Report: Network of Networks Meeting

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser

On May 28, 2013, leaders from 9 independent media organizations held their first ever informal meeting. The meeting was organized by Jo Ellen Green Kaiser (TMC) and Ginny Berson (NFCB), and underwritten by INN and TMC.

Leaders in attendance were:

* Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, Executive Director, The Media Consortium (TMC)
* Ginny Berson, Vice President, National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB)
* Janis Lane-Ewart, Interim President, NFCB
* Keri Stokstand, Chair of the Board, Alliance for Community Media (ACM)
* Debra Reynolds, Board Member, ACM
* Todd Thayer, Board Treasurer, ACM
* Jack Walsh, Executive Director, National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC)
* Ellin Leary, Executive Director, Youth Radio
* Sue Schardt, Executive Director, Association of Independents in Radio (AIR)
* Sandy Close, Executive Director, New America Media (NAM)
* Tiffany Shackleford, Executive Director, Association for Alternative Newsmedia (AAN)
* Kevin Davis, Executive Director, Investigative News Network (INN)’

The meeting’s main purpose was to introduce leaders to each other in an informal environment. After an unstructured cocktail hour and a dinner, Ginny, Jo Ellen, and Kevin each spoke briefly about opportunities for interassociation collaboration. There followed an informal discussion around resources we could share and services we could offer members.

POINTS OF INTEREST

**Business Tools and Services.** Most conversation focused on these very practical tools to better support our members. There was interest in AAN’s C-Xense ad-serving content platform, in TMC’s shared Vocus account, and in INN’s CJET business training program. In terms of services, there was interest in INN’s liability insurance, and a discussion about implementing health or retirement benefits across all our associations.

**Content collaboration**. The future of journalism may well be sustained, ongoing collaboration around content. We briefly discussed ways publishers at INN, TMC, and AAN could work with outlets represented by ACM and NFCB to create stronger radio and video content. There was also interest in AIR’s Localore project, and content collaborations at a number of associations.

**Media Policy.** Independent media is the basis of American democracy, but also relies on the people to keep the airwaves open and accessible. Several of the gathered associations put time and energy into media policy, including NAMAC, NAM, ACM and TMC. There was interest among these groups in coordinating media policy briefings, and doing media policy advocacy work together.

OUTCOMES

There was strong agreement that we should continue to meet as a group.

A wiggio was created (by Debra Reynolds of ACM) for that purpose.

TMC used the wiggio to open its briefing on the FCC chair hearings to group members. We expect further conversation to flow over this network.

NEXT STEPS

* Pull together 1 or more business tools or services that can be offered network-wide by December 2014.
* Develop partnerships between associations in this network, such as strengthening bonds between INN and TMC, ACM and NAMAC, etc.
* Fundraise for a 2-day retreat in summer 2014 so leaders can develop a strategic plan for further collaboration and coordination.