We meet for cocktails at 6 p.m. and were seated for dinner at 7 p.m. There were nine members present of which seven were certified. There was one sustaining member present as well as four spouses present.

As this was a chapter social gathering, there was no business meeting conducted or a formal program. All enjoyed an evening of good food and company.

*Submitted by Tom Smith, Chapter Secretary*

## Ham Radio Class Now Forming!!

As a Licensed Ham Radio Operator You Get To:

- Serve Your Community
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The UW Space Place will be holding a weekend course where **YOU** will learn everything you need to earn your **Amateur Radio Technician** license.

You don't need to learn Morse Code for this FCC license.

This **Free** class is February 24 & 25, 2007.

Registration is required.

For more information please contact:

Don Michalski, [dem@sal.wisc.edu](mailto:dem@sal.wisc.edu), 263-4685

[www.arrl.org/hamradio.html](http://www.arrl.org/hamradio.html)



ARRL, The national association for Amateur Radio --  
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## Amateur Radio News

By Tom Weeden, WJ9H

### Morse code nixed

Soon, the United States will join the growing list of countries that no longer require Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code test as the entry ticket to HF. Announcement of the pending historic rule change arrived with no fanfare December 15, 2006, in an FCC public notice. A full-blown Report and Order (R&O) in the proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, followed December 19. The best estimate of when the Morse code requirement will go away officially is sometime in February — 30 days after the R&O appears in the Federal Register.

“We ... believe that the public interest is not served by requiring facility in Morse code when the trend in amateur communications is to use voice and digital technologies for exchanging messages,” the FCC said in its R&O. “Rather, we believe that because the international requirement for telegraphy proficiency has been eliminated, we should treat Morse code telegraphy no differently from other Amateur Service communications techniques.”

The FCC says it deems the current regime of written examinations “sufficient to determine whether a person is qualified to be issued an Amateur Radio operator license.”

The FCC also ordered that all Technician licensees present and future — whether or not they’ve passed a Morse code test — will get privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters identical to those of Novice licensees.

“In eliminating this disparity between Technician and Technician Plus licenses, we are simplifying the Amateur Service licensing structure and promoting regulatory parity,” the FCC said.

Although the FCC’s Morse code decision came as no surprise, it nonetheless revived debate on the issue.

The FCC had proposed more than a year ago to drop the Morse code requirement for all license classes. The record in the proceeding, the FCC said, “reflects a division of views in the Amateur Radio community.” After reviewing the more than 3,500 comments and counter-proposals radio amateurs had filed, the Commission stuck with its initial proposal.

### ARRL sues FCC

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) is suing the FCC over a recent rule change in the long-running “Broadband over Powerline” (BPL) controversy and is asking its members to contribute to its “Spectrum Defense Fund” to mount the challenge to the federal agency.

“The FCC has an obligation to protect licensed radio services from unnecessary interference,” the ARRL’s Web site said. “There was growing

evidence that interference from some BPL systems is a serious problem that is either impossible, or very expensive, to fix.”

Calling the new BPL rules adopted in 2006 “intolerable,” the ARRL said, “Never before has an unintentional emitter been given a free pass to interfere with licensed radio services.”

On October 10, 2006, the law firm of Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP (WilmerHale) joined ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay in filing a Petition for Review on behalf of the ARRL in the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

ARRL says one of the challenges in the case will be that “complex technical issues must be made understandable to a panel of judges who are not telecommunications experts.”

*(Excerpts from the American Radio Relay League’s Web site, arrl.org)*

*As a means of delivering broadband services to consumers, BPL is an inferior technology. According to the FCC’s own figures, the BPL industry has managed to reach fewer than 5,000 customers nationwide. BPL is failing in the marketplace, as well it should.*

*Here’s the problem: Even if BPL disappears from the scene tomorrow, the FCC’s preference for unlicensed, unintentional emitters over the interests of its licensees will remain on the books. Bad rules left unchallenged will lead to even worse rules later.*

*The FCC was heading in the wrong direction under Michael Powell. It’s continuing in the wrong direction under Kevin Martin. Reasoned technical arguments backed up by overwhelming evidence have not altered the FCC’s errant course. There was only one thing left that we could do: appeal in federal court. After carefully considering the costs and consequences, the ARRL Board of Directors concluded that was what we must do.*

*The Court of Appeals will not substitute its judgment for the reasoned decision-making of an expert agency. But this long-established principle does not give agencies such as the FCC carte blanche. Deciding the outcome you want and adjusting the facts to fit is not reasoned decision-making. We will show that the FCC did not come to a reasoned decision in developing its BPL rules.*

*In another case earlier this year, a panel of this court had this to say about another federal agency: “We therefore owe no deference to [the agency’s] purported expertise because we cannot discern it.” When it reviews the FCC’s BPL decisions we expect the court to reach a similar conclusion.*

—From ARRL’s “Defense of Frequencies” Web page on BPL

**FCC Inquiry** *continued*

Froeb, William C. and Margaret W. Oehmig Owen Graduate School of Management, Vanderbilt University. That panel was to be followed by a two-hour public comment period.

The evening panel, which was to start at 5:30 p.m., consisted Gary Cunningham, president of GCA Publishing; Bob D'Andrea, president of the Christian Broadcasting Network; Elden Hale, vice president, WSMV-TV; John Heidelberg, president, Heidelberg Broadcasting/WVOL-AM; Alex Jones, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government; Gene Kimmelman, vice president, Consumers Union; Ellen Liefeld, president, The Tennessean; Deborah McDermott, president, Young Broadcasting; Terry Pefanis, CEO, Big Idea, Inc.; Wendell Rawls, reporter; Debbie Turner, president, News Channel 5 Network; Ginny Welsch, WRFN-LPFM; and James Wolfe, former radio station executive. This panel was also followed by two hours of public comments.

In prepared statements, Commissioner Tate mentioned the impact of new media on radio when reviewing the ownership rules while Commissioners Copps and Adelstein discussed greater oversight in license renewal and the fact that radio broadcasting is the dominate method of music entertainment.

In the prepared statements of George Jones, Porter Wagoner, Dobie Gray and Craig Wiseman, they all discussed the difficulty

in getting airplay for their new songs including the limited playlists with very little input from local programmers. The Future of Music Coalition's Jenny Toomey commented on the decline in the number of station owners, including local ownership, limited amount of music formats and the

*Still with all the information released, the commission will not have conducted four of the promised six public hearings and have all the studies released. At this point, it seems that making a deadline for completing the required Congressional review is more important than completing the record before taking action.*

loose group of small station groups that programmed niche formats such as jazz, classical and folk. She suggested that the FCC retain the current ownership caps, create regulations to aid radio ownership by small, independent or minority broadcasters, ending payola, expanding non-commercial and LPFM, and making the transition to digital radio, and increasing local-

ism, competition and diversity. The comments from the professors from Vanderbilt were pro-merger, stating the FCC should let evidence and not ideology guide new regulations. They contend that mergers would help the industry adapt to technological advances and that joint ownership of stations would

increase program diversity and force commonly owned stations to format stations differently to prevent "cannibalization of listeners".

Ginny Welsch, WRFN-LPFM in Nashville, was not available, but in a statement on the station's Web site, it was made clear that it was against further consolidation and urged listeners to file comments. For comments from other panelists and the public at the hearing, view the FCC webcast archive.

On December 13, the Future of Music Coalition released a 119-page study on the consolidation of broadcast radio ownership, which it was to add to the record in the ownership inquiry.

On December 15, the commission adopted and released a notice extending the period for reply comments to the ownership rule-making from December 21, 2006 to January 16, 2007. This action was taken because of a request by Media General, Inc. Media General ask for a 45-day delay to allow for

*continued on page 6*



Media & Information Technologies

Tom Sibenaller  
Sales Representative

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Roscor Wisconsin  
W6428 Schilling Road  
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## FCC ISSUES NOTICE ON CLOSED CAPTIONING

By Tom Smith

On December 29, 2006, the FCC issued a notice in response to questions on closed captioning of emergency information. In the notice, the FCC reminds TV broadcasters that are not permitted to use captions created by electronic newsroom systems (teleprompter copy) of the requirements that they must meet during emergency alerts and breaking news. They address circumstances where those required to close caption are unable and that they still must provide visual information in a method similar to that of exempt stations such as providing a crawl over programming or even using handwritten information.

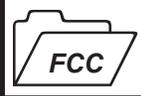
The FCC also suggested methods of training staff and assuring access to captions such as having arrangements with a service, establishing policies for contacting the services, placing reminders on TVs in the newsroom, setting up speed dialing phones, and training staff on a regular basis.

The end of the notice contained a footnote listing recent fines for closed captioning violations.

—From FCC release ([www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov))

Thanks to WISC-TV for maintaining the web server for the Chapter 24 Web page!

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



## FCC Rulemakings

By Tom Smith

### PROPOSED RULEMAKINGS

*PS Docket No. 06-229  
Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band*

\*\*\*

*WT Docket No. 96-86  
Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Communications Requirements through the year 2010*

On December 20, 2006, the FCC adopted and released a proposed rulemaking concerning the allocation and impletation of the new public band on TV channels 64-65 and 68-69. This band is to be created from some of the spectrum that will be returned at the end of the DTV transition.

The FCC is proposing some major changes in the way the band will be allocated and managed. First, they propose that the band be change from two 6 MHz narrowband segments with 1920 6.25 kHz channels that may be combined into 25 kHz channels and two 6 MHz wideband segments with 240 50 kHz channels that may be combined into 100 or 150 kHz channels. Some of the channels were reserved for nationwide interoperable communications. The new proposal would allocate the upper half of TV channels 64 and 68 and

the lower half of TV channels 65 and 69 for broadband use instead of wideband use. The FCC is also proposing that the 12 MHz allotted for broadband use be assigned to one national licensee and that public safety users pay for the airtime they use in the band. Further more, the FCC is proposing that the national licensee would be allowed to lease the spectrum on a commercial basis as long as the commercial use is preempted, when needed by public safety users. The national licensee could also lease excess bandwidth in the narrowband spectrum that is assigned to local users for commercial use also with the same preemption requirements.

The idea of the national licensee is to make it easier to create an interoperable system so all users can talk to each other on. By requiring local users to pay for airtime, the FCC figures that it would limit non-critical usage. Airtime fees and commercial use would also create funding for a national system.

Comments on this proposal should be interesting particularly from the larger public safety groups like the Los Angeles Sheriff Department, which has for a long time been seeking more spectrum. Will they want to share or lose control of their communications?

Comments will be due 45 days after publication in the Federal Register.

—From FCC release ([www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov))

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**FCC Inquiry** *continued*

comment on the 10 studies the FCC announced would be undertaken November 22 and time to analyze the comments filed during the regular comment period. The FCC action allowed for time to study the comments, but will not delay replies until the studies have all been released.

On December 29, the FCC released a notice announcing that they were posting copies of all studies and reports on media ownership, minority ownership and localism and related issues, including all draft copies.

Still with all the information released, the commission will not have conducted four of the promised six public hearings and have all the studies released. At this point, it seems that making a deadline for completing the required Congressional review is more important than completing the record before taking action.

—From FCC releases, ([www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)); American Federation of Television and Radio Artists releases ([www.aftra.com](http://www.aftra.com)); Future of Music Coalition releases ([www.futureofmusic.org](http://www.futureofmusic.org)); Vanderbilt University ([www.owen.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.owen.vanderbilt.edu)) and WRFN-LPFM ([www.radiofreenashville.org](http://www.radiofreenashville.org))

# SBE Notes

## Chapter members may use SBE logo

SBE chapters and members may use the SBE logo on business cards, letterhead and chapter newsletters. When referring to a chapter, it must be used with that chapter's name or number adjacent to the logo. Members must put "Member of" or "Certified by" adjacent to the logo. The proper logo must be used in any case. The correct logo can be obtained only through the SBE National Office. Send an e-mail with your request to Angel Bates at [abates@sbe.org](mailto:abates@sbe.org).

## Chapter 24 Listserver available

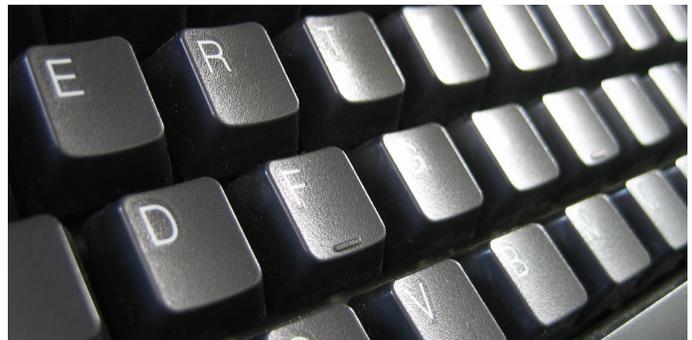
Chapter 24 members are invited to join the chapter listserver. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to [msnsbe-request@broadcast.net](mailto:msnsbe-request@broadcast.net). In the body of an e-mail message type "subscribe." (The subject line can be left blank.)

The Mailman package the listserver is running on also has a web interface for subscribing to the list. Visit [www.broadcast.net/mailman/list-info/msnsbe](http://www.broadcast.net/mailman/list-info/msnsbe) to subscribe. Instructions and a confirmation message will be e-mailed to you.

The SBE National also has a listserver. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to [sbe-request@broadcast.net](mailto:sbe-request@broadcast.net). In the body of e-mail message type "subscribe." To post to the list, send e-mail to [sbe@broadcast.net](mailto:sbe@broadcast.net).

## Submissions welcome

Submissions of interest to the broadcast technical community are welcome. Please make your submissions by e-mail to [Mike\\_Norton@wetrn.pbs.org](mailto:Mike_Norton@wetrn.pbs.org). Submissions may be edited for space, content or clarity.



**BROADCAST RICHARDSON**  
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## Certification Exam Session Dates

The SBE National Certification Committee has announced exam session dates. Check the list below for the exam period that is best for you. For more information about SBE Certification, see your Chapter Certification Chair or contact Megan Clappe, Certification Director at the SBE National Office at (317) 846-9000, or [mclappe@sbe.org](mailto:mclappe@sbe.org).

Exam Dates	Location Application	Application Deadline
April 17, 2007	NAB, Las Vegas	March 2, 2007
June 1-11, 1007	Local Chapters	April 20, 2007
August 10-20, 2007	Local Chapters	June 8, 2007
November 9-19, 2007	Local Chapters	September 21, 2007

## Upcoming Regional SBE Conference

### Great Lakes Broadcasting Conference & EXPO

Date: March 13-14, 2007

Location: Lansing, Mich.

Hosted by: The Michigan Association of Broadcasters, in cooperation with SBE Chapter 91 and the Michigan Association of Public Broadcasters

Contact: Call (800) 968-7622, e-mail [mab@michmab.com](mailto:mab@michmab.com) or visit [www.michmab.com/conferences/glbc\\_main.html](http://www.michmab.com/conferences/glbc_main.html)

Registration: 2007 Rates TBA; admission to exhibits only is FREE

## SBE CHAPTER OF THE AIR

HamNet meets the second Sunday of each month at 0000 GMT on 14.205 MHz. Hal Hostetler WA7BGX is the Control Station. Any amateur operator is welcome and encouraged to participate.

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**John Reuter**  
Sales Engineer  
[johnr@alphavideo.com](mailto:johnr@alphavideo.com)  
7711 Computer Ave.  
Edina, MN 55435-5494

dir 952.841.3354  
p 952.896.9898  
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**Society of Broadcast  
Engineers, Inc.**  
9102 North Meridian St.  
Suite 150  
Indianapolis, IN 46260



**Office (317) 846-9000**  
**Fax (317) 846-9120**



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**Mark Bartolotta**  
Regional Sales Manager  
Heartland Video Systems, Inc.  
1311 Pilgrim Road  
Plymouth, WI 53073  
Tel 800.332.7088  
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SBE Chapter 24 Newsletter  
P.O. Box 46291  
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Contributors this month: Tom Smith and Tom Weeden.  
Thanks to Leonard Charles for his work on the Chapter 24 Web page.

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