K CETLINK MEDIA GROUP AND PBS SOCAL ANNOUNCE MERGER

New Organization Will Advance PBS Flagship Station in Southern California and Expand Original Content Creation and Innovation for Public Media Locally, and Across the Nation

LOS ANGELES, April 25, 2018 – KCETLink Media Group (KCET), a leading national independent broadcast and digital network, and PBS SoCal (KOCE), the flagship PBS organization for Southern California, today announced an agreement to merge the two companies. The merger of equals creates a center for public media innovation and creativity that serves the more than 18 million people living in the Southern California region. The name of the new organization will be announced with the closing of the merger, which is expected to be completed in the first half of 2018.

Establishing a powerful PBS flagship organization on the West Coast, the historic union of these two storied institutions creates the opportunity to produce more original programs for multiple channels and platforms that address the diverse community in Southern California and the nation, and innovate new community engagement experiences that educate, inform, entertain, and empower.

KCET Board of Directors Chairman Dick Cook will serve as Board Chair, and PBS SoCal President and CEO Andrew Russell will be President and CEO of the new entity, which will be governed by a 32-person Board of Trustees composed of the 14 members from each of the boards of KCETLink and PBS SoCal, as well as four new Board appointees.

“Fifty years ago, a surge of innovation and inspiration created public television as we know it today,” said KCETLink Board Chair Dick Cook and Jim McCluney, Chairman of the PBS SoCal Board of Trustees, in a joint statement. “In this dynamic time for media, this is exactly the right moment to marry the complementary core strengths of each of our organizations. Our new company combines PBS SoCal's beloved quality programming and community engagement excellence with KCETLink's passion for creating smart, original content that captures the spirit of the region. We are very excited to advance content creation in public media and continue to successfully implement innovative technologies to reach new and diverse audiences.”

“We believe our calling – to tell stories that matter – is essential, and will become even more so in the future,” said Mr. Russell. “Southern California is a global center for innovation, a trend-setter, and home to the world’s foremost creative talent. Together, we will tell more stories that matter, and better serve our region – one of the most diverse places in the country - and our nation.”

Over the past seven years, PBS SoCal and KCETLink have built two unique public media institutions — each making significant contributions to the advancement of public media. Together, they form a vibrant and financially strong public media institution, ensuring future generations have access to all its vital services.

The newly merged organization will also play a unique role within PBS.
“We are pleased that this merger will bring the combined forces of KCETLink and PBS SoCal together to serve the people of Southern California with high-quality PBS content and services,” said PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger. “We know this new entity will be a great partner to PBS and will help strengthen the broader public television system.”

“The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is pleased that our longstanding goal and efforts to encourage the merger of public television stations KCET and KOCE will be realized,” said Pat Harrison, CPB President and CEO. “As a result, citizens in Greater Los Angeles, and across Southern California, will benefit from the combined strengths and capacities of these two stations—especially the increased ability to produce content for diverse local audiences as well as national audiences.”

The new organization will continue to operate from KCET’s and PBS SoCal’s existing Southern California locations in Burbank, Costa Mesa and Los Angeles. There will be no immediate changes to broadcast operations or program schedules on any of the stations’ channels during the merger transition period. The merger process was led by committees within the Boards of each organization with PBS SoCal’s Committee chaired by Marc Stern and KCETLink’s Committee chaired by Gordon Bava. The transaction is subject to regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions.

ABOUT KCETLINK MEDIA GROUP

KCETLink Media Group is a leading national independent, nonprofit, digital and broadcast network that provides high-quality, culturally diverse programming designed to engage the public in innovative, entertaining and transformative ways. A viewer-supported 501(c)(3) organization, KCETLink is committed to independent perspectives, smart global entertainment, local communities, and opportunities for engagement and social action. KCETLink content is distributed nationally on Link TV via satellite on DIRECTV channel 375 and DISH Network channel 9410 and on KCET in Southern and Central California via broadcast and cable, as well as through digital delivery systems including Apple TV, Amazon and Roku. Through acclaimed original programming, KCET amplifies the critical issues of the Southern California region, while Link TV depicts people and the world through a lens seldom available in conventional American media. For additional information about KCET and Link TV productions, web-exclusive content, programming schedules and community events, please visit ketc.org or linktv.org.

ABOUT PBS Socal KOCE

PBS SoCal KOCE is the flagship PBS station for 18 million diverse people across Southern California. As a member-supported non-profit organization, our mission is to deliver content and experiences that inspire, inform and entertain – over the air, online, in the community and in the classroom. PBS SoCal provides beloved PBS programs including MASTERPIECE, NOVA, PBS NewsHour, Frontline, Independent Lens, a broad library of documentary films including works from Ken Burns, and educational PBS Kids programs including Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood and Curious George. Our programs are accessible for free through four broadcast channels, and available for streaming at pbssocal.org, on the PBS mobile apps, and via connected TV services Android TV, Roku, Apple TV and Amazon Fire TV. Through PBS SoCal LIVE, we provide in-person arts, culture and civic engagement experiences. And we support our youngest Southern Californians with essential early childhood education content and services. Connect with PBS SoCal at pbssocal.org, and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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