

**Message from CKUA CEO Marc Carnes,**

**Edmonton, Alberta – April 17, 2024**

I'm CKUA CEO Marc Carnes, and I'm addressing you today because CKUA needs your help.

There's no other way to say it: We must raise \$3 million by September 30. Without it, CKUA's cash reserves will be depleted, and we will be forced to shut down after 96 years of serving Albertans—and honorary Albertans—like you.

This news may shock you, but if you've read any headlines lately, it's no secret that the music, arts, and culture sectors have never fully recovered from the pandemic. It's also no secret that the commercial broadcasting sector continues to struggle. Many of our independent, donor-supported public radio peers in the United States are in the same boat.

This is not happening because of a lack of success.

CKUA audiences have been growing and diversifying steadily over the past five years.

Our fundraising revenues have been steady at a time when many charities and cultural organizations are struggling.

Our advertising sales have been steady at a time when traditional media advertising has plummeted in recent years.

In an economy where charitable dollars are tight and advertising-based traditional media is struggling, we are bucking the trend. This speaks to the value people place on our service and what it means to them.

What's more, we do all of this without the government footing the bill for us.

But CKUA is not immune to the challenges faced by so many. Like many households and businesses, inflationary pressures have been increasingly difficult over the last 18 months.

Borrowing rates have doubled. Utility costs have skyrocketed. Capital maintenance of our vast and complex technical systems has become more expensive than ever.

This, coupled with ever-changing and new federal regulations, has been a lot for CKUA to absorb in a short time.

As the owner of the Alberta Hotel, our broadcast centre, CKUA has also felt the effects of record-high, post-pandemic commercial real estate vacancies in downtown Edmonton.

18 months ago, every square foot of our building was spoken for. Last summer, the building was half empty, and revenues had almost completely disappeared after our main tenant became insolvent.

Just 18 months ago, our budgets were balanced. Today, a perfect storm is threatening our future, a mere three and a half years before our centennial.

Because of these factors, the sound of Alberta is at risk of going silent.

When we saw CKUA's new reality unfolding, we took immediate action.

We cut and deferred as many expenses as possible while maintaining the operations our listeners generously support with charitable donations.

We worked with real estate professionals and developed scenarios for how to fill Alberta Hotel with paying tenants, given the current market.

We sought to collaborate with the provincial and federal governments for financial help.

And we developed a plan to diversify our fundraising revenues through major gift and legacy giving leading up to our centennial in 2027.

All of these measures take time. But time is not on our side.

As a non-profit, CKUA has always been a lean, mean machine for the size of our 24/7 province-wide operation. That is even more true today. We're doing more with less, and that's thanks to our incredible team, whose dedication and persistence in the face of these challenges inspire me every day.

What's more, they are doing amazing, creative work that is being recognized and sought out by more people. They have every reason to be proud. As I am of them.

We've also found some success in filling our building and are negotiating with several new tenants. But the high interest rate on our loan is still dogging us, and the revenue from these potential new tenants won't come online for several months.

Disappointingly, after a year of conversations, the provincial and federal governments have yet to step up.

We continue our conversations with the provincial government, driving home our role in telling a piece of Alberta's story around the globe.

Since our humble beginnings in 1927 as Canada's first public broadcaster, we have been there for Albertans. Today, we give a province-wide platform to our artists and our storytellers, filling the growing hole left by national media and the loss of local independents.

As of yesterday, the federal and provincial government budgets have come and gone, and we have received no indication that financial help is coming.

Despite hundreds of millions of dollars in new money for our national public broadcaster and relief for privately owned media companies in their time of need, Alberta's broadcasting and cultural gem has been left out.

And, CKUA isn't just a broadcasting investment—it's a heritage investment.

Our historical record collection is one of the finest in North America—priceless, in fact.

As Canada's first public broadcaster, we are the blueprint for all public and community broadcasters across Canada. For hundreds of thousands of artists and listeners in communities across the country and around the world, CKUA is a big part of what it means to be Albertan.

We'll keep talking with both governments because we know CKUA is an important part of Alberta's cultural past, present, and future. But we cannot wait any longer for them. The time is now for the community to jump into action.

We are the sound of Alberta.

For over 96 years, we have faithfully met the needs of our community to be informed, inspired, and connected with people who share the same passions and values.

We are a station of firsts—the first station in Canada to broadcast a football game, the first to stream its programming online, and the first to showcase incredible artists like k.d. lang, Jann Arden, and Corb Lund to the world.

But our success isn't just in the past.

Last year, our audience grew by 13%, and more than 10% over the last 5 years. This has outpaced the commercial radio sector in Alberta and even the donor-supported public radio sector in the United States where our business model most closely aligns.

However, the truth remains: We provide a service anyone can access and enjoy anywhere. Since public airwaves are free, we can't automatically pass on our cost increases to our customers as most businesses can. Nor can we wait any longer for the government to come through. We must crowdsource.

The only thing we can rely on is the generosity and power of the CKUA listening community.

We must do what we did valiantly in 1997 when the Government of Alberta decommissioned us.

We must show up in record numbers and show the world what the CKUA community means to so many—THAT collective voice IS the sound of Alberta.

I can't be more perfectly clear:

Advertising revenues do not fund CKUA.

The government has yet to come to the table.

This is about you. Only YOU can save CKUA.

I've spent a lot of time talking about our storied past and our current state.

Today's address isn't about what was, or what is. Today is about what can be.

We have an incredible community of listeners and champions who believe wholeheartedly in what we do and what it means to so many. I know we can get there, together.

Our monthly audience reach has grown to over 470,000 Albertans alone. Of those, an estimated 100,000 are regular listeners. Of those, a little more than 10,000 donate to support CKUA to the tune of nearly \$4 million a year.

The math is right in front of us. It is within your power and that of your fellow listeners to make all the difference.

So the question is: What does CKUA mean to you?

How much does 365 days of CKUA, a unique and invaluable part of your life, mean to you?

Is it a family outing to an annual festival?

A concert at your local arena?

Is it the same amount as a subscription service based halfway around the world and in no way connected to your community?

Or is CKUA, and the community it creates, something more meaningful and substantial than an algorithm?

I'm asking you directly: If you listen and do not donate to CKUA, The Time Is Now to get in the game because only you can protect CKUA. You can't count on someone else to do it for you.

The time is now to step up. It's time to step up and protect the sound of Alberta.

We have a plan.

We must raise \$3 million by September 30 to weather the perfect storm. In the coming weeks and months, we will also appeal to individual donors and continue calling on the government to do its part.

The first step is right now. Every year in April, we launch our spring on-air fundraising campaign. This year, it starts Friday, April 19.

Over those 10 days, our goal is to raise the first \$775,000 towards our \$3 million goal. We absolutely have to surpass that goal—we have to crush it. The more we

raise in those first 10 days, the better the momentum and the better the story to tell as we ask donors, community members, and the government to invest in our future.

And then, over the coming five years, we will launch a centennial fundraising campaign that will help build an endowment and contribute to sustainable funding for CKUA's second century.

But CKUA's future starts today. The Time Is Now.

You can start by going to [CKUA.com](http://CKUA.com) and becoming a recurring annual or monthly donor, right now.

Thank you. And thank you for your support of CKUA—one of Canada's true cultural treasures.