



Presented to VAB Members  
Wednesday, June 16, 2021

# Annual Report July 2020 – June 2021

# Mission Statement:

Provide equitable resources and diverse opportunities for growth as well as celebrate, unite and advocate for all free, over-the-air broadcast television and radio stations operating in the state of Vermont.

# Government Advocacy:

## FEDERAL

- ★ Participating in the 18-state “Safe Advertising Coalition” - committed \$5,000 to pay D.C. Lobbying Firm Klein Johnson to either Include a protection for Broadcasters who want to advertise Cannabis in the S.A.F.E. Banking Bill or drum up support for the M.O.R.E. Act to decriminalize.
- ★ May 11: Five VAB members participated NAB’s Virtual State Leadership Conference (SLC)
- ★ May 12-13: Virtual Meetings with Rep. Welch, Senator Leahy and Senator Sanders’ Legislative Director.
- ★ Shared stories about the role trusted local broadcasters have had during the COVID pandemic.
- ★ Advocated for:
  - Local Radio Freedom Act
  - Journalism Competition & Preservation Act
  - Diversity Tax Certificate Program

## STATE

- ★ S.107:
  - Governor vetoed a bill that would have concealed juvenile arrest/charge information from the press.
- ★ S.25: Cannabis Regulations:
  - Despite strong opinions about a ban on advertising, a bill with tighter restrictions than alcohol passed, giving the Cannabis Control Board autonomous oversight.
- ★ S.10/S.62: Unemployment Insurance
  - Started as an extension for a temporary COVID bill, but turned into a vehicle for permanent UI benefit increases.
  - Win: 2020, an anomaly year, was eliminated from the formula DOL uses to compute UI tax rate schedules, preventing employers from unmerited UI cost increases.
  - Loss: Sirotkin held the bill for political ransom, forcing an added \$100 million tax on to employers to increase UI benefits for claimants over the next several years.
- ★ H.315: Tax on PPP Loans Forgiven in 2021 Avoided:
  - House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees tried to add a tax on PPP loans forgiven in 2021. Coordinated cries of outrage from the business community put enough pressure on the Legislature to change course and strike the tax from the bill .

# Career Growth Opportunities:

Made 32 webinars available over the last 12 months, including:

- ★ Local Broadcast Sales (LBS) 2nd Tuesday Webinar Series. Subscription also includes on-demand training videos, sales and promotion ideas & B.E.S.T. training program for new hires
- ★ *Third Thursday Webinar Series* organized by the Michigan Association of Broadcasters, offering content for journalists, programmers and managers.
- ★ Alabama Broadcasters Association Engineering Academy's Monthly Webinar Series.
- ★ *"Get After It!"* a Motivational Talk by Dawanna St. Louis
- ★ *"How To Conduct A Needs Analysis Remotely"* by Matt Sunshine
- ★ *Power Up Your Reporting Parts 1&2* as well as *Leading a Local Newsroom Through Uncertain Times*, both by Al Tompkins

Links to recorded webinars speakers gave VAB access to are on the "Free Webinars" page of VAB.org

# FCC, EEO & EAS Support:

## FCC/EEO:

- ★ Participated in filing 50-state Joint Comments opposing the FCC's proposal to increase 2021 Regulatory Fees.
- ★ David Oxenford's webinars "*Preparing for FCC License Renewal*" 4/14 and "*Staying on Top of Your EEO Obligations*" 3/24.
- ★ *Political File Rules* Webinar with an FCC Panel
- ★ Posted local job openings on VAB.org, providing employers with EEO credit opportunities.

## EAS:

- ★ Represented broadcast media in the Virtual Operations Room during the VT State Police Amber and Blue Alert System tests.
- ★ Negotiated EAS test schedule with VEM that keeps tests out of Prime and Drive times.
- ★ Answered questions about failed IPAWS weekly required tests in May.

# Awards & Recognitions:

- ★ Due to COVID, the 2020 Convention and Hall of Fame & Awards Banquets could not take place.
- ★ VAB's 65th Annual Convention is scheduled for Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at Lareau Farm in Waitsfield, VT!
- ★ In lieu of an in-person Production of the Year Awards ceremony, the VAB recorded videos announcing and congratulating over 20 Commercial, Promo, PSA and Digital category winners.
- ★ Celebrated WCAX and VPR's National Edward R. Murrow Award wins.

- Recognized the passing of Chip Hobart, Heather Sheppard, Mike Donovan, Amy McGovern, Hobbes, Andy Luchini and Mike Calhoun.
- Recognized Dana Jewell's retirement as well as Local 22/44 staff with 20+ years of service
- Recognized new positions for Ryan Rothstein, John Mullett, Dave Godette, Jeff Morad and Alice Kang.

# Other Member Benefits:

## **Advertising:**

Worked with NAB, NASBA and local contacts to funnel as much Federal and State COVID-related and U.S. Census advertising funds as possible directly to stations.

## **ABIP:**

2021 is an Alternative Broadcast Inspection Program (ABIP) year. The VAB is paying 100% of the \$500 per station fee and so far, 82 inspections have been scheduled!

## **Paid Internship Program**

Stations apply to hire a college intern and have the VAB pay for it! Five stations took advantage of this new benefit this summer and five more paid internships will be made available for the Fall and/or Spring semesters.

# Thank you!

The membership dues you pay once a year is how the VAB finances all of our lobbying activity, including the new addition of having MMR on retainer!

It is because you donate your airtime and run the VAB's NCSA and PEP campaigns that the VAB is able to finance all the member benefits we offer.



# Important Save The Dates!

## **June 17th:**

*Addressing the Recruiting Challenges  
within a Changing Media Industry*  
webinar for Managers

## **July 8th:**

Deadline to get *Production of the  
Year Competition* entries submitted

## **August 11th:**

National EAS Test

## **August 18th:**

65th Annual VAB Convention at Lareau Farm  
in Waitsfield

## **December 1st:**

FCC License Renewal Applications for  
Vermont Radio Stations Due

## **December 4th:**

Hall of Fame & Awards Banquet at the Hilton  
Hotel in Burlington