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Dear WSPR Members,

I have been looking forward to attending the great sessions on your Fall Conference agenda and to the opportunity to talk with you, and am so disappointed that a confluence of events has made it impossible to be there. I'm grateful that Paul Stankavich has agreed to help me at least share some thoughts with you by way of this letter.

It's been an honor to serve as Interim CEO & President of NPR for the past 8 months. My watchwords in the role have been "collaboration" and "communication," and I hope you agree that we have made good progress during that time.

Collaboration with Member stations remains a bedrock of our work. StateImpact is a great example of a ground-breaking partnership with Member stations. We've asked Executive Editor Dick Meyer to take a lead role on StateImpact for NPR, working with stations on both the management and fundraising aspects of the project. StateImpact stations are producing a terrific body of work for their audiences on-air and online, and we are pleased that many stories have also appeared on *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, *Weekend Edition* and *Weekend Edition Sunday*, and many more have appeared on the npr.org homepage in the blog rotator.

The Health Care in the States Reporting Partnership, a collaboration between NPR, Member stations, and Kaiser Health News is helping NPR and 24 Member stations to hone our reporting on the topic of health care. And again, while filing for the newsmagazines is not the primary goal of this project, we are grateful that stories by participating Member stations are appearing in our national programs.

NPR Digital Services is well on the way in bringing more support to stations' digital ambitions. And we're keeping stations top of mind in our work on connected cars, as you heard from Kinsey Wilson at your meeting.

Collaboration continues in the Development world. We've launched the New Gift Annuity Pilot Project with 13 Members. This pilot will set the stage for broader rollout of a planned giving program designed to bring powerful benefits to both Member stations and NPR. We expect that our Development team will also soon be sending out a request for proposals from stations who are interested in participating in a Philanthropic Station Partnership. Under this program, we will implement a "go deep" strategy with a pilot group of stations that want to work closely with NPR

on cultivating major donors in their markets. Our future efforts in collaborative fundraising will be educated by what we learn in this pilot.

I was able to witness firsthand the power of a Member station and NPR combining forces recently, when a friend of mine in Dallas hosted a donor cultivation event for guests of both NPR and KERA. Mary Anne Alhadeff and I agree that, by working together, we put together a much stronger event than either of us could have done on our own, with the same kind of local/national appeal that makes our news so strong.

And NPR Music is “collaboration-palooza”! In the past year, we've joined forces to create "live event SWAT teams" to cover large, national music festivals. Through the work of these SWAT teams, live streams, archive recordings, images and more are made available to stations to feature on-air or online.

At South by Southwest in Austin, our partners included KUT, The Current, WXPB, WFUV, KEXP and KCRW. KUT's David Brown co-hosted our first live video broadcast from the festival. With KEXP, we covered the Sasquatch Music Festival in Washington State for the first time. We were also joined by hosts and reporters from OPB, KUT and The Current. We continued our work with WFUV and Folk Alley at the Newport Folk Festival and were joined by WBGO, WGBH and WYPR at the Newport Jazz Festival.

We launched a new series called *The Mix* to feature special digital music streams curated by public radio DJ's across the system. Streams include an Ozark Mountain Mix from KSMU, Soca Hits from WLRN and a Gospel Music Mix from KUNM. We've worked with 10 new stations this year through this series. These streams are spotlighted along with all the station streams featured on our site and via the NPR Music iPhone app. We also launched a new series with KCRW called *Wednesdays Become Eclectic*, featuring their best studio sessions on a weekly basis.

And with support from The Mellon Foundation, we are working with classical music stations to broadcast and webcast major events across the country and build the necessary digital tools to share these experiences more widely across the system.

Mike Riksen has shared with you a detailed look at federal funding issues, so you know that our strategy on that front is all about collaborating with Member stations, understanding that all politics is, in fact, local. We want to provide you tools and support to help you be even more effective advocates.

We continue our efforts to improve communications with Member stations, not only with frequent AREps messages but also in activities such as the Digital Services roadshow and station interconnects on topics of interest. Dana Davis Rehm and her team are also working hard to focus and hone our PR messaging and create a campaign that will help us all be more successful in spreading awareness and understanding of NPR and public radio beyond our current audiences.

And while "communicating with" someone is often assumed to mean talking, we've tried to be mindful that it also means listening. We heard your concerns about the Digital Services plan, and revised it in response to those concerns. We heard your concerns about breaking news coverage, and we've we've put new systems in place to respond with greater speed and agility when major news unfolds. I hope you'll all respond to the quick, six question survey we recently circulated to find out how you think we're doing on the breaking news front. The survey closes on November 17th.

We also heard you when you said that we needed to develop new programming, and we've created two new, strong programming concepts. In March, we conducted a pilot for *Ask Me Another*, a weekend program concept that focuses around playing games and puzzles with a live studio audience. We refined the concept in response to feedback from station programmers and listeners, recently did a second pilot. It was a smash, and we made public radio history - or the first time ever, a public radio audience had to be told to "settle down"! The audience was having so much fun that their laughter and applause were drowning out the host and puzzlemasters, and we actually had to re-cut 2 segments of the pilot as a result. We plan to produce a series of 13 programs of this lively, engaging show in FY12.

Our second concept, *HOW TO DO EVERYTHING*, is currently a weekly podcast, but we've been testing and learning, and have begun to feature segments of it in the newsmagazines. Produced by two senior producers from *Wait Wait, Don't Tell Me*, Mike Danforth & Ian Chillag, it's a cross between an advice column and a survival guide, answering listeners' questions about...anything. Like how to pick a name for a military campaign. What to do if you meet the queen. How to stop the presses (which the New York Times actually had to do when Bin Laden was killed). Their magic is in picking colorful and informative guests to answer the questions. And we've now made *HOW TO DO EVERYTHING* available through PRX for use in your local programming.

In all that we do now, we try very hard to ensure that top of mind is the question, "What about the stations?" By way of example, you've now seen the highly successful rollout of *NPR's Back Seat Book Club*. Conceived by Michele Norris, this segment is designed specifically for our younger listeners – those in the 9 to 14 age range who listen to NPR programs sitting in the back seat of the car or at the kitchen table. We ask young people and their parents to join us in reading a special book each month. We also invite them to join in the conversation with that book's author, to let us know what they think about the book, and to submit their questions for the author. This is a great way for *All Things Considered* to celebrate kids' books and to provide a special treat for all those youngsters who are fed a steady diet of NPR news. I'm sure you see the immediate appeal, but the idea quickly gained traction at NPR in large part because of the opportunities we see for Member stations to partner with parents, schools, teachers, libraries and bookstores around these segments.

Anyone on the NPR Board of Directors will attest to the fact that my constant message to the Board has been that NPR is not a broken place, in need of a new CEO to come fix it. The facts of the past eight months demonstrate that. Our journalism never skipped a beat. We've provided extraordinary coverage of events like the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the Arab Spring and, together with Member stations, the tornadoes, floods, droughts and wildfires around our own

country. Our coverage of the killing of Osama bin Laden kept us on the air almost around the clock, and was the catalyst for us doing what was needed to make our digital team a true 24/7 operation. Our 9/11 anniversary coverage was superb. Our 2012 election coverage is already in high gear. And we continue every day to tell compelling stories like those of the major faults and injustices in the foster care system for Native Americans in South Dakota uncovered by Laura Sullivan, and Tom Bowman's unflinching and intimate account of what life is like for the families of the Marines of the Darkhorse Battalion, who suffered more casualties and wounds than any other unit in Afghanistan.

We've also made good progress in our diversity efforts, recruited a prolific new Ombudsman, and developed a new set of ethics principles to guide our journalism and provided company-wide training on journalism ethics, among other internal improvements.

So, what we need is not someone to come and fix NPR, but a visionary leader who can take us to the next level. And I'm pleased to report that is exactly who the Board has brought us.

I've been privileged to know Gary Knell for almost 20 years, and he is a friend. We've worked together on a number of projects in the children's space, most notably as two of the key participants in the creation of the Sprout 24/7 children's cable channel, a joint venture among HIT Entertainment (for whom I worked at the time), Sesame Workshop, PBS and Comcast. We spent a lot of time together in the 18 months it took to negotiate that deal, and I had the chance to see Gary in action in complex and sometimes contentious negotiations. In that setting and others, I've seen him combine his deep commitment to mission with savvy business skills to very good effect. And I know that he believes deeply in the power of public media to inform and enlighten. He also understands its challenges and complexities.

I hope many of you were able to join us on the interconnect when we introduced Gary, and that you agree that he is just the leader we need - an experienced media CEO with proven leadership skills, a deep commitment to mission and a record of success. We're looking forward to his December 1 start.

In closing, I want to say again what an honor it is to serve as Interim CEO. I can't find words big enough to convey my gratitude to the NPR Directors, Trustees and staff, to Member stations and to the many others in the public media community for the incredible support that has been extended to me. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future as, under Gary's leadership, we all rise to even greater achievements.

Very best regards to you all,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joyce". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "Very best regards to you all,".