

**RESOLUTION NO. 31 - 2004**

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**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF A SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT TO PRESERVE THE VOICE OF AMERICA BETHANY STATION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND DISPENSING WITH THE SECOND READING**

**WHEREAS**, the federal government, in 1999, decommissioned and gave to West Chester Township the Voice of America Bethany Station for enhancement of the Township park's system and for historic monument purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Voice of America Bethany Station stands as an international symbol of freedom and democracy, and represents a milestone in the evolution of communication technology; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Save America's Treasures Initiative, led by First Lady Laura Bush and supported by Congress, recognizes local sites of national significance with the emphasis on providing funds for restoration and preservation of basic building functions; and,

**WHEREAS**, the West Chester Township Trustees are committed to protecting this valuable cultural resource for the community and the region; and,

**WHEREAS**, West Chester Township continues to seek out opportunities to meet its promise to preserve the Voice of America Bethany Station for historic monument purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Voice of America Bethany Station meets the criteria of the Save America's Treasures program and is in urgent need of a HVAC system and electrical system replacement as well as repairs to the exterior façade.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the West Chester Township Board of Trustees does hereby agree to:

**SECTION 1.** Authorize Township Administrator to submit an application to Save America's Treasures on behalf of the Voice of America Bethany Station in the amount of \$912,974.

**SECTION 2.** Declare that grant funding that will be used to replace the obsolete and non-functional HVAC system and electrical system as well as to complete urgent repairs to the exterior building façade.

**SECTION 3.** Declare that the Township match of \$912,974 be provided through in-kind services, donations and other non-federal grants.

**This resolution shall be adopted as an emergency necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, or welfare of the community.**

Adopted this 27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2004.

Catherine Stoker yes  
Catherine Stoker, President Yes / No

Jose Alvarez yes  
Jose Alvarez, Vice President Yes / No

George Lang YES  
George Lang, Trustee Yes / No

**ATTEST:**

Patricia Williams  
Patricia Williams, Township Clerk

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

Strain  
Donald L. Crain, Law Director

**VOICE OF AMERICA  
BETHANY RELAY STATION  
PROJECT ESTIMATE**

<b>Demolition - Existing Mechanical &amp; Electrical</b>	
Obsolete & Non-Functional Mechanical Equipment	139783.00
1944 Electrical System	23095.00
<b>Installation - Mechanical &amp; Electrical</b>	
Heating and Cooling System	782789.00
Electrical System	328187.00
<b>Exterior Stabilization</b>	
Wall Tile - Patch and Paint	75406.00
Exterior Concrete Block - Patch, Rework, and Paint	34034.00
<b>Project Subtotal</b>	<b>1383294.00</b>
Contingency (10%)	138329
Design Fees (12%)	165995
CM Services (10%) .	138329
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>1825947</b>

**CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION**

_____	First Reading
Date	
<u>April 27, 2004</u>	Emergency Reading
_____	
Date	Second Reading
_____	
Date	First Publication
<u>May 3, 2004 Journal News</u>	(After Approval)
Date and Newspaper	
<u>May 6, 2004 Pulse Journal</u>	
_____	
<u>May 10, 2004 Journal News</u>	Second Publication
Date and Newspaper	(After Approval)
<u>May 13, 2004 Pulse Journal</u>	
_____	
<u>Patricia Williams, 11/4/04</u>	Certificate of Publication
Clerk Signature & Date	

## **SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT**

### **VOICE OF AMERICA BETHANY STATION PRESERVATION PROJECT**

#### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

**In the space below, briefly summarize the proposed project. Discuss the national significance of the historic property or collection, its current condition, the nature of the threat, the proposed preservation and/or conservation work, and the project's public benefit. One continuation sheet may be attached; however, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide brief, concise narratives.**

The Voice of America Bethany Station in West Chester Township (Butler County), Ohio, stands as an international symbol of freedom and democracy and represents a significant milestone in the evolution of communication technology. Without some intervention, however, we are in danger of losing this historic 60-year-old transmitting facility that was the first to deliver Voice of America broadcasts to Europe, South America and Africa during World War II.

This proposed project addresses those most urgent needs. It is critical that the building's obsolete and non-functioning HVAC and electrical systems be replaced, and that critical repairs be made to the building's exterior facade in order to secure its future.

The Voice of America Bethany Station is the perfect example of a historic property that possesses value in illustrating the American ideal of cultivating freedom and democracy around the world. It is associated with great events and people in our history who have shaped our cultural heritage – The Cold War, President Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Louis Armstrong, Battle of the Bulge, World War II, D-Day, and too many more to mention. Locally and regionally, the Voice of America Bethany Station represents the Cincinnati-area's role as a communication technology giant and the roles of Powel Crosley and countless other innovators who made the unimaginable imaginable and delivered the timeless message of truth around the world.

The Bethany Station building is of art deco design and resembles a small WWII airfield control tower. It was built on a wartime basis given highest priority by President Roosevelt. The most impressive and inspired part of the structure was the great Concourse, an open space with 25-foot ceiling, curved balcony and 6 transmitters on two podiums. This impressive space in the 1940's would have been a vision of technology

and progress. Powel Crosley appropriately referred to this Concourse as “the Temple of Radio.”

The federal government in 1999 decommissioned the Bethany Station. The antennae towers were dismantled and many of the transmitter components were removed, but the building and 330 acres were given to the people of West Chester Township as a park. The 20-acre site on which the building sits was given to the Township for Historic Monument Purposes and the Township is committed to working within a Program of Preservation and Utilization with the National Park Service. The facility is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, according to the Ohio Historical Society and was honored with an Ohio Bicentennial Historical Marker in 2003.

West Chester Township is committed to keep the building for historic monument purposes and a team of volunteers has worked with the Township to create plans for development of a museum in the former transmitting facility. The current director of the Voice of America in Washington D.C. refers to Bethany Station as the only repository of Voice of America memorabilia and individuals have been referred to the facility by the Smithsonian Institution.

Bethany Station has many stories yet to tell and preserving the building now will make it possible for future generations to better understand that in times of distress around the world, the United States provided hope and inspiration to millions of people. The building will be open to the public with displays representing the significance of the Voice of America message, the evolution of communications technology, and Cincinnati broadcast history.

If action is not taken soon to address these basic building needs, however, Voice of America Bethany Station could be silenced and the opportunity to celebrate its past lost.

## **NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (30 points)**

### **A. Historic Properties**

#### **The district site, building, structure, or object is:**

Evaluated as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for national significance by the State Historic Preservation Office

**e.) Explain the reasons why the property is nationally significant. One continuation sheet may be attached; however, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide brief, concise narratives.**

During World War II the United States was sorely behind in the development of radio technology, while oppressive leaders overseas were using radio to deliver their message to the masses. Cincinnati-area broadcast giant Powel Crosley took up the cause of

President Roosevelt in 1942 and committed to build the most powerful radio transmitters there had ever been.

The transmitters and antennae systems built on farm fields north of Cincinnati were the first capable of delivering the Voice of America's important message to the people of Europe, South America and Africa. Bethany Station housed six 200-kilowatt transmitters (10 kilowatt was the "off the shelf" standard power at the time). The transmitters were designed and built by the Crosley engineers with every component custom made and they would remain in service the next 45 years; eventually only replaced for machines capable of faster frequency shifts to dodge USSR jamming efforts. The technology was top secret and perplexed Hitler and others as America's Voice continued to permeate Europe and South America. Frustrated by the inability to block this powerful voice, Hitler referred to the facility as "those Cincinnati Liars."

In a world torn apart by war, injustice and oppression, the Voice of America brought truth and hope to millions of people around the globe, and continues to do so today. For 50 years the Bethany Station in West Chester, Ohio, was the flagship of this Voice of America mission. Referred to as "the siege guns of radio," the Bethany transmitting facility represents America's struggle, determination and ultimate success in communicating to the world its message of freedom, democracy and hope.

## **8. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **A. WHAT IS THE THREAT TO THE HISTORIC PROPERTY? Describe the current physical condition and the source, nature, extent and severity of the threat, danger or damage to the historic property.**

We are in danger of losing the Voice of America Bethany Station due to an obsolete HVAC and electrical systems and damage to the building's exterior façade. Time has taken its toll on the facility and without financial support to complete these projects; the building could be left to further decay and would no longer be accessible to the public.

In-kind donations and the hard work of volunteers has helped in completing smaller tasks within the facility, but major mechanical improvements and structural improvements require more substantial financial support.

The current heating system is obsolete and non-functioning. The building uses a combination of steam radiators and forced air for heating. Heat for these systems was supplied by a combination of waste heat from the transmitters and a supplemental heat boiler. In decommissioning some of the transmitters were taken out along with their cooling fans that supplied the air for the building's forced air system. Some of the existing ductwork was also removed and capped and are no longer serviceable. The transmitters heated the bulk of the building during the time the facility was in service, but because the transmitters are no longer functioning little heat is available. Township maintenance crews have continued to patch the existing boiler over the past 5 or 6 years,

but replacing the system remains the only logical option at this point. There is also insignificant air conditioning available at this time.

The electrical systems in the facility are now 60 years old and work must be done to bring them up to current codes and to allow for more functional use of the space within the building.

The building's exterior façade features glazed tiles that have been coated to control moisture. There are signs of "stair-step" cracking on all façade elevations. This is usually due to deflection of the grade beams supporting the wall or foundation settlement. This cracking may have led to moisture entering the building skin. There are signs of corrosion of ledge angles, which will continue spalling the masonry façade of the building and lead to further damage.

## **B. What work will be supported by the grant and will it mitigate the threat to the historic property or collection?**

The key project activities included in this request are demolition, removal and replacement of the obsolete and non-functioning HVAC and electrical systems in the building and the stabilization of the building's exterior façade – including patching and painting of the exterior tile and the concrete block.

Completion of these projects diminishes the threat to the building as it addresses concerns of boiler failure, some leaking and further deterioration of the 1944 electrical system. Preservation of the tile façade of the building protects it from further weather damage and preserves the original appearance of the structure, which has become an icon to so many.

West Chester Township staff have worked over the past 6 years with some of the original designers of the Bethany Station, historians, residents and architects to determine to scope of the entire preservation project of which this is the first phase. These experts – especially the former designers of the site have been invaluable in establishing the standards from which we work.

Architect Jim Fearing has been working on the Voice of America Bethany Station project since its beginning and has identified these projects as critical for building preservation. Mr. Fearing, well recognized in his field for attention to detail, has worked on many historic facilities and has spent countless hours researching the details of construction of this specific site. He is responsible for developing a three-phase approach for creation of the Voice of America Museum.

These specific projects are vital to the continuation of efforts to preserve this historic location and to make it accessible to the public. Lack of adequate HVAC now limits opportunities to introduce the public to the building and has led to concerns due to the antiquated boiler. Replacing this system allows for public use of the building and



provides additional safeguards. The 1944 electrical system also creates concerns for safety and viability of the building, addressing that issue now allows for more public access to the building. Finally, restoration of the building's exterior façade is needed to preserve the iconic view of the building. Completing these major projects, puts our fundraising team in even a better position to secure support for further preservation efforts.

## **9. PROJECT BUDGET AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **B. What are the Sources of the non-federal match?**

The non-federal match for this grant will come from support through the State of Ohio biennial budget and through fundraising efforts of the Voice of America Fundraising Committee.