



The Society of Broadcast Engineers

Fox Valley Wisconsin SBE Chapter 80

PO Box 1519 Appleton, WI 54912-1519

September 2026

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Chairman's Corner

One of the biggest fears I have is failure. It's taken me a long time in life to come to the point where I can be OK putting forth what I know is my best effort, even if I don't accomplish my goal. Success isn't fully measured by outcome. I tend to overanalyze, to catastrophize, and eventually just become paralyzed by choice. "What if I do this and it's not perfect? What if it fails in a week? What if there's a problem and I don't know how to solve it?" I've trained myself to, sometimes, just take action. There are a million aphorisms all centered around the central theme that doing-and-failing is better than not-doing (because that's also failing). And so, if you need to hear it, I'll be the one to say it out loud: GO FOR IT! Give your idea a shot. Put things in motion and see what happens. You cannot put a perfect system in place, without first putting an IMPERFECT system in place and making improvements. Half of a solution is better than no solution, and once you have half, you know what you need to finish the job. So, get to it!

Craig Pilgram Chairman

SBE Chapter 80

No Meeting this Month!

We won't have our usual monthly meeting in September but join us next week at the Midwest Broadcasters Clinic in Madison !

A Look Back At Tape.

When many of us got into engineering most of the programming being broadcast was from one of the various formats of magnetic tape. How many of us knew that we had Bing Crosby to thank for this? Thanks to Steve Brown and IEEE for this excerpt from their Spectrum Magazine. Be sure to check out the link below the article.

HISTORY IN AN OBJECT

BY ALLISON MARSH

Past Forward

U.S. singer Bing Crosby championed the Magnetophon, a high-fidelity reel-to-reel tape recorder that allowed prerecorded performances to be played over the air.



Birth of the Laugh Track

The hit of the 1935 Berlin Radio Show was the Magnetophon, a reel-to-reel tape recorder developed by AEG and I.G. Farben (now known as BASF). One decade and a world war later, a young electrical engineer named John T. "Jack" Mullin was serving with the U.S. Army Signal Corps when he came across the machine at a German radio

station. Impressed with the device's remarkable playback fidelity, he shipped two disassembled Magnetophons to the United States, along with about 50 reels of magnetic tape and schematic drawings. He then set about rebuilding the machines, swapping in U.S. motors and vacuum tubes.

Bing Crosby witnessed a demo of Mullin's modified device and decided to invest in the engineer's research. Tired of doing live radio performances, Crosby had a vested interest in

improving the technology for prerecording and editing shows. He was delighted to learn that radio listeners couldn't distinguish between a Magnetophon recording and a live broadcast. The recording also gave radio producers a way to selectively edit the live audience's reactions. Thus was born the laugh track. ■

FOR MORE ON THE MAGNETOPHON, see spectrum.ieee.org/pastforward-aug2026

PAVEK MUSEUM

Congratulations Dave Duca, CRBE!

Congratulations to Chapter 80 member Dave Duca, who passed the SBE's Certified Radio Broadcast Engineer exam in June. Dave has a varied background, including several terms in the US Navy, time as a ASE certified auto mechanic and receiving an associate's degree in electromechanical technology from North Central Technical Institute in Wausau. Dave then started his broadcast career as a part time announcer at WOCO Radio in Oconto. Using his skills from his earlier careers, he helped develop the computer resources of the radio station focusing on audio editing and the automated playout systems. He joined SBE Chapter 80 in 2021 and took the CBRE certification exam in June 2026. Dave currently serves as the Membership Chairman for Chapter 80.

Congratulations Dave on your CBRE certification!



Upcoming Webinars by SBE

Setting Up a Secure Site

September 24, 2026 | 2 p.m. ET

Networking is full of IT jargon and buzzwords, but it's there just to confuse everyone else. IT (ha!) is quite easy to understand a practical multi-site IP network, how to implement VPNs/SDWANs over public internet, setting up DMZ spaces for codecs, and other best practices to keep your IT network safe from various external threats crawling the Internet

AM Directional Antennas: The Care and Feeding of AM Directional Facilities

October 8, 2026 | 2 p.m. ET

Keeping a directional array within FCC-defined limits requires regular maintenance and periodic minor adjustments. In this webinar, we will take a top-to-bottom look at what is required to keep an AM directional facility legal and performing well, and we will provide some troubleshooting tips and techniques to help engineers track down and fix problems with dispatch.

Part 1 HDR Systems for Television – Overview

October 15, 2026 | 2 p.m

This session introduces the concepts behind High Dynamic Range (HDR) as its used in television production and distribution. It also covers the technical standards involved, and defines terminology commonly used in the practices of converting between Standard Dynamic Range (TV as we know it today) and these new HDR systems.



Upcoming Certification Exams

Exam Dates	Location	Application Deadline
November 6-16, 2026	Local Chapters	EXTENDED TO September 18, 2026
February 5-15, 2027	Local Chapters	January 4, 2027
June 4-14, 2027	Local Chapters	April 12, 2027



Give Back. Become an SBE Mentor.

The SBE Mentor Program provides a means for SBE members to share knowledge and experience. For the seasoned mentor, it's a chance to give something back. For the freshman mentee, it's an ideal way to gain inside knowledge and understanding that can sometime take years to accumulate.

Want to share your knowledge, but don't want to be a regular mentor? Be a Subject Matter Expert. Lend your knowledge and experience in specific areas when the need arises

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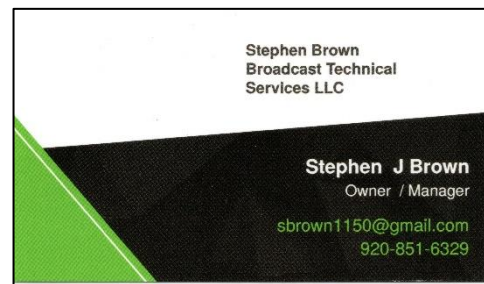
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