



Director Report April 2020

Production, Programming, & Training

- With the facility closed and us staff working remotely for the last month, our operations and workflows have changed drastically. All of our attention is focused on programming. That is, the vast majority of our work falls into the areas: 1) generating new programming through video conferencing (Zoom), 2) downloading & uploading programming, 3) processing, editing, and post-production on new programming, and 4) scheduling & promoting programming. We have split up the workload so that we each have responsibilities related to getting programming processed, scheduled, & promoted. The bulk of all programming has been related to COVID-19.
- Program Stats: Over the last 30 days, since March 15th, we have televised 136 new ("first run") programs. Of these, 37 were locally produced (in our service area), and several others were from the surrounding region. 74 were downloaded from VMX (our statewide video sharing network). In addition, we televised 13 new ("first run") PSAs or promos. Of these, 5 were local – including PSAs from both BR Good Neighbors & the Town of Ludlow, while the remainder were from the CDC, VT Department of Health, and Governor's Office (all were COVID-19 related)
- In total, we televised 221 different programs and 31 different short promos & PSAs during the same period. (these figures are the "first runs" plus others that were repeated)
- Video on Demand (website): The top viewed video, by far, this past month has been Dr. Linda Thomson's hypnotherapy recording (which was created to help those trying to cope with social distancing & isolation). It has been viewed 280 times on our website. This is due to the fact that she sent out the link to the video far & wide. The next most-viewed video was Ralph Pace's most recent "Spotlight" show, on Ludlow' emergency management (with Town Manager Scott Murphy & Emergency Management Director Ron Bixby), which was viewed 36 times. In third place was Pat & Penny's "Non-Travel Video" (self-quarantine tips from Pat Moore & Penny Trick), which was viewed 22 times.
- You Tube: During the last month, we had over 1,900 views of videos. Those with the highest number of views during this period: once again, John Specker's 2014 version of "Bonaparte's Retreat" was far & away the most popular (335), followed by Rick Davis's "I Ski Alone" short parody (163), Cavendish Librarian Kata Welch's Story Time reading of "Lousy Rotten Stinkin' Grapes" (117), "Paleoindians at Jackson Gore" (116), John Specker's "Keel Row" from 2018 (63), & John Specker's 2020 version of Bonaparte's Retreat (62).
- Zoom Workflow: All of a sudden, we are becoming Zoom experts. It has become what we are using to produce shows. I purchased a "Pro" level account (for \$15 / month) which gives us a lot of flexibility. So far, we have produced shows with Ralph Pace ("Spotlight", and a regional ash borer committee meeting), the Chamber of Commerce (with Springfield Medical Care Systems, and we have another scheduled for this Weds., with the Small Business Administration), and Black River Good Neighbors (food shelf PSA). We are now using our account to host some government meetings. We offered to do that for all Towns; Cavendish, Ludlow, & Mount Holly took us up on it.

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Andover will be using their own Zoom account starting with the upcoming meeting, and Plymouth has not announced any changes (the last we heard, they are still meeting in person). Two Rivers Supervisory Union has been holding meeting using its own Zoom account. We have been getting the recordings for those using their own account and for those where we host, we have full control over the recording. Eric has been handling that.

- Green Mountain High School: I am providing some support to GMUHGS Media Journalism class projects, which involve students & the teacher producing videos remotely via Zoom and other applications. So far we have received & distributed one student-produced video, but there are others in the works
- State Programming: We have been downloading, processing, & televising Senate Pro Tempore Tim Ashe's daily video updates, which are all related to the State's response to the pandemic. Eric has been doing this as part of his daily work. We are also receiving the Governor's many press conferences, among other state government programs, most related to COVID-19. A few weeks ago, all VT legislative committees began holding their meetings via Zoom, and they are all being streamed live on You Tube, where they are also archived. We have been selecting some meetings, then downloading them from there, and doing the post-production ourselves. This is something Fred has started doing.
- Other New Program Highlights: Fairbanks Museum Virtual Learning science & nature classes (produced via Zoom in partnership with Kingdom Access TV in St. Johnsbury), Merck Forest & Farmland Center short "Nearby Nature" educational videos, Kata Welch from Cavendish Library doing "Story Time" readings
- The biggest challenge with some of the remote work seems to be internet bandwidth, particularly video uploads. I am lucky enough to live where there is high speed fiber optic service, but both Eric & Fred are on Comcast, with much slower upload speeds. For them, video downloads aren't a problem – but uploads of large video files can be slow. We might consider temporary upgrades for their respective home services if the stay home order goes on much longer (it has currently been extended to May 15th).

Outreach & Marketing

- Facebook Page: It has now been a month and I still do not have any kind of response from Facebook regarding the restrictions placed on our Page. I believe it is a glitch (it happened before, a little more than a year ago), and for whatever reason it just keeps happening to our Page. It is very frustrating because (when it's working) it has been the most effective platform for promoting programming. I wish that wasn't the case, because we have very little control over how it is functions. At a time like this, when we are striving to provide important and timely local news & information, it is especially unfortunate. This underscores that people don't automatically go to our TV channels, website, You Tube channel on their own. We aren't necessarily a "go to" source in that way for most people. Instead, they need prompting. And Facebook can be a very good tool for that.
- Postcard Advertisement: We have the design for the postcard ready (again, this is for the bulk mailing – "Every Door Direct Mail" – to highlight A) the channel change on Comcast, B) the upgrade to HD on VTel, C) the interactive program guide on both Comcast & VTel, and D) how else to find us (website You Tube). I am still awaiting the approval from the Post Office, re: non profit bulk mailing rate. I stopped by the Ludlow P.). 2 weeks ago to check on this and was informed it still appears to be in the works but things could be delayed with all that is going on, and that I would receive an email.
- Program Guide: We are close – very close – to being at a point where our schedules are built out

enough days in advance so that we can submit them to the interactive program guide. As soon as we do

- Print News Releases: I am trying to get these out as much as possible, getting them into the workflow weekly, to highlight new programs, and any other news.
- E-Newsletters: I am now sending out weekly program highlight emails.
- End of School: This is something to think about & work on. How can we be of service to local schools & the students this year, in lieu of reg. In particular, what can we provide to Black River in light of its anti-climactic and pre-mature closing?

Administrative / Financial

- Collaboration Discussion: The discussion with neighboring colleagues in the Southeastern region (CATV, Woodstock Community TV, & SAPA) have continued. This current situation has helped aid and steer the conversation. I suspect there are some of the things we have been discussing could take place sooner rather than later. There is some shared interest in addressing overlap.
- Channel Change: The transition of our Comcast channels to 1076 & 1086 was supposed to have been completed on March 26th. I need to be able to monitor this a little more closely before I can really confirm that everything is working...and that's been tricky to do while working remotely. For anyone who is a Comcast subscriber- please check channels 1076 and 1086 and confirm that it looks identical to what you see on 8 & 10 (or 20 & 21 in Mt. Holly). Also please test out the program guide to see what is displayed for 1076 & 1086. You should see "OVTV1" and "OVTV2".
- Board Candidate Recruitment: We will need to follow-up about this. The Nominating & Elections committee was going to meet remotely at some point. We should do the advertising about this soon – news releases, emails, social media postings, etc.