

October 18, 2017

Dear Fellow Broadcasters:

It is with a great deal of excitement that I write you today as the newly appointed Executive Director of the Arkansas Broadcasters Association. This is the first communication in what I hope will be a long and fruitful association between myself and this organization, and each of you.

First, a bit about me. I grew up in the very small town of Wayne, Ohio in the rural northwest portion of that state. Life after high school had me dreaming of being a sports commentator on ESPN, and to that end I chose to pursue a degree in Mass Communications at a small school in the mountains of Northeast Georgia, Piedmont College. The faculty at Piedmont, particularly in the Mass Communications department, was phenomenal and I was afforded opportunities above and beyond what many people have the chance to experience. I remained on as a Graduate Assistant in the Mass Communications department after graduation as I pursued and completed my MBA. While at Piedmont, I met the love of my life, and wife, Sarah, who was also a student in the Mass Comm. program at Piedmont; and we are currently experiencing the joys of parenthood for the first time with our son, Maxwell, who was born at the end of July.

Professionally, I developed a loving relationship with the medium of radio while in college, and had the opportunity to work with some great people both on- and off-air at WCON in Cornelia, Georgia and WDUN in Gainesville, Georgia. I remember fondly those early days when I got to read the obituaries on air at lunchtime, and my entire hometown would come to a standstill while they tuned in the live stream to listen. What I began to realize, though, was that my true passion existed not just with radio, but the entire broadcast industry – especially in advocacy and promoting the good work of our nation's first informers. To that end I was fortunate to receive a job as the Office Manager at the Georgia Association of Broadcasters where I have spent the last three years, eventually assuming the post of Director of Communications and Operations.

I am especially proud of the work the Georgia Association does, and feel we have accomplished many things during my tenure including strengthening ties with the Governor's office and our legislators, working more closely with our educational institutions to assure our broadcasters-in-training are provided the opportunities they deserve; creating a more public and responsive face for broadcasting in the state; forging a much closer alliance with the National Association of Broadcasters; developing a stronger financial base from which to operate; and providing ever-greater opportunities for our members to be recognized as leaders in the industry both within the state and nationally.

In the same vein, I see a wealth of opportunity for the Arkansas Broadcasters Association to expand and grow, strengthening a well-deserved spot as a much more nationally recognized organization and membership. While I certainly have some thoughts in mind and am already in discussion with our Board on strategies and initiatives to move us forward, I do not come here with pre-conceived notions or an agenda. This organization belongs to you – each of you – on-air, off-air, radio, television, from smallest to largest, and I want it to represent what that which is important to you. To that end it is my plan to spend a great deal of my time listening and meeting with you; hearing your concerns and needs, and then putting an agenda in action that will enhance the broadcasting climate of this state, elevate our Art, and provide us with the opportunities and ability to meet the challenges of the ever-changing face of broadcasting. It is my hope that when people think of the "Natural" State, they may soon begin to equate it with a different phrase – "Arkansas is Broadcasting, Naturally." Together I believe we can accomplish that goal.

I want to return to my earlier story for a moment. You see what makes broadcasting great is the passion and the love each person pours into what they do each day. Few of us may ever achieve the longevity or notoriety of one of our greats like KFFA's "Sunshine" Sonny Payne; but whether we are the voice of "King Biscuit Time," the face of the local weather, the videographer behind tonight's lead story, the person in the booth making sure things run smoothly, or simply the kid who reads the obituaries at noon, we provide a great and essential service which has always been to entertain, inform and influence our fellow Arkansans. I hope each of you realizes that people stop a part of their day, each and every day, because of you . . . that is an awesome responsibility and something in which you should take great pride.

I look forward in the very near future to meeting with as many of you as time permits. Please know that I believe strongly this Association is yours and meant to serve. I pledge to do that to the very best of my ability. Please reach out to me when you are having successes I can share and in times when you need my help. I pledge you the support of this Association and my office to assist you and your fellow broadcasters in whatever means available to us. Because, after all . . .

Arkansas IS Broadcasting, Naturally!

Sincerely,

C. Luke Story, Executive Director  
Arkansas Broadcasters Association