

WTVP Community Broadcasting Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2012

Present – Adam Sloan, Carole Hill, Tara Cobble, Cindy Kennedy, Henry Litchfield, Andra Connor, Steve Tarter, Maggie Heppner, Mary Jo Lewellen, Linda Miller

Linda Miller told the group that the fall schedule had been announced by PBS. "The philosophy and the thinking in making up the schedule is that the 50 to 65-year-old age group is a very important demographic group," she said.

While PBS has traditionally gained an audience with the very young ("Sesame Street") and the very old ("Masterpiece Theatre"), PBS has done research on other age groups with the idea of expanding the network's market share, said Miller. "Wagner's Ring Cycle will be a major attraction on 'Great Performances at the Met' in September plus there are a number of political debates scheduled," she said.

A debate between State Senator Dave Koehler (D) and challenger Pat Sullivan (R) will be shown at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 18. In partnership with the League of Women Voters and the Institute for Principled Leadership in Public Service at Bradley University, WTVP will host a live debate between the candidates for the 17th Congressional District: Bobby Schilling(R) and challenger Cheri Bustos(D) at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 25.

Miller said the station would run a pledge drive in November and December. Shows to watch in 2013 include "Downtown Abbey" that will be back with Shirley MacLaine in the cast. Another British program of note that will be on the PBS schedule this fall is "Call the Midwife," said Miller. She also talked about the importance of the community surveys that advisory board members are asked to obtain. "The surveys help by helping to answer the question as to what the station should be doing. We take public affairs very seriously," she said.

Miller spoke about the growing trend of programming becoming available on Channel 47's website. "You can see a lot online now. The idea is that the public can view (programs) when they want to," she said. Other board members added their own comments regarding programming trends. "We watch very few things anymore in real time," said Tara Cobble. "People now watch what they want when they want," said Chairman Adam Sloan, adding "For now, a large part of the WTVP audience are real-time viewers. That will change."

A discussion on the growth of technology followed. "A lot of people are addictively consumed by technology," said Andra Connor. "Technology breeds technology," said Sloan, noting that 30 percent of viewers watch WTVP (for some period of time) on mobile devices. WTVP GM Chet Tomczyk stopped by the meeting to introduce new board member Griffin Hammond from Bloomington.

Linda Miller then talked about a number of new local productions in the works at WTVP, touching on themes such as cooking, philosophy and sewing.

The next meeting was announced as Oct. 9.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Tarter