

For Immediate Release

NET General Manager Rod Bates Announces Retirement

LINCOLN, Neb. (June 22, 2012) – After 16 years as Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) General Manager, Rod Bates announced he will retire March 31, 2013. Bates is only the second leader in the statewide public broadcaster's 58-year history. He was hired when the network's founding General Manager Jack G. McBride retired in 1996.

“Our essential Television, Radio and educational programs are stronger than ever and NET has a talented team in place to ensure a smooth transition,” Bates explained during the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission meeting Thursday in Lincoln.

As general manager, Bates is in charge of a staff of more than 200 employees with an annual budget of \$22 million from state, federal and private sources. In addition, Bates is the Director of University Television and general manager for station KUON-TV, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Secretary/Treasurer, NET Foundations for Radio and Television; Chair, Board of Trustees, Association of Public Television Stations; Chair, Board of Directors, American Public Television; Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, National Educational Telecommunications Association; Member, Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee of the Public Broadcasting Service board; Member, Executive Committee of the University Licensee Association; Member, Board of the Organization of State Broadcast Executives; and Member, Joint Licensee Association.

Bates came to Nebraska in 1975 as a producer and director for Nebraska ETV. Ron Hull, the station's fourth employee and now NET senior advisor, interviewed and hired Bates for a temporary one-year assignment while on vacation in San Diego based upon the urging of a colleague at San Diego State University. Bates had directed an Emmy-award winning drama “The Magic Man” while a student there.

“We had a dream – to bring the best of the world's culture, news and public affairs to the people of Nebraska through non-commercial television,” Hull said of those early years. “NET has surpassed my wildest dreams for success in meeting its mission and Rod Bates' leadership has brought NET to the highest level of service in our history. He has truly made a most positive difference in the culture of our state during his 10 years on staff and 16 years as general manager in shaping the success that NET is today,” he added.

After that first year, Bates was offered a permanent position as a senior producer and later was promoted to assistant director and then director of development for Nebraskans for Public Television, Inc. In 1985 he left NET to serve as the director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for then Governor Bob Kerrey. In 1987, he founded Bates and Associates, a Lincoln communications consulting company. Bates is a graduate of San Diego State University and he and his wife Robin live in Lincoln. They have three grown children.

“We’ve been fortunate to have Rod’s leadership at NET,” according to Commission Chair Dick Shoemaker of Cambridge. “Both he and NET are recognized nationally for documentaries, gavel-to-gavel legislative coverage and technology innovation. NET is one of Nebraska’s finest treasures as it connects every corner of our state,” he added.

The mission of NET is to enrich lives and engage minds by connecting communities and celebrating Nebraska with services that educate, entertain and enlighten. NET connects the entire state as Nebraska’s PBS and NPR stations and includes Television, Radio, news, sports, and educational programming. On November 1, 1954, KUON-TV was activated, becoming the nation’s ninth educational station and making Nebraska an early pioneer in the broadcast industry. Today, it consists of 9 transmitters, 14 translators and a terrestrial broadband interconnection system. NET is a dual licensee of the University of Nebraska and the State of Nebraska’s Educational Telecommunications Commission.

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<p><u>Editor’s Note:</u> A photograph of Rod Bates is available. Please contact Mary Jane Winqest at 402.470.6247 or mjwinqest@netnebraska.org should you want a photo or have questions. Cell # is 402.540.0756.</p>
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NET Television:

NET1 is Nebraska’s first public television broadcast service and includes PBS and award-winning, locally produced public television programming; **NET2 World** offers live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral, and other news and public affairs programming; **NET3 Create** is a 24-hour channel featuring the most popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series; and **NET-HD** presents high-definition digital broadcast programming displayed in a wide-screen format.

NET Radio:

NET Radio broadcasts on the following frequencies: Alliance/91.1 FM; Bassett/90.3 FM; Chadron/91.9 FM; Columbus/90.3 FM; Culbertson/92.7 FM; Falls City/91.7 FM; Harrison/89.5 FM; Hastings/Grand Island/89.1 FM; Lexington/88.7 FM; Lincoln/91.1 FM; Max/93.3 FM; Merriman/91.5 FM; Norfolk/89.3 FM; and North Platte/91.7 FM.

(more)

Rod Bates Key Accomplishments

- Transition from analog to digital technology which improved picture and sound and provided multicasting for four television channels and two radio signals
- Extensive Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center renovation provides for more than 50 organizations to utilize NET's state-of-the-art meeting and conference spaces each year
- Debt on digital conversion (\$31 million) and building renovation (\$15 million) paid in full
- Moved from satellite to terrestrial distribution of its signal resulting in 75% cost savings
- NET issued Amber Alerts have resulted in 100% recovery of children since 2002
- NET streams live coverage from 11 different state government venues, including the main legislative chamber, seven committee hearing rooms, the Nebraska Supreme Court, the Nebraska Appellate Court, the Governor's hearing room and from the Nebraska Department of Education
- Listeners and viewers connect with NET on multiple platforms, including podcasts, e-newsletters, NET on Demand, online as well as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr
- More than 1 million viewers watch NET Television and nearly 100,000 listeners tune in to NET Radio each week
- Successful five-year \$25 million "Inspire Nebraska" campaign representing gifts from individuals in every Nebraska county as well as foundations, businesses and corporations
- NET received 455 awards for its documentaries, news and public affairs programs
- Digital recording, editing and storage has replaced film and videotape and a new Content Management System has been built as a file repository and media management tool
- Robotic cameras have been installed in the State Capitol for improved efficiency
- NET's website netNebraska.org is visited more than two million times per year
- NET's Nebraska Studies website is explored 860,000 times by 585,000 unique visitors annually
- NET Radio and University of Nebraska-Omaha's KVNO Radio have partnered to share classical music programming and expand station reach
- NET Radio's HD channel HD-2 is now available statewide, offering news all day / jazz all night
- A new app for NET Radio is offered free for iPhone and Android phones, providing users with classical and jazz music as well as news and public affairs stories
- Library of Congress honored former Nebraska veterans U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel and professor Thomas Hagel along with NET for contributing hours of raw interview footage from "Echoes of War" documentary to commence the Vietnam Veterans Collections Campaign for the Library
- Nebraska Virtual Partnership is a collaborative effort between the Nebraska Department of Education, University of Nebraska, Educational Service Units and Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) to serve K-12 students and emphasize science, technology, engineering and math as a centralized resource for students, parents and teachers across the state
- Partnership with UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications, the Hixson/Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources to guide interns through valuable hands-on work experience in journalism, television and radio
- Designed and produced hundreds of interactive multimedia projects and websites for high school courses, military training for Reserves, law enforcement training, custodial services training, career readiness, alcohol and drug abuse, and environmental quality training
- Partnership with Central Community College to develop a pilot program that will use digital archiving to support distance education

- Bates served six years on the board of directors for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and nominated former U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska to the board. Hagel is currently serving his first term.

Rod Bates Key Awards

University of Nebraska College of Journalism and Mass Communications
2009 Service to the Profession by a non-alumnus

Rotary Club # 14, Lincoln, NE
Rotarian of the Year – 2007 -08

International Association of Business Communicators
2008 Partner in Progress

Association of Public Television Stations
National Advocacy Award

Association of Public Television Stations
21st Century Award for Visionary Leadership

International Association of Business Communicators
Quill Award of Excellence, *Partners In Progress*
Quill Award of Achievement, *Celebrate Nebraska '88*
Quill Award of Excellence, *Nebraska Student Loan Program*

National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences – Columbus/Dayton/Cincinnati Chapter
Honorable Mention for Outstanding Directing, *Evening with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra*

Corporation for Public Broadcasting
Honorable Mention for Special Events, *Sports America: University of Nebraska-Lincoln vs. UCLA in Men's Gymnastics*

Central Education Network
Special Events Award, *Sports America: The 1981 Intercollegiate Rodeo*

Eudora Welty Americana Award
Honorable Mention, *Song of the Plains: The Story of Mari Sandoz*

Nebraska Broadcasters Association
Honorable Mention for Aksarben Community Service Award, *The Grand Generation*

National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences
Emmy for Best Director/Student Production, *The Magic Man*