

FY 2020 CAPITAL REQUEST

Iowa Public Radio (IPR) requests \$1.3M for three high priority capital projects required for WOI-FM, KSUI-FM, and KICP-FM. These stations are three of the IPR network's largest signals. Without timely attention, there is growing danger of significant failure. Iowa Public Radio respectfully requests support for these capital needs, which are explained in detail below.

IPR manages 25 stations and serves 250,000 listeners statewide with three programming services: News, Classical, and Studio One. IPR's combined radio groups serve rural and urban Iowa, touching all of Iowa's 99 counties. The history of public radio in Iowa is long and proud: two of our stations are almost a century old, with licenses among the first 100 radio licenses ever granted by the FCC. We expect to celebrate their centennial in 2022.

WOI-FM Antenna, Transmitter and Transmission Line

Request: \$830,000 for replacing WOI-FM antenna, transmission line, transmitter and studio-to-transmitter link

This project would replace the antenna and transmission system for WOI-FM, licensed to Iowa State University. WOI-FM is the main signal for the Iowa Public Radio network in the Des Moines/Ames area, and is an essential hub for our statewide network. Originating in Ames, the signal serves 60,600 listeners in 15 counties in central Iowa with news, information and cultural programming. WOI-FM is very popular, averaging in the top 10 stations in the Des Moines metro market, and is ranked the #2 news station (of around 15) in the Des Moines metro area. In addition, the Iowa Radio Reading Information Service, (IRIS), Iowa's reading service for the blind, is carried on a sub-carrier of WOI-FM, and WOI-FM is the secondary State Relay station in Iowa's Emergency Alert System (EAS) plan. Should WHO-AM, the State's Primary Relay station, fail to send emergency alerts to the public, WOI-FM is the designated backup station.

Portions of WOI-FM's main transmitter system are 24 years old, and the analog-only backup transmitter is 40 years old. The WOI-FM transmission line and antenna are also over 20 years old, and the transmission line is obsolete. A failure in any of the segments would likely necessitate replacement of the entire transmission line. The usual life of transmission systems is 15-20 years, so the current equipment is living on borrowed time. At the completion of this project, WOI-FM will move the current transmission system into a back-up role, replacing our current back-up system. This move will also ensure that both the main transmission system and back-up system are HD (digital) radio-capable. Our HD signals serve HD radio listeners, and also provide an effective system for delivering programming to other stations in the 25-station IPR network. We have developed an audience of listeners to our HD radio service, so redundancy is needed to maintain HD radio coverage.

This project was originally in the Board of Regents capital plan for FY 2017, 2018, and 2019 making this the fourth year we have requested this capital support. The need for this technology support becomes more urgent by the day.

KSUI Transmission Line and Studio-to-Transmitter Link

Request: \$350,000 for replacing KSUI transmission line, studio-to-transmitter link

Replace transmission line, studio-to-transmitter link and remote control system for KSUI-FM, licensed to the University of Iowa. KSUI is IPR's largest classical signal, serving 48,000 listeners in 13 counties in eastern Iowa each week. IPR's classical service – with 10 stations statewide -- is the only classical music radio service in the state. In addition to providing listeners with the very best in classical programming from the around the world, IPR classical also extends the reach of Iowa's most respected cultural institutions, bringing performances from Iowa's symphonies and opera companies to audiences far beyond the symphony hall.

The transmission line, which connects the transmitter on the ground to the antenna on the tower, failed in late 2015. Although many person hours were spent to repair the failure, the line is old and compromised, subjecting it to potential failure again without warning. KSUI is IPR's primary classical signal, serving Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and the Quad Cities, making it a high priority project. This project was on IPR's capital needs list for FY 2019, making this the second year we have requested support for this project.

KICP antenna

Request: \$125,000 for antenna

This project would replace the antenna for KICP-FM, licensed to Iowa State University. This fall, we had a major failure on the station, and conducted emergency repairs. A new antenna will complete the project. KICP is the largest classical signal in central Iowa, serving 12,000 listeners per week.

Iowa Public Radio (IPR) was created in 2004 by the Iowa Board of Regents to manage the public radio groups licensed Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa. Our mission is to enrich the civic and cultural life in Iowa, through high quality news and cultural programming.