

KPBS SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY DESK

NPR sponsored research shows a powerful opportunity for public radio journalists to fulfill a major unmet audience demand. Audiences cite science, technology, and environment issues as the most pressing issues of our time – yet they find these issues severely under-reported by their preferred media sources.

These issues include increasing energy demand, loss of threatened and endangered species, land development and urban sprawl, pollution and food contamination, nuclear waste disposal, matters of climate change and the impacts of global warming, population growth and natural resource depletion, water quality and water availability. The list goes on.

KPBS proposes a Science and Technology Desk to employ multiple reporting specialists. These professional multi-media reporters would appear on KPBS Radio, Television, and Web and work in cooperation with National Public Radio, the California Report and other shared news outlets. KPBS has already secured funding for one of these reporters: Ed Joyce. Ed works tirelessly to inform our audience of issues and trends in the science and environment field. Additional funding will allow the station to more than double its resources dedicated to this important beat.

The Desk operates like a mini editorial unit within the overall editorial agenda of the station. Ideally, there will be two full time reporters, along with a web developer, and editor. The reporters will offer a deeper understanding of science, technology, and related fields and would – when appropriate -- provide solution-based coverage, especially as that coverage blends into the coverage of San Diego-based scientific research. There is a wealth of life-changing work taking place at the Burnham Institute, the Salk Institute, SDSU, UCSD and Scripps. Many of the discoveries are unknown outside of the local scientific community.

KPBS/FM has a weekly listening audience of over 263,000 people while NPR has a national weekly listening audience of over 22 million people. KPBS television has a viewing audience of over 744,977 weekly.

The fund would provide, over a year's time, roughly 100 daily radio news reports; between 20-40 in-depth radio features; an estimated 20 appearances on KPBS radio and TV news analysis programs; plus corresponding web reports and frequent reports for regional and national networks. KPBS Reporters are also available for visits to schools, community groups, and special events.

The annual costs of a Science and Technology Reporter would be \$80,000 per year for three years. This would cover salary, benefits, overhead costs, start-up costs, training and equipment. With this funding we could attract a talented reporter who would be assured of the position's continuity.

A commitment of \$240,000 would insure a three-year commitment, which would be necessary to create this position, assure its continuity and sufficient resources for quality production.

Recognition

The funder of the Science and Technology Reporting Endowment will be recognized daily on KPBS/FM. The donor will also be recognized around science and technology programming on KPBS television and on any reports that are submitted for regional and national broadcast.