



# “State of the Station” Annual Summary July 2018 – June 2019

## Programming

- We ran 1,258 shows since the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1, 2018). This is the combined total between our 2 channels (Public / Community Access and Educational / Government Access).
- 476 (38%) of these were categorized as “local”, meaning they were A) produced by community members or organizations, B) produced by our staff or volunteers, C) produced by someone else but submitted to us by a local individual
- 159 (13%) of the shows were “regional” (produced through a neighboring access TV station or provided to us directly by a producer from a neighboring community).
- We received 367 shows (29% of the total) through the Vermont Media Exchange (VMX), our statewide video program sharing networking among community access TV stations. The majority of what we receive through VMX is State government programming, as well as content from statewide non profits & other institutions. 72 short “interstitials”
- The remaining 256 shows (20% of the total) were received from other sources, mainly outside of Vermont. This was primarily the daily news show “Democracy Now!”, which we ran once every weekday (at 6PM).
- In terms of total program hours (first runs plus repeats), we have run programming for 4,672,751 total hours between the 2 channels since July 1. 65% of this time was allocated to “local” programming (again, those produced and/or generated through us); “regional” programming ran 14% of the time, programming received through VMX ran 23% of the time, and other imported programming ran 3% of the time.
- In addition to the above, we have run 77 “interstitials” since July 1. These include PSAs, promotional videos, and sponsorship videos thanking our underwriters. 46 of the 77 interstitials were “local”, 13 were “regional”, 11 were from VMX, and the remaining 7 were national PSA campaigns (downloaded from the Ad Council).
- Several of the short underwriting sponsorship videos ran several hundred times over the course of the past year; other frequently-played interstitials included the Plymouth Community Center promo (263 runs), Ludlow Fire Department promo (178), & several of the monthly promo videos from the Cavendish Library (most of them ran approx. 100 times over the course of a month)
- The shows that were televised the most (had the most repeats) over the past year were: “FOLA Presents” for April & May 2019 (it ran 122 times, but it was only under 6 minutes long), a 2018 episode of Ralph Pace’s show “Spotlight” with the Weston Playhouse (133 runs), Across Our Table- the Goulash episode (cooking show from Black River Good Neighbors), which ran 103 times, and the Citizen Science episode of “Black River Connections” (presented by Black River Action Team), which was shown 100 times even over the past year. These are all local shows.
- In terms of video on demand (videos played from our website), the most popular shows have been: Paleoindians at Jackson Gore (a short doc. we produced with the UVM Consulting Archaeology program & State Archaeologist), which has been viewed 217 times on the website (and even more on You Tube). Mt. Holly School Winter Sports program was next up, with 64 views.
- You Tube: We put more stock into the You Tube channel this year, realizing that was where we should be placing some emphasis, in terms of building awareness more broadly, and in preparation for our migration to live 24/7 streaming of our channels (which will be handled through You Tube).

## Staff Productions

- Okemo Valley TV staff supports the production of local programming in a variety of ways. One way is through doing the actual production work. We do this for the local municipalities, through the coverage of government meetings. In addition to meeting coverage, we also cover, on average, 3 community events per month. And then there's the studio – we offer technical support to anyone wishing to use our studio to record programming.
- We provided "gavel-to-gavel" coverage of 232 local government meetings in the Towns of Andover, Cavendish, Ludlow, Mount Holly, & Plymouth throughout the past year. These include Selectboards & Planning Commissions, as well as Ludlow Development Review Board, Village of Ludlow Trustees, and local school boards (Two Rivers Supervisory Union, Ludlow-Mt. Holly Unified School District, Green Mt. Unified School District).
- We covered 5 annual Town meetings, 1 Cavendish Annual Fire Department meeting, & the annual Ludlow Village meetings, as well as 5 annual school district & supervisory union meetings.
- Thanks to our colleagues at SAPA-TV for providing some of this coverage. Due to our overlapping "territory", we share some of the workload. SAPA provided all coverage of River Valley Technical Center Board meetings, as well as several Green Mtn. Unified School District meetings.
- In addition to government meetings, we produced many event videos for different community organizations. These include: Coolidge Presidential Foundation & the Coolidge State Historic Site (4<sup>th</sup> of July Coolidge Birthday & Naturalization Ceremony, Grace Coolidge Musicale, Presidents Day event, & "Coolidge summer retreats" special presentation), FOLA (candidate debates, Christmas show), American Legion Post 36 (Ludlow Memorial Day Parade), Ludlow Elementary School (Veterans' Day assembly), Ludlow Rotary Club (guest speakers), Cavendish Historical Society ("walk & talk" events), VT Humanities Council / Mt. Holly Library ("Hollywood Blacklist" presentation), & Farm & Wilderness / Ninevah Foundation (presentation on ecology)
- We also recorded special public hearings & informational sessions, including the presentation from VTrans & Pike Industries on the Ludlow paving project, and a public hearing from Springfield Medical Care Systems
- We provided coverage of several concerts from Cavendish & Ludlow's summer series
- We produced video coverage from school graduations & school concerts (including holiday concerts)
- Last Summer, we supported Black River Good Neighbor Services with a "re-boot" of its "Across Our Table" educational cooking series. We helped them produce 3 new episodes.
- Also last Summer, we worked with Margo Caulfield from Cavendish Historical Society to produce short video about the Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn exhibit at the museum
- A bigger project was the production of a short documentary about the 2007 archaeological excavation at Jackson Gore, conducted by the State Division of Historic Preservation & the UVM Consulting Archaeology program. We had video from the 2007 dig and edited that together with interviews that were recorded last September with the State archaeologist, Jess Robinson, and the department head of the UVM program, John Crock.
- We recorded an on-location interview with Weston Playhouse's new Executive Artistic Director Susanna Gellert at the Playhouse's Walker Farm facility. The video served as a follow-up to one we recorded a year prior, right after the grand opening of the facility.
- In March, we produced a fun little video with the Mount Holly Winter Sports program on Okemo
- After the May 2018 forest fire in Plymouth, Patrick & Board member John Cama went out on site to record interviews with Al & Sue Poirier from the Plymouth Volunteer Fire Department. The video was turned into a fire awareness & prevention PSA, with footage from the actual fire provided by the Proctorsville Department. The editing was completed in time for this Spring, when fire danger is at the highest in Vermont.

## Studio Productions

- We have supported regular & semi-regular studio production, including FOLA Presents, Spotlight, Chamber Update, Black River Connections, & updates from the Black River Independent School Committee (BRISC).
- We have also produced special presentations in the studio, including special interviews (which have featured, over the past year, filmmakers & authors with local ties, and the Ludlow Garden Club)
- We welcomed Senior Solutions (Council on Aging for SE VT), with its first production in our studio.
- The studio was out of operation from late March through the end of May, as we used it for storage during renovations. The building improvements include a new studio control room for the production of studio shows. We hope to dramatically increase the amount of use of the studio in the coming year. A primary focus will be to market & promote its availability to community members & organizations.

### **Volunteer Productions & Community Producers**

- The largest project that we supported this past year was with the Ludlow Fire Department, which produced a 10-minute member recruitment promotional video through our support. Produced by volunteer firefighters Fran & Angela Kissell, the project was truly a team effort and an exemplary use community access TV, in terms of far-reaching value.
- Thanks to Sherri Geimer and her daughter, Natasha Fortin, for volunteer coverage of school sporting and other events. Natasha alone covered a combined total of 50 Black River High School & Middle School boys' & girls' games in each of the 3 seasons- soccer, basketball, & baseball / softball. Sherri recorded BRHSMS concerts & a school play.
- Thanks to Pat Moore for providing coverage of the Innkeepers' race series on Okemo this past season.
- Ludlow Baptist Church, whose volunteer video producer Kelly Kingsbury has continued the tradition her father, Fenwick, started more than 14 years ago. Kelly & Roger Crosswell team up to provide the coverage & editing of weekly church services. Together, they quietly keep the engine churning- this past year they produced 52 church service videos – that means they didn't miss a single week! The Ludlow Baptist Church service is a longest continuously-running series of shows.
- Thanks to Sarah Devereux, St. James United Methodist Church provided 34 church services, which we televised over the past year. Sarah, a student at GMUHS, has been doing this work for the church for several years.
- Calvary Church, also in Proctorsville, provided 14 church services this past year, which we have televised.
- History Day- for many years, we have provided support to Black River Middle & High School with student productions of short historical documentaries for the annual Vermont History Day. This year we worked with 3 different students on 2 projects. One of the projects, on Vincent VanGogh, won 2<sup>nd</sup> place at VT History Day, earning it entry into the National History Day competition
- Students from the AV Production program at River Valley Technical Center produced a new regular weekly series, "Trailer Trash Talk", a review of new trailers for feature films and video games.
- We also began receiving videos from Stafford Technical Center, which were mainly short promos & PSAs.
- We received several more short videos from Green Mountain Union High School's Media Journalism class.
- Proctorsville resident (and department head of the AV Production program at RVTC) Zachary McNaughton launched his fishing series, Master Anglers, in the Spring, and has been "releasing" an episode every 2 weeks

### **Building Improvements & Equipment Upgrades**

- After a lot of grant writing, planning, & prep. work, we were able to move forward with Phase 3 of our building renovations in March. We hired Wright Construction to complete the construction of walls, insulation, interior windows, electrical, and HVAC work. This included the build-out of several new rooms: the conference. classroom, studio control room, master control room, and the equipment & training room. This work resulted in the most significant improvement made to our facility since the construction of the studio & subsequent lighting & acoustic upgrades during 2014 – 2015. The project was funded through the \$25,000 "Building Communities" grant from the State of Vermont, grants from the Marro Trust & The

- Cricket Foundation, as well as our own building reserve funds.
- Since the completion of the Phase 3 work in late April, we have been painting, organizing, and running new AV cabling & conduit.
- We now must focus our attention on raising funds so that we may complete the interior doors and flooring. Those are the next priorities.
- Over the past year, we purchased 2 new Canon XA 11 camcorders and 1 used Canon XF100 camcorder (the XA 11's predecessor). We also purchased some new microphones.
- We also assisted the Town of Ludlow with improvements to the audio in the Town Hall conference room by replacing microphones with new "gooseneck" style mics, which have proven to be a good upgrade.
- This past year we replaced our old NAS (Network-attached Storage) with a new one, for networked & back-up data storage and shared files.
- The next big improvement we will be making with the services that we provide is with live 24/7 streaming of our TV channels. In preparation of this, we purchased and have begun to set up a server for the first of the 2 channels. The project was delayed due to some technical issues, and then everything was put on hold during the building renovations. We are now at a point where we can revisit this project. The live streaming of our channels will open up many new opportunities and expand the potential viewership of our channels and the local programming that they carry.

### **Regulatory & Legal**

- As a "PEG Access" TV station, our primary funding model comes from "Franchise Fees" placed on cable company subscriber revenue, as stipulated through regulations on both the federal & State levels. In Vermont, the regulatory authority of the telecommunications industry is the State itself, through the Public Utility Commission (formerly known as the Public Service Board). The cable companies make the Franchise Fee payments to us, as stipulated by the Public Utility Commission. These funds account for 90% of our annual budget, and they are under threat. The FCC is expected to vote on a rule change that will have a large impact on how cable companies account for Franchise Fees.
- The FCC rule change is the most severe and immediate threat to our funding, but there are also other very real, albeit less immediate threats. The most significant of these longer-term threats is the evolution of viewing habits and the trend of "cutting the cord" of cable TV.
- We are not alone. These funding threats affect all PEG Access organizations. In light of the various threats and recognizing that we must be planning for future sustainability no matter what happens in the immediate future, our statewide membership & advocacy organization, the Vermont Access Network, worked hard during the past legislative session to get the attention of State lawmakers. The result of this effort is a Summer study session spearheaded by the legislature and the Department of Public Service, which will be looking at other possible funding mechanisms for PEG Access organizations, otherwise known in the state as "community media centers".

### **Administrative / Personnel**

- Our Board members this year have been: Francis DeVine (President & Treasurer), Lou Krefski (V.P.), George Thomson (Secretary), Sharon Bixby, Julie Bowyer, John Cama, & Noah Schmidt.
- Staffing: 3 positions remained consistent for the year. Those are: Executive Director Patrick Cody (Full-time), Programming Coordinator Fred Marin (.75 FTE), & Production Associate Ed McEaney (.25 FTE). In addition, we had Tanner Bischofberger working part time from July – September as a Production Associate; and from September – December Vincent Guerrero worked in this capacity (.5 FTE). Vincent had worked for us at different times over the previous years; he moved to Oregon in January. In December, we hired Eric Chatterjee as our new full-time Production Coordinator. He has taken over all of the production & equipment scheduling, post-production activities & workflow, and is also handling much of our regular production work, including after school programs
- Thanks to Ed McEaney for being our "go to" guy for covering meetings & community events over the

past 4 years. He has brought added value to the position by also working as our "in house" carpenter and jack-of-all-trades. He built our storage shed, and helped make various improvements in the studio, building a "bass trap" acoustic treatment, set risers, and backdrop flats. With his house in Proctorsville now for sale, Ed is planning to move South, to join his son in North Carolina.

### **Community Outreach / Marketing / Recognition**

- In collaboration with the Weston Playhouse, we received a 2018 "Nor'easter" award in the short program / promo category for the video we produced about the opening of the Playhouse's Walker Farm facility, with its now-retired longtime Producing Artistic Director, Steve Stettler
- We are pleased to announce the following 2019 Okemo Valley TV award recipients: Outstanding Achievement Award: Ludlow Fire Department; Community Service Award: Kelly Stettner (Black River Action Team); Producer of the Year: Zachary McNaughton; and Youth Producer Award: Natasha Fortin.
- Improvements have continued with our website. Over the past year, the search function on the Videos page has been improved and, most recently, the menu navigation on the mobile site has been improved.

### **Fundraising**

- We were awarded a \$25,000 "Building Communities" grant from the State of Vermont Department of Buildings & General Services in 2018. That provided the bulk of the funding that enabled us to move forward with our Phase 3 renovations on our facility. We also received a \$5000 grant from The Cricket Foundation in 2018, which was set aside for the same purpose. Then, during this past year, we received a \$5000 grant, from The Marro Trust, which was also used towards the construction.
- We recently received generous underwriting support from Ludlow Fire Department; we are currently working on revamping the underwriting program, inviting all local businesses to consider getting involved. Underwriting is different from advertising in that businesses received a simple "thank you" on TV & our website, rather than the production of an advertising spot. It's a low cost alternative to traditional advertising, while publicly displaying a business's support for local community media.
- Thank you to the Town of Ludlow, Plymouth, Cavendish, and Mount Holly for their continued support through their respective municipal budgets. In total, \$3450 in revenue was generated through this support.