



PUBLIC MEDIA VENTURE GROUP ACQUIRES W35DZ-D FOR WCTE

BOULDER, CO (April 6) — The Public Media Venture Group (PMVG) has received a donation of W35DZ-D, a low-power television (LPTV) station licensed to Algood, TN. PMVG will construct the station in collaboration with public TV station WCTE, Cookeville, TN. The station will transmit from WCTE’s tower in Cookeville. Once on the air, the station will double the amount of free, over-the-air television available to the Upper Cumberland region.

The donation was made by Lowcountry 34 Media, an LPTV owner based out of Beaufort, South Carolina. The FCC approved the assignment of the station to PMVG as the new licensee on March 28, 2022. PMVG will act quickly to build this station since, according to a limitation on the station’s authorization, it must begin on-air service before the end of July 2022.

PMVG and WCTE will work together to take advantage of the flexibility the FCC has provided in its rules that allow low-power television stations to “flash cut” from ATSC 1.0 to ATSC 3.0. PMVG has been working for the last year to identify ways to use this flexibility to help its public television station members transition to ATSC 3.0. Low-power options are particularly important to several PMVG members who, like WCTE, operate the only full-power television stations in the regions they serve and have no potential full-power transition partners to work with. W35DZ-D is currently the only practical way that WCTE can begin to provide ATSC 3.0 service to the population it serves.

PMVG and WCTE plan to transition the new station to ATSC 3.0 in the near future. Once transitioned, PMVG and WCTE will not only use the superior capabilities of ATSC 3.0 to provide enhanced television programming to viewers, they will also leverage the non-broadcast capabilities of ATSC 3.0 to help bridge the digital divide for students in rural Tennessee and expand the amount and effectiveness of weather and emergency alerting to the region.

The FCC has also approved the assignment of LPTV station W29EN-D in Beaufort, SC, to PMVG from Lowcountry 34 Media. Once built, these stations will bring nearly \$1 million in new broadcast assets to PMVG and public television.

"PMVG is thrilled to coordinate and close on the donation of these stations to benefit WCTE and SCETV," said PMVG CEO Marc Hand. "Our first priority is to do everything we can to bring our member stations options to transition to ATSC 3.0, which is of the utmost importance during this time of rapid transformation and advancements in the broadcast industry. Securing these low-power licenses that enable two of our stations to bring the benefits of NextGen TV to their communities exemplifies our purpose and value as an organization."

"Access to education is the greatest opportunity we can give our viewers, and establishing an infrastructure like this gives WCTE PBS the foundation to be ATSC 3.0-ready," said Avery Hutchins, WCTE President and CEO. "This work makes it possible for WCTE PBS to serve our community by closing the digital divide among students while improving the OTA experience for others. WCTE PBS couldn't be more excited to be working with PMVG on this initiative. The success of this collaborative work will be a win for public safety communication, civil literacy, and At-Home learning initiatives such as datacasting."

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"Our company helps broadcasters achieve the highest and best use of their license assets," said Jeff Winemiller, owner and general manager of Lowcountry 34 Media. "Our partnership with public television has brought important resources to communities in Tennessee, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. We're proud to be working with the Public Media Venture Group to advance the important service that public television stations provide."

About the Public Media Venture Group: PMVG is a nonprofit business development consortium of 33 public media organizations committed to furthering the mission and financial vitality of public media by developing and implementing a range of new service opportunities focused on the local communities these public media organizations serve. PMVG is especially focused on leveraging the power of the new broadcast platform, NextGen TV. PMVG media organizations own and operate 112 public stations that together reach 250 million people. PMVG is led by Marc Hand and a national board that consists of three of the PMVG station managers.

About WCTE: WCTE is a small, rural public media organization located in Cookeville, Tennessee, serving a fourteen-county region known as the Upper Cumberland. It is the only broadcast television station within a 75-mile radius of Cookeville, nestled in between Knoxville, Nashville, and Chattanooga. The award-winning station is recognized nationally, regionally, and locally as a full-service PBS member with a strong emphasis on locally created content, education, public safety, and a national conduit for independent producers. WCTE currently focuses on the Upper Cumberland area, although the signal reaches 1.3 million viewers throughout middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky with over-the-air broadcast, cable, and satellite services.

About Lowcountry 34 Media: Lowcountry 34 Media LLC is a broadcast engineering firm building infrastructure to support both LPTV and full-power stations nationwide. Lowcountry 34 Media owns 80 LPTV CPs in 27 states.

MEDIA CONTACT: Marc Hand, marc@publicmediaventure.com; 303-781-5101

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