

Tim Nelson

Interview with Bruce Turner

3/22/96

- WNMU-TV officially signed on December 28, 1972
- Turner began working for NMU in 1963
- NMU developed a division called Instructional Communications which began with WNMU-FM--public radio--1962-63 under President Harden, NMU constructed television studios in the ball room of Lee Hall, there they began a cable distribution, cable microwave community antenna distribution, throughout the U.P. serving about 33 communities
- Cost of doing this warranted spending more money and broadcasting and thus being able to reach non-cable areas
- Decision was made to apply for license to begin operating a public television station
- FCC allocated certain channels to the area, channel 19 was allocated to Marquette, NMU appealed that channel and asked for a VHF channel because in 1972, very few people could get UHF, channels 2-13 are VHF
- 1972 it cost about \$500,000 to operate the station compared to about \$1.6 million today, 1/3 of todays cost
- State government grants have been cut off but the Corporation for Fereral Broadcasting gives NMU a grant each year for \$400,000, the grant is called a Community Service Grant
- Grant is to be used to serve the community
- Some of the grant is used to pay the staff, some is used for expansion, and it pays for attorneys in Washington, some equipment and programming
- Public donations are used mostly for the programming of the various shows, \$350,000
- 1975 was the first on air fund raiser that the station held, Festival 1975, raised \$975 compared to \$67,000 in March of 1996
- 1975, on air fund raiser was the only thing done for fund raiser, no mail campaign, no telemarketing

- Festival 1975 featured going on the air and recording a pitch in English and a pitch in Finnish, the two pitches played several times and raised the \$975
- Have two on air fund raisers each year, one in March, one in December
- WNMU-TV in 1996 has direct mail campaigns telemarketing, and in August they hold a quiet campaign, which is fund raising but not on the air, sending out of letters
- Approximately 48,000 households watched channel 13 at last count
- About 96,000 watched WLUC-TV6 (an NBC affiliate in Negaunee)
- Turner said that this is excellent that they have roughly half the viewers that TV-6 has
- From the Learning Resources Center, there is a microwave dish on the top of the building, signal goes to a microwave dish in Negaunee, then goes to a microwave dish near Suicide Bowl in Ishpeming, then the signal is goes to the 1,100 foot transmitter located about 15 miles southwest of Ishpeming
- Transmitter receives signal from live and taped programs
- Transmitter has 316,000 watts of power, which transmits signal in about a 100 mile radius
- Cable companies within the primary coverage area are required to carry WNMU-TV while cable companies outside the primary coverage area have the option of carrying the station. Turner said they are foolish if they don't carry the station because they are the only station in the area
- 1972 -- 20 regularly seen programs each week
- programs were flown in because the station had no satellite, all programs on tape, tape was 2" compared to 1" and 1/2" that is used today
- Enormous boxes of tape were picked up at the airport and they were extremely heavy
- Public Eye News and the fund raisers were the only live television programs in '72
- Now call in shows, commencement, and Public Eye News are seen live
- 1963, 3 employees were working for the station, Turner in charge of production, and a technician and a person in charge of instructional communications
- 1996, 25 full time staffers work for the station

- Engineers work for the radio and the television station
- Apply for the public service grant 1 time per year
- Different sources of income so if they are short in one area they can borrow from another pool of money
- FAA made the station put the tower 15 miles southwest of Ishpeming because of the flight path of the flight of the aircraft in the Marquette/Negaunee area.
- Couldn't put the transmitter south of Marquette because of the Air Force Base
- Serves the population base better where it is now because the bulk of the people live in the central and west U.P.
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- NMIU cost about \$500,000 to operate the station compared to about \$1.5 million today, 1/3 of today's cost
- State government grants have been cut off but the Corporation for Federal Broadcasting gives NMIU a grant each year for \$400,000, the grant is called a Community Service Grant
- Grant is to be used to serve the community
- Some of the grant is used to pay the staff, some is used for expansion, and it pays for attorneys in Washington, some equipment and programming
- Public donations are used mainly for the programming of the various shows, \$350,000
- 1975 was the first on air fund raiser that the station held, Festival 1975, raised \$975 compared to \$27,000 in March of 1986
- 1975, on air fund raiser was the only thing done for fund raiser, no mail campaign, no telemarketing