

Managers Annual Report 2010-2011

Leaves are mostly off the trees, days are getting shorter, and the snow is creeping down the mountains. Fall is upon us! That means finishing up the summer chores and gearing up for the KCHU annual meeting. There is some exciting stuff to report on. But first, the business at hand. Included with this report is a ballot, please vote for three candidates and return it in the envelope provided. Without enough returned ballots we will be unable to certify the election and have to send it out again, so please take a moment to vote. You can return it by mail, deliver it to the station, or at one of the meeting locations on October 29th.

We are planning on having simultaneous meetings around our area to celebrate our 25 years of broadcasting October 29th, at 6pm. Listen to KCHU, and look at kchu.org for details as we get closer to October 29th. We are looking at having meetings in Valdez, Cordova, Whittier, and Copper Center.

In Valdez the meeting will be at Magpie's Bakery, costumes encouraged, especially from 25 years ago. Please bring a gory appetizer.

In Cordova the meeting will be at Liz Senear's house. Please bring an appetizer to share and enjoy good company as we discuss your public radio station.

We are still working out details for meetings in Whittier and Copper Basin, please listen for details, check kchu.org, or become our friend on Facebook! We will update plans for the annual meeting then. Anyone interested will be able to attend via teleconference, contact the station for details to join that way.

I have continued to work on some big capital improvement projects over the last year, and nearly complete! Nearly all our translators and repeaters are being fed by internet connection with high quality encoders/decoders. This is replacing using the 770 signal in the smaller communities that had many problems, mostly related to rebroadcasting a poor signal picked up outside its range. Glennallen and Cordova have been fed using older technology that is getting less reliable, and has always been expensive. We are using the new technology in Glennallen and will be soon in Cordova. The new technology has come with its own challenges, but I think it's fairly reliable after all the troubleshooting and lessons learned. As we implement the improvements throughout the system, everyone should be able to enjoy a quality signal within the broadcast patterns.

In Whittier the signal sounds good and the antennas are working correctly! After having to relocate temporarily as they worked on the Harbor Office, we have moved back with new transmitter, cable, and replaced the antennas to assure that everything is working correctly. It's exciting to talk to new Whittier listeners who didn't know there was a station there until recently. You can tune in Whittier at 88.3 FM.

In Tatitlek we've recently added some equipment to improve stability and allow for remote reset of equipment. So far, so good! You can listen in Tatitlek at 88.1 FM.

Chenega Bay still has some improvements to implement. We have some equipment to take there to improve the signal quality.

Cordova will hear some changes soon, possibly before you receive this letter. There shouldn't be much of a change you notice as a listener, but know that it's going to lowering the amount to get the signal to Cordova by about 400%! Significant savings! Tune in and hear at 88.1 FM.

McCarthy has had some improvements, but continues to listen to a signal with drop-outs. We will be moving the equipment there as well, that allow us to tap into a more stable connection. Along with getting a good signal in McCarthy we have to keep an eye on our power consumption. Everything we do there has to be done factoring in our watts and volts. We've been told that in November we'll be able to make the move and improve the signal at 89.7 FM!

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Glennallen has a new transmitter and is also using the new technology. We've overcome some hick-ups and feel confident about its reliability. We are already seeing significant savings in Glennallen and now that we have more remote capabilities you probably don't even notice. Listen in Copper Basin at 90.5 FM.

Here in Valdez we've been installing equipment that is supposed to cut our energy consumption by 15% to 20%! We're a test case with this, but it isn't costing us anything. With some patience we'll see some benefits. This should be done very soon. There is also some minor maintenance needed at the Valdez transmitter site we continue to work on. Even though it's in the same town as the office, it can be difficult to access in the winter. We have been working on improving our remote capability there too, and have a stronger link between the studio and the transmitter site.

Along with all these projects, I continue to keep my eye on that hole in the signal; Kenny Lake and Chitna. I have heard rumor that next year the FCC will be opening an application window for new FM licenses. We plan to be ready to submit an application to move closer to getting coverage to those communities.

We have also been looking at what we can broadcast over the improved signal that is important to our listeners. This summer we broadcast the fishing openers for fisherfolk in the Prince William Sound, more Valdez Fish Derby updates, and some live broadcasts from local events. We want to continue adding programming important to you. Many more of our listeners are going to have access to equipment that will give access to the KCHU airwaves. I get asked a lot about being a DJ. Well, now you don't have to be in Valdez to have a show. Right now we are just able to record the audio and have it sent to the station to be broadcast. However, I envision a time in the not too distant future that will allow us to broadcast live from the various communities. Non-profit organizations can also record PSAs to promote services and events, I would like to see them used to interview elders to preserve their wisdom and stories, and I expect even better ideas to come from our listeners. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me. There is a lot possible, and the more help we have in the communities the more we can do!

The station is doing good financially. Much of the funding for the projects I've been talking have been grant funded, but our membership has had to match 10% of the funds. This has allowed us to make major improvements, but it has also increased our spending some to make the match. As we budget to maintain and replace aging gear, it will balance out. There is still concern about what will happen to our federal funds, roughly a third of our budget. Budget talks have resumed, and we will be keeping an eye on that. If it is cut, you will see a different KCHU, but I believe that you will continue to hear KCHU as long as listeners support it! And our listeners are marvelous supporters, THANK YOU!!! Our percentage of members is something most stations can only envy. It is wonderful working for an organization that is supported so strongly by the community. Again, THANK YOU!!!

We are looking for volunteers, so if you would like to lend a hand to your public station let us know! We can use help with some of the committees of the Board of Directors (less commitment than a BOD member, but still valuable help) such as fundraising committee, and building committees. We need help with our programming schedule with the Community Advisory Board, office work, and of course, on-air volunteers. Contact the station if you are interested.

Another exciting year, and electrifying stuff ahead!