

APBC meeting – March 18, 2021

KHNS Emergency report

Haines had a major landslide and weather event in early December 2020 with a tragic loss of life and property. The extreme weather events led by heavy wind, rain, snow and resultant utility fluctuations also dramatically affected the equipment infrastructure at KHNS. We lost a tower, antenna, STL transmitter and receiver and various pieces of office equipment. Working with the group at Alaskan Public Broadcasting Inc, we quickly came up with a plan to assess, diagnose and resolve the many issues we encountered. APBI loaned us a replacement STL Transmitter and Receiver and I applied for emergency funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting who came through quickly with a grant. We had our engineer from Anchorage on site twice in January, once to assess and plan a course of action, the second time to raise a new antenna on a separate tower. Meanwhile, we brought in a tower crew from Homer (conveniently working in Juneau at the time) to take down and dismantle the damaged tower. Local salvage crews were happy to haul away the metal and we tapped our insurance for that \$9000 bill.

We were on and off the air for two days before the landslide, trying everything we could think of and eventually had AP&T run internet to the transmitter site so we could begin broadcasting our stream. The next day the landslide happened and we were grateful to have the internet but then came the power outages which disrupted the broadcast again. The power fluctuations put enormous strain on our firewall and that too crashed. By this time, we had received the loaner equipment from APBI and were able to restore broadcast until we saw the tower damage and the engineer suggested an urgent takedown to avoid it falling on the transmitter shed. Because the tower was seriously unstable, we couldn't retrieve the antenna and it was damaged in the takedown. The continuing weather with delays in mail and transportation have hampered us but we have most of our equipment ordered, some received and more in waiting as part of our engineer's spring visit. We also have another grant submitted to help with equipment expenditures which at this point we expect will exceed \$65,000.

With the internet run to the transmitter site, we now have a somewhat solid backup when/if we have a failure but we are anything but stable on internet. The broadcast signal is much more robust and straightforward. It will be a long time, if ever, that really rapid internet is installed in the Upper Lynn Canal so we are grateful to have our broadcast signal restored and to be able to use the internet as a backup.

KHNS served our friends and neighbors well in a tough time but what was remarkable was the response from our fellow radio stations and broadcasters who reached out immediately: did we need equipment, personnel, resources, money, an entire radio-in-a-box? (It was staged and ready to go). The news team was offered editorial help and they worked together with journalists from Juneau, Anchorage and Sitka, helping to alleviate some of the pressure of non-stop reporting. The response from our friends in radio was immediate and generous and a wonderful example of the network of Alaska radio people who want to make sure we all thrive

together. I know I say this a lot, but there is no overstating the kind of support our network provides. Since I arrived at KHNS in 2011, I have been uplifted to know that the network exists, that it is extremely generous and that there is always *someone* who has experience with what I need or someone capable to recommend me too. That has been priceless.