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For Immediate Release

KPBS CANCELS “FULL FOCUS” AND “A WAY WITH WORDS”

San Diego – Effective August 1, production of “Full Focus” on KPBS-TV and “A Way with Words” on KPBS 89.5 FM has been cancelled. KPBS management made the announcement to staff earlier today. The decision resulted in the elimination of 12 KPBS staff positions associated with the two programs.

“This was a difficult decision,” said Doug Myrland, KPBS General Manager. “But the new fiscal year forced KPBS management to closely examine each program and project within the KPBS organization. It’s important that we spend our financial resources wisely and while both activities had elements of success in the past, trends indicate their future potential for audience and revenue growth is minimal.”

“Full Focus” had been on the air since April 2000, when it began as a monthly news magazine program. Since its inception seven years ago, the program grew to a weekday evening news and public affairs program hosted by Gloria Penner. While the staff and budget grew over the years, the program attracted a small audience.

Host Gloria Penner, reporter Amita Sharma, and some production and support staff will remain within the KPBS news and production divisions. “Full Focus” executive producer Natalie Walsh has been reassigned to the role of senior producer for “These Days” with Tom Fudge on KPBS 89.5 FM.

“While producing local television programs is a fundamental part of our mission, we need to reassess and find other program offerings,” said Myrland. “We are committed to working with the content staff to determine what type of programming we’ll invest in for the future that will have a broader impact on the local community.”

“A Way with Words” began on KPBS 89.5 FM in 1998. The language program featured hosts Martha Barnette and newcomer Grant Barrett and was also heard on Wisconsin Public Radio and WFPL-FM in Louisville, Kentucky. KPBS made several unsuccessful attempts to receive support to make “A Way with Words” a national offering over the past few years. And although the program attracts a decent sized local audience, it was expensive to produce and required much more unbudgeted investment to market the program nationally without outside funding.

“As a public service organization, KPBS is in the business of serving as diverse and broad an audience as possible,” said Myrland. “These decisions give KPBS the opportunity to determine the kinds of local programs that best meet the needs of the entire San Diego community. While losing staff and canceling programs where we

invested significant time and resources is difficult, in the long run, I think KPBS will become stronger and more focused on our core activities and content vision.”

The “Nightly Business Report” will replace “Full Focus” weekdays at 6:30 p.m. on KPBS-TV. KPBS 89.5 FM will continue to air archives of “A Way with Words” on Saturdays and Sundays through the fall. Archives of both programs will continue to be available online at kpbs.org.

KPBS is a public service of San Diego State University, serving the region with TV, radio and Internet content that is educational as well as entertaining – and free of commercial interruption.

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