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## Chapter 5

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### Coordination of Services Needed to Leverage WPTV Resources

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***WPTV's efforts to coordinate its endeavors have been inconsistent.***

To leverage its limited resources, WPTV should enhance coordination of its offerings with other state entities. Over the years, WPTV has produced or acquired programming that has supported state agency initiatives. However, its efforts to coordinate its endeavors are inconsistent. With limited resources and production capability, WPTV could use the assistance that coordinated efforts entail. New WPTV management has initiated purposeful coordination efforts with other state entities. Continuing these will be even more critical if WPTV is to realize the full potential of its digital conversion.

### Coordination of Services More Critical After Digital Conversion

***Potential for WPTV to have multiple channels highlights importance of coordinating with other state entities.***

In 2000, when preparing to request funding for digital conversion, WPTV released a preliminary proposal suggesting how it might use the four simultaneous channels possible with the format. It proposed using the four channels for programming in the following areas: K-12 education, higher education, business development, and general programming purchased from PBS. The potential of WPTV offering programming directly related to the responsibilities of other sectors of state government highlights the importance of coordination of services.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, WPTV will not be offering such expanded programming in the near future with the funding requested for digital conversion. However, WPTV already offers services that relate to other state funded entities. With limited resources for production and broadcasting, it is important that efforts be coordinated.

## **WPTV Productions and Services Have Supported State Initiatives**

***WPTV has partnered with the Department of Health and DFS in producing programs in their areas.***

Over the years, WPTV has dedicated effort to producing or acquiring programming that supports the efforts of other state entities. For example, working with the Department of Health Substance Abuse Division, WPTV produced a 20-minute program to encourage the implementation of drug courts across the state. The same partnership also resulted in a program to encourage parents, teachers, and other adults in Wyoming communities to take action to reduce underage drinking.

WPTV reports working in concert with the Department of Family Services (DFS) to broadcast programs offering continuing education credits for childcare providers. Also with DFS, WPTV produced a one-hour discussion of foster care services in Wyoming, and public service announcements encouraging people to become foster parents and current foster parents to avail themselves of resources.

***The station has also produced public affairs programming.***

Through its productions, WPTV has also supported public affairs and the legislative process. During the 2000 elections, the station produced a series of "election minutes" to provide access time to all legislative candidates. WPTV traveled to six Wyoming communities to produce the series, which featured 42 candidates. At the request of the Legislature, WPTV produced a learning resource tape for new legislators and will produce another on the legislative budget process.

### **WPTV Beginning Involvement with K-12**

***WPTV teamed with the Department of Education to air a series aimed at K-2 foreign language requirement.***

In the last year, WPTV has responded to a new state requirement for K-2 foreign language instruction by working with the State Department of Education (WDE) to air a Spanish instructional television series. WDE paid the licensing fee for the series for one year (21 hours of programs), and purchased the videotape to dub the series for WPTV broadcast. WPTV sent out program schedules to all elementary school teachers in the state for the first two broadcasts so elementary schools could record this series for use in their curricula.

WPTV also broadcast NASA CONNECT, a live, interactive K-12 series acclaimed for its value in enriching classroom instruction and the integration of math, science, and technology. During and after the program, students could interact with NASA engineers and astronauts over the Internet. Educators throughout the state used this series, reaching nearly 17,000 Wyoming students during the 1999-2000 broadcast period.

### **WPTV Has Not Coordinated Its Services to the Extent It Could**

***WPTV and the Commission have not yet coordinated telecourse use among community colleges.***

Although WPTV has provided programming and services that relate to and are supportive of the functions of other state entities, it has not fully coordinated these efforts. For example, since its inception, WPTV has aired telecourses that some community colleges offer in their curricula. Although WPTV and the Commission have tried to facilitate a community college consortium to coordinate telecourses, they have not been able to accomplish this. Recently, these efforts have begun again.

Because the colleges have not coordinated telecourse use, WPTV must expend more air time broadcasting telecourses than they would if more than one college used the same courses in the same semester. So as not to interfere with prime time evening PBS programming, WPTV broadcasts the telecourses during daytime hours. This is time the station would like to devote to additional PBS educational children's programming to benefit parents and childcare providers.

### **WPTV K-12 Services Not Planned with WDE, PTSB**

***WPTV implemented a teacher-training program without input from WDE and PTSB.***

WPTV offers an Internet-based, self-directed professional development service for teachers, TeacherLine. However, it did not involve the state entities responsible for teaching certification and academic standards in planning and implementing the program. TeacherLine focuses on math and science training for teachers, which is needed in the state. However, officials from the WDE and the Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) reported that they were not involved in developing this WPTV service. Coordination with these entities is important to ensure that professional development offerings tie into state standards and thereby count as certification renewal credits.

***WDE and PTSB officials see potential for WPTV to assist K-12 sector, but program review is necessary.***

Officials from both WDE and PTSB agreed that WPTV could offer services that would be helpful to the K-12 sector. For example, teachers could use its programming in developing lesson plans and providing enrichment for students. However, to be most effective, officials say teachers would need an intermediary to review potential WPTV offerings to identify those that would address the standards. The WPTV programming director also expressed the need for a process to screen programming for the K-12 sector.

***WPTV could provide rural teachers with access to professional development.***

Additionally, the PTSB director sees potential for WPTV services to help teachers in rural areas gain access to professional development opportunities. Educators look to a variety of sources for professional development, according to this official, but all should be coordinated through the WDE and PTSB. However, WDE and PTSB officials said they have not been involved with WPTV in planning what services might be of use to educators.

## **WPTV Coordination of Services Has Been Informal**

***Usually, the station independently promotes its efforts.***

WPTV officials told us their coordination efforts have been serendipitous and perhaps not as consistent as they could be. Often, WPTV produces a program on its own and then sends tapes to selected state agencies, suggesting they could be of some educational use. The station usually works independently to promote its efforts with others. For example, WPTV sent out flyers and letters to Wyoming Employment Services offices to inform them of a job skills series it was offering.

***WPTV works with individual districts rather than through WDE at state level.***

With respect to K-12, WPTV acknowledges that it needs some leadership in order to offer the services that are needed. Currently, the station primarily works with individual districts, although the programming director says it would be better to work at the state level. A WDE official noted that while individual districts direct their curricula, WDE could assist WPTV by facilitating coordination with the districts to identify common needs, and with mailings to promote WPTV offerings.

***Wisconsin PTV has found that partnerships make programming richer and encourage commitment to projects.***

### **Coordination Leverages Resources**

WPTV can leverage its limited staff, production capacity, and air time resources by coordinating with other entities. Wisconsin Public Television (WPT), nationally recognized for quality programming and innovative practices, extensively coordinates its efforts. Through partnerships, WPT has been able to make its programming richer and more efficient by linking editorial, financial and program resources. Its partners include the state's public instruction agency, the historical society, and a host of K-12 organizations. WPT has found that such partnerships ensure content development that meets needs, as well as create efficiencies, increase financial support, and encourage commitment to the projects being developed.

### **New WPTV Management Sees Developing Coordination as a Priority**

***New WPTV general manager sees supporting other agencies as part of WPTV mission.***

The recently-hired WPTV general manager intends to strengthen the station's relationships with other state entities. He considers supporting state agencies in reaching their goals by building awareness and enhancing outreach to be a part of WPTV's mission. Within the first months of arriving, he made contact with various agency officials to establish how WPTV might assist them.

***However, helping other agencies is beyond the scope of CWC and Commission responsibilities.***

Program officials say coordination of services was not as much of a priority in earlier years. This was largely because staff resources limited the attention WPTV could devote to this, and also because the station did not reach statewide. Since 1995, when Cheyenne and Laramie started receiving WPTV through cable, coordination efforts have increased.

WPTV's organizational placement also does not enhance its ability to coordinate with other state entities. Neither CWC nor Community College Commission officials want to restrict the scope of WPTV services to telecourses. However, it is beyond the scope of CWC or Commission responsibilities to facilitate coordination that supports the missions of other state entities. What WPTV does in this regard is on its own initiative and within its autonomous authority to determine programming.

## **Recommendation: WPTV should enhance efforts to coordinate its services with other state entities.**

***WPTV should involve partners in the planning stages of its projects.***

Because WPTV has limited resources, it needs to leverage them through purposeful partnerships with other state entities. Rather than acquiring or developing programming and then seeking partners to use and promote it, WPTV managers should involve other entities in the planning and development stages of projects. Not only does coordination of services make more efficient use of the state funds supporting WPTV, but it also may generate financial assistance and increased commitment to WPTV efforts. The new WPTV general manager has indicated that he places a high priority on consistently building such partnerships, and has begun initiating contacts for the purpose of coordinating efforts.