



Alliance for Community Media

Promoting Civic Engagement Through Community Media

Creating a Better Future for Community Media

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” ~Peter Drucker

Background

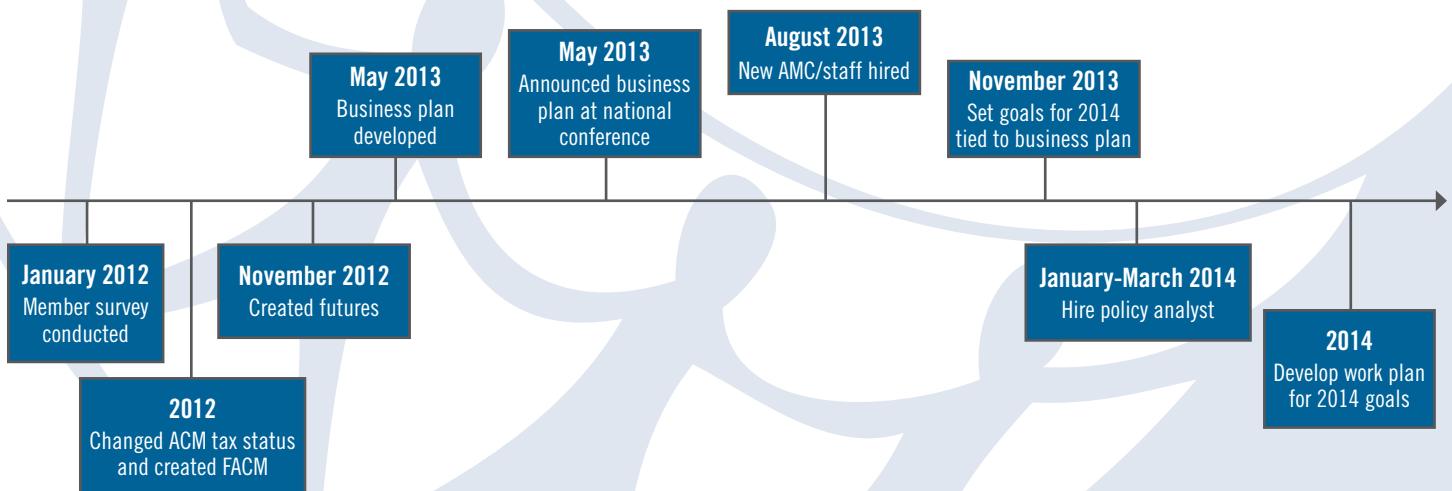
The future of community media here in the U.S. is wholly dependent upon the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) being strong enough to ensure the policy and funding framework for community media survives the next rewrite of the Telecomm Act and other future challenges.

In 2012 the ACM began an in-depth assessment of the organization and what it would take for ACM to be able to set a new course leading to a better future for community media. A Futures Committee was created to benchmark with similar organizations, survey members and to develop a business plan.

Through this process members' top priorities and concerns were identified along with an evaluation of ACM's organizational strengths and weaknesses. Additional valuable insights were gained from other organizations about the need for a multi-year building process to create strong, effective industry relationships, and the importance of creating a foundation to provide critical funding to support our work.

This information was evaluated and used to help develop a business plan that re-dedicates ACM to an expansion-oriented rather than protection-oriented vision of community media and identifies the strategies to get there.

Progress Timeline



Our Vision

- Thriving community media centers in cities and towns nationwide
- Stable funding and channel capacity for centers that have a demonstrably beneficial impact on their communities
- Infrastructure that will promote the sharing of “best practices” amongst these centers, and incentives to encourage these centers to achieve their highest potential
- Freedom from political, ideological, or commercial interference that would inhibit service delivery or use of these centers by any lawfully-engaged citizen

ACM Priorities

- Create a new vision for Public Education and Government Access (PEG) and foster a greater understanding of the vital role community media plays in engaging communities in local decision making, government transparency, emergency management planning, and community dialogue
- Provide funding and resources to build a favorable policy and funding climate for community media by establishing ACM as the leading industry resource through coalition building and growing grassroots support to affect positive policies at all levels
- Expanding our capacities for success by building and nurturing a strong network of community-based media centers and advancing our industry’s use of best practices

From Planning to Implementation – 2014 Goals

Once the business plan was established it was important to create clear and specific goals for 2014 to keep our focus sharply tuned on creating the future needed for community media.

Focus	Activity	Responsible
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a federal bill to fix PEG funding • Identify state for overturning harmful state franchising law 	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire policy advocate in Washington, DC 	ACM Board
Board Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish new FACM board by January 2015 • Create a FACM board matrix with identified skill sets needed • Identify a financial professional for both boards 	ACM Board FACM Board ACM Board
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a marketing campaign where a press packet is written on our terms that is distributed to 535 legislative offices and every organizational members office in the country • Implement a well defined region/affiliate relationship to the organization, including defining compliance and mutual benefits • Create new region/affiliate handbook • Increase paid membership by 30% • Establish 2000 new contacts including 500 new ally relationships • Get 1000 new Facebook likes • Get 1000 new Twitter followers • New website by end of 2014 	FACM Board ACM Board Both Boards
Fund Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise \$45,000 in new funding from donors outside the memberships • Implement plan to identify new revenue streams through vendors, and other advertisers, sponsorships, and underwriting • Raise additional \$65,000 • Identify 100 potential donors outside Alliance Membership • Create cash reserves for positive fund balance for both organizations 	FACM Both Boards
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, promote, and manage National Conference and trade show • Implement a trade show with 40 vendors • Hold 6 ACM webinars as a benefit to members • Create a Tech think tank group that has its first meeting and submits notes to board • Create and maintain a best practices area on the website for members 	ACM Board & Staff ACM Board & Staff ACM Board & Staff ACM Board
Hometown Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1000 entries 	FACM

Funding the Future

During this planning and development process the ACM Board and Futures Committee have faced the unpleasant truth that the business model ACM has been operating under for the past five to 10 years is no longer viable. Collectively the Board, Members and Staff must bring additional resources to the table in order for ACM to succeed in its long-term mission of creating a favorable policy and funding climate for community media.

The ACM Board and Futures Committee have carefully looked at options to fund the changes and resources necessary to create a better future for community media. As outlined in the 2014 goals, some of the funds will come from fund raising efforts and new sources of revenue. The fact remains, however, that membership dues has not been increased in many years and re-evaluating the dues structure and insuring that everyone is paying a fair share and the true cost of membership is one of the things we all can and should do. Along with a new dues structure is a clearly communicated benefit package that members can and should expect on their behalf.

A new membership dues structure will take effect for new and renewing memberships beginning May 1, 2014.

Working Together For a Better Future

Having a plan is only the first step. Maximizing our efforts requires all parts of our organization to work together so that local efforts are in sync with national initiatives and national efforts amplify the work of affiliates and members.

Board

- Providing organizational direction and strategic planning
- Cultivating leaders and building a strong board
- Raising funds
- Serving as organizational ambassadors

Staff

- Shaping national public policy
- Building national coalitions
- Cultivating foundation supporters
- Gathering Information and managing data for national and local use

Members

- Organizing grass roots support
- Advocating for local and state public policy
- Identifying and recruiting prospective institutions to join the national network
- Helping staff define “best practices” for institutions and professional staff
- Providing “best practices” training to professionals
- Gathering local data and stories to be shared nationally

