

Regarding the Operation and Programming
Of The

Alaska Rural Communications Service

These Policies revised and approved on August 31, 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS) is a shared system providing five general types of service: live news and sports, cultural, public service, instructional, and entertainment television.

B. While every attempt should be made to keep the system as flexible as possible regarding use, certain scheduling policies have been established for the various user classes. These policies have, more or less, developed as the system has matured and have become established in line with the actual usage of the system. These scheduling policies are outlined below.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Alaska Public Broadcasting, Inc. and the Satellite Interconnection Project are the agencies ensuring the proper management of ARCS and providing the avenues for necessary rural representation for selecting television programs to be carried on ARCS to rural audiences.

B. The ARCS Council is the advisory organization responsible for deciding the ARCS programming provided to the rural residents of the State.

C. The ARCS Council is composed of 19 representatives made up as follows:

One each from each of the 12 regional not-for-profit Native Corporations appointed by the corporation (12 members),

Two from the general public, at-large, appointed by the Alaska Public Broadcasting, Inc.

One from the Department of Education

One from the University of Alaska Public Broadcasting

One from Public Broadcasting, appointed by the Public Broadcasting System

One from Bethel Broadcasting, Inc.

One from the Anchorage Television Consortium. This shall be a non-voting member.

D. It is the function of the ARCS Council to represent the interests of the rural residents of the State of Alaska in the matters of programming ARCS.

E. It is the responsibility of this Council, as a whole body, to serve without bias or preferential treatment to any select group, agency, or organization and to respect the rights and opinions of all in a fair and equal manner. Communications regarding ARCS are to be directed to the Council as a whole. Individual Council Members may refer all contacts to the ARCS Coordinator who will distribute them to the entire council.

F. All policy decisions made by the ARCS Council must be in compliance with the legal requirements and contractual provisions by which ARCS successfully operates.

G. The ARCS Council shall, once per year, during the regularly scheduled fall meeting, elect officers, serving for a term of one year each. The officers to be elected are: President, Vice-President, and Secretary. An officer will be elected by a majority vote of council members present so long as a quorum (one more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the current appointed members) is present for the meeting in which the election is taking place.

H. The ARCS Council shall have an Executive Committee. It shall be comprised of the Officers plus two members from the other members of the Council selected by the newly elected President. The Executive Committee will be formed during the same meeting that the election of officers takes place. The Executive Committee will assume those duties spelled out in these guidelines.

III. SCHEDULING POLICIES

A. Sign-On and Sign-Off: The time from sign-on to sign-off will be scheduled by the ARCS Council. All scheduling time referred to in this document is Alaska Time.

B. Public Service Time: National, state, and local emergency announcements will preempt all programming.

C. Requests for Satellite Time: All requests for programming time will be evaluated by the ARCS Council.

IV. PROGRAM GUIDELINES

A. This section establishes guidelines regarding program material submitted by organizations requesting time on ARCS.

B. Alaska Productions: The ARCS Council encourages locally produced programs for the Alaska statewide audience.

C. Program Submissions: Independent producers requesting programming time must present their requests in writing and provide VHS videotape for screening to the ARCS program coordinator.

D. Production Standards: Program material, if approved, must meet acceptable broadcast standards with regard to quality of content and production.

E. Entertainment Program Selection: Entertainment programs will be selected from the local affiliates of all networks and independent program producers, if permission to carry programs is available.

F. Sports Programming: Sports programming will be evaluated on a seasonal basis.

G. Political Broadcasting: The ARCS Council recognizes the importance of political broadcasting to an informed public. In addition, reasonable access to broadcasting facilities and equal opportunities for candidates to access the airwaves contribute to public participation in the election process. Recognizing these benefits to the public, the ARCS Council will promulgate its political broadcasting policies three months prior to primary elections to ensure that legally qualified candidates for statewide and federal offices have access to broadcast time on ARCS.

H. Religious Groups/Faiths are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Program material may not be used to proselytize.

2. Religious music may be treated as any other cultural art form, but may not be used to proclaim a specific religious doctrine (i.e., traditional music of the various religious festivals is acceptable).

3. The Bible, or other holy books representing the various faiths and denominations, may be treated as any other document in a comparative discussion of the many faiths or when used during an interview or other newsworthy coverage.

4. Historical documentaries depicting one aspect of our multi-faceted culture will be considered just as any other historical documentary.

I. Deviations from the Established Schedule:

1. It is the intent of the ARCS Council to keep deviations from the established schedule to a minimum. However, the Council recognizes that the program providers throughout the year make routine, minor, program schedule changes based upon many factors such as current events, competitive program needs and last minute network program replacements with specials. Such routine changes do not normally affect an entire block of established program schedule for extended periods of time. It is the intent of the Council that the ARCS Coordinator be given the latitude to schedule such changes without the need to notify the Council of every such routine, minor schedule change.

2. For the purpose of this section, minor changes will be defined as those changes that are caused to be made in the ARCS schedule by temporary changes in station or network lineups so that they now differ from that which the council originally selected. Examples of these changes would include, but not be limited to, swapping out a 'network night' in order to carry a selected special event, or carriage of a part 2 of a special presentation, inclusion of an important national or local news event created on short notice.

3. A major change would be defined as one creating a long-term change in the fundamental schedule as determined by vote of the council.

4. The following guidelines are to be consulted when a major changes to the ARCS schedule are requested or required:

a. The ARCS Council is to be notified of significant, major deviations in writing at the regularly scheduled meetings.

b. If 'a', as stated above, is not possible due to the time frame involved, as might occur in the case of important news stories, then telephone confirmation with the Executive Committee by the ARCS Coordinator or his/her designee is required.

c. If neither 'a' or 'b' is possible, then the ARCS Coordinator will use his or her best judgment as to rural acceptance of the proposed schedule change. Such judgment shall take into account the policy guidelines as established in this document, and the Executive Committee will be advised at the earliest possible time.

d. In all cases when the rural feed schedule has to be altered, changes will be announced or published as soon as is practically possible.

J. Schedule Dissemination: It is the intent of the ARCS Council to provide rural viewers with the broadcast schedule in one or more forms. It is the responsibility of the program coordinator to expedite the distribution of the ARCS schedule to rural media representatives. When a situation arises that requires preemption of the programming, the ARCS program coordinator will disseminate the given changes.

K. Amendments: These Policy Guidelines can be amended by an affirmative vote of no less than nine members of the Council, provided 30 days notice of the proposed amendment has been sent by certified mail to all Council members. In the case of a Council-as-a-whole meeting, however, the Policy Guidelines can be amended by an affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of Council members in attendance.