



## Director Report November 2018

### Production, Programming, & Training

- Over the past month, we televised 222 different programs, over our 2 TV channels, 102 of which were locally-produced
- Election coverage was in heavy rotation on "Channel 10" (the Ed. / Gov't channel) over the past months. This included candidate interviews, forums, and debates, much of which was provided to us by colleagues through the Vermont Media Exchange. Some of it was produced locally, by us and in our studio. The locally-produced election shows were: multi-camera coverage of the legislative candidate forum at Ludlow Town Hall, the Windsor Co. Senate Democratic incumbents in-studio, Ralph Pace's interview with Logan Nicoll & Peter Berger (who ran against each other for the House seat), and 2 independent candidates running for office (Mason Wade, for State Senate, and Charles Laramie, for Governor), who appeared together in the studio. In addition, Ralph hosted one of his "Spotlight" shows with Ludlow Town Manager Scott Murphy and the Wastewater Plant Manager Chuck Craig about the proposed plant upgrades, which were subject to a bond vote on Election Day.
- I was able to get the Election Results out on Tuesday night, with data from the local Town ballots and using sources such as VPR. The results were posted to social media and the TV bulletin board. We also recorded Town Clerk Ulla Cook announcing Ludlow's results right after 7PM.
- In the past month, there were 45 new local productions. This included: the election programs mentioned above, 12 government meetings, 6 Black River soccer games, 7 church services, a home weatherization workshop, 7 studio shows (including Black River Connections, FOLA Presents, and the Chamber Update), a Rotary guest speaker presentation, a promo for the Cavendish library, the LES Veterans' Day Assembly, and the Black River winter sports banquet.
- Our most prolific volunteer producer has been Natasha Fortin, who has covered the soccer games (approx. 20 of them this season), as well as the sports banquet. Her mother, Sherri Fortin, covered the Veterans' Day Assembly. Another volunteer producer, Mary Omrod, covered the weatherization workshop, on behalf of the Cavendish Energy Committee.
- We have launched a new after school program in Mt. Holly, which will run until the holiday break in December. Vincent is once again running this program. Last Spring, he helped the kids make the "Little Crimes" movie. There were good parts and bad parts to this. The good: it resulted in a nice finished product that the kids & the school enjoyed. The bad: it also resulted in a broken camera, which has been out of commission since April. This time around, we are going to have the kids using our newer consumer-level video "toys", such as the 360 degree camera and the iphone video tools. We will work with them to create a movie of their own shot entirely on an iphone. It is something we can teach, which will likely get them excited, since it's much less complicated than shooting with a bigger camera, and also it's much less risky for us to have them shooting with a (comparatively) low-cost cell phone.
- Organizations who directly benefited from our video services over the last month: Cavendish Fletcher Free Library, Ludlow Rotary Club, Cavendish Energy Committee / CCCA, Town of Ludlow, Town of Plymouth, Town of Mount Holly, Town of Andover

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## **Fundraising**

- We should be receiving notification within the next two weeks from the Marro Trust about our grant application
- Our request for an extension on the \$25,000 Building Communities grant has been granted. We now have until March 31<sup>st</sup> to complete the project.
- The next grant application deadline is November 30<sup>th</sup>, for Mascoma Savings Bank's charitable giving program.

## **Equipment & Building**

- When the building committee met a few weeks ago, it was decided that we need a new cost estimate from an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party not already affiliated with the project. Tom Appel put me in touch with someone with whom he has worked over the years -Tom Barden, who operates a building inspection and construction consultation business, out of Hinesburg. Mr. Barden has offered to provide us with a low-cost (and potentially pro-bono) estimate, based on his conversation with Mr. Appel. He told me he could have it done by November 15<sup>th</sup>. An updated & independent cost estimate will give us the ability to firm up our project budget and determine how much remaining funding we need. The cost estimate, as well as detailed budget, will be needed should we pursue financing, and quite likely for larger grant requests
- Speaking of larger grant requests, Tom Appel is now recommending that we do not apply for USDA grant funding – the issue is that it will either cost us a lot of time and energy to apply, or cost a lot of money for us to hire him to do it, and even then, we are only eligible to apply for \$15,000. He also suggests that we may not even want to pursue USDA for a loan, since it is also a lot of work to apply and there is still some question on when the next round of funds will be available – likely not until Spring, which does not coincide well with our timing and need. I have
- By next week the new additional digital signage server (aka "bulletin board") should be up & running. I have a support call in with the company on Monday – I have experienced some issues with the installation, and they should be hopefully sorting that out.
- We now have the new equipment needed for the 24/7 streaming of one of our channels. That
- Sharon has reported that she should have information soon from the insurance company regarding our claim for the camera (from the damage sustained in April during the Mt. Holly after school program)

## **Administrative / Organizational**

- The FCC is proposing some rule changes to how franchise fees are calculated, which could impact the amount of funding we receive from the franchise fees from cable providers. This is being proposed under what is called a "Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking", the document of which can be found online at [docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-18-131A1.pdf](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-18-131A1.pdf). The proposal calls for giving cable providers the ability to place a value on Public, Education, & Government channels and other in-kind services that they provide to community access stations and municipalities; they could then deduct that amount from the franchise fee. This, of course, problematic, but it also underscores the need to continue to develop other revenue streams. There is a coalition, led by VAN and the Alliance for Community Media (ACM), which is soliciting comments to be filed by the deadline. A memo sent out by ACM initially reported that the deadline for comments is December 14<sup>th</sup>, but in fact it is November 14<sup>th</sup> (this coming Thursday!). December 14<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for a reply to comments. I will have more information about this at the Board meeting on Tuesday.
- VAN Summit: As a follow-up to an ongoing discussion that came out of regional meetings (such as the one we hosted last December) the annual meeting in May, and in subsequent work, VAN is hosting a first-ever "summit" for its membership, to discuss big picture issues. It will be held in Rutland on December 12<sup>th</sup>. All are invited. At the moment, Fra & myself are planning to attend. If any others are interested, please let me know. RSVPs are due Monday, November 19
- Our 990s (tax returns) have been filed, meeting the November 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. I can now complete our Annual Report, which is due November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Digital Media & Production Coordinator search: we have two finalists for the position. Information on this will be presented for your review.

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