West Virginia Public Broadcasting, marking 50 years of service to the Mountain State, continues to educate, inform and inspire listeners, viewers and our digital audience in West Virginia and beyond.

For every $1 of state investment, WVPB matches it with $2 from other sources.

West Virginia Public Broadcasting:
- educates our citizens
- informs us about government
- protects us during emergencies
- promotes tourism
- contributes to our economy

PBS Kids Channel provides the most-respected educational programming available.

PBS LearningMedia is a curated digital library filled with PBS content and standards-aligned lessons.

The WVPB News Team works to share stories that matter to West Virginia, reaching into the six-state region of Appalachia.

Mountain Stage is an unparalleled music exploration experience.

The Inside Appalachia Folkways Project shines a light on folk arts and culture of the region.

Us & Them focuses on the fault lines that make America divisive and features passionate people on both sides of our culture wars.

Our Legislative Session coverage is unmatched. The Legislature Today team does a daily news show Monday-Friday on TV and radio.

Mountain Stage is broadcast on 240 NPR radio stations, and 12,000+ fans attended a live show last year.

Our Folksways Corps training included intensive work with respected state folklorists, an award-winning audio editor and our News Team.

West Virginia gained national attention when Us & Them won a national 2018 Public Media Journalists Award.
West Virginia Public Broadcasting has been here since man first walked on the moon. The pivotal year was 1969. NASA took us farther than we'd ever been. The country was conflicted over war. Hundreds of thousands of music fans attended Woodstock. It was a year of social strife and huge scientific advances. Meanwhile, in West Virginia a visionary decision by leadership created the Educational Broadcasting Authority.

From a humble beginning during a year full of historical significance, WVPB has evolved to its current role as a statewide radio, television and digital network, as well as a critical resource for emergency communications for the Mountain State. At times, our future wasn’t certain, but WVPB has weathered changing technology, reorganizations and significant cuts to state and federal funding, which seem to have plateaued for the moment. For that, we are thankful; however, other challenges loom.

Many of our listeners and viewers have heard static on the radio or lost our television signal in the last several years as our transmissions system ages. There also will be times in the next year when our engineers will be busy converting our region’s system as a part of our conversion to ATSC 3.0, today’s high-definition television broadcasting standard. In all instances, whether we are making repairs or doing conversions, we are humbled by the patience of our WVPB family members as we work to improve their experience.

Throughout the last 50 years the only thing public broadcasting could count on has been change – whether it’s been continually evolving viewer and listener habits or changes in the way individuals support us. Maybe our listeners get their news via our mobile app and not a radio. Maybe they don’t write WVPB a check anymore but give online instead. Things change, but generosity remains strong. Support is critical to our continued success. And, without the dedication of our board members, WVPB never would have made it to this golden age, much less thrive as we do while producing amazing local programs like Mountain Stage, Inside Appalachia, Us & Them and The Legislature Today.

West Virginia Public Broadcasting will continue to use its influence as a trusted member of the media and valued community partner to bring sound reporting to West Virginians and programming that will inspire, educate and inform us all. It’s a great time to be here at WVPB, and I’m thankful for the opportunity to lead such a talented, ethical and creative team of professionals.

Chuck Roberts is Executive Director and CEO of WVPB.
West Virginia Public Broadcasting continually works to expand its impact in education, news and public affairs, emergency communications and economic development.

EDUCATION

_Inquire Within_ is an out-of-school program designed to encourage family engagement and a love of learning. Partnering with 11 libraries around the state, WVPB is bringing STEM content and early literacy skills to families. In FY 2020, 691 children and families have participated in family learning events, and 970 people have participated in outreach events.

Our annual _Writers Contest_ drew a record number of entries, and one of the winning stories was made into an animated film. View it at wvpublic.org/education.

_PBS LearningMedia_ is a curated digital library filled with PBS content and standards-aligned lessons. Built to enhance teachers’ use of digital resources in the classroom, the program is free for anyone — teachers, parents and caregivers. There were more than 34,114 unique visitors to LearningMedia in FY 2019.

_American Graduate: Getting To Work_ targets youth and their adult influencers and highlights different pathways to good careers that don’t require a four-year degree. We created a web page that houses all the content we have developed, wvpublic.org/jobs, and our social media campaign this year gained 404,568 impressions. We also broadcast more than 16 hours of content.

NEWS

Our news team welcomed its second _Report for America_ corps member in June this year. Emily Allen fills the position and reports on rural issues such as broadband and water infrastructure issues and will join _The Legislature Today_ team during the 2020 legislative session.

WVPB also expanded its part-time _Folkways_ reporting position to include reporting on issues of the southern coalfields while continuing its focus on Appalachian arts, culture and folklife.

That brings the newsroom staff to nine full-time and two part-time reporters and producers, who produced more than 500 audio, video and digital print feature stories last year. Many of those features also were distributed to regional and national outlets through our editorial partnerships, NPR and the Associated Press.
As part of our focus on folkways reporting, we held a workshop for our new Inside Appalachia Folkways Corps. It included three days of hands-on training at Pipestem Resort State Park for 10 corps members from around the region, focusing on folklife, audio story collection and production, and a discussion of still and video photography.

Those corps members have filed five radio features about folklife in the region for Inside Appalachia to date, with a total of 10 expected by the end of 2019. Another call for applications to the Folkways Corps is in process, with a new training session planned for spring 2020. The Folkways Reporting Project is made possible through a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

WVPB continued its investment in regional reporting in 2019, continuing editorial partnerships with 100 Days in Appalachia and the Ohio Valley ReSource. 100 Days in Appalachia is an independent digital media publication housed at WVU’s Media Innovation Center. The Ohio Valley ReSource is a regional public media collaborative that includes seven stations across Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia. Both collaborations produced substantive, original reporting on regional issues important to all West Virginians, such as the effects of the opioid epidemic on newborns and the people who care for them, and the effects of coal company bankruptcies on state and local governments in the region.

The news team continued its commitment to training the next generation of audio journalists, renewing its partnership with West Virginia University’s U92 student radio station, which includes a 10-week summer internship at WVPB for a U92 staff member.

WVPB continued coverage of the West Virginia Legislative session in 2019, expanding the resources and staff dedicated to covering the 60-day legislative session. The 2019 legislative session opened with the live broadcast of Governor Jim Justice’s third State of the State address, our most watched program of the year with an audience of 19,940. The following evening, The Legislature Today began its nightly coverage from a set located just outside Senate Chambers.

Executive Producer and Host Suzanne Higgins led the network-wide effort, which produced 44 programs from the Capitol building. Lawmakers, agency heads, advocates, protestors and stakeholders visited the set throughout the session for in-depth discussions of policy and politics. Senior Statehouse Reporter Dave Mistich provided analysis and highlights from committee meetings, floor action, press conferences and citizen reaction. This year’s coverage included contributions from WVPB reporters throughout the state and fellow journalists from WV MetroNews, The Charleston Gazette-Mail and the Huntington Herald-Dispatch.
STATEWIDE OUTREACH
WVPB operated a statewide network of 25 radio and television transmitters located across the Mountain State and our website, wvpublic.org, providing free educational programming to all of West Virginia. More than 2 million people connected with WVPB in 2019 via television, radio, streaming devices, social media, at a live event or at wvpublic.org for news, educational resources or to access our streaming resources. By the numbers:

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SERVING WEST VIRGINIA

On The West Virginia Channel, we broadcast the Legislative Session beginning with the Governor’s State of the State Address. We air and stream important press conferences from the State Capitol campus and special events from the West Virginia Culture Center.

WVPB also provides the only secure broadcast path out of the state Capitol Complex in case of emergencies. In the event of a serious crisis, emergency officials can communicate to the entire state from the Capitol through WVPB equipment.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

As part of a national 30-city promotional tour crisscrossing the United States, West Virginia Public Broadcasting presented a special screening of the PBS documentary, “Country Music: A Film by Ken Burns,” on Tuesday, April 16, at 7:30 p.m., at the Lyell B. Clay Concert Theatre in the Creative Arts Center at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

The film’s writer and producer, Dayton Duncan showcased an exclusive selection of excerpts from the film specific to the Mountain State’s rich country music heritage. Beloved West Virginia country music artists Kathy Mattea and
Charlie McCoy, both of whom are featured in the documentary, performed live with the Mountain Stage Band, and early arrivals were treated to a performance by the WVU Bluegrass and Old Time Band in the lobby prior to the show.

Chuck Roberts, WVPB executive director, said an event of this magnitude wouldn’t be possible without support from PBS and collaboration with WVU’s College of Creative Arts and Reed College of Media. He said everyone involved in organizing the event recognizes its importance.

“Country music has flowed through West Virginia since before the genre had a formal name,” Roberts said. “Our history is steeped with a respect and love for this kind of music, and it is ingrained in who we are. We were honored to be able to present a fantastic event celebrating the film and our state’s unique place in country music history with the help of our partners and sponsors.”

Burns, Duncan and Julie Dunfey spent eight years researching and producing the film, an eight-part, 16-hour documentary that premiered on West Virginia Public Broadcasting television September 15. They conducted interviews with more than 100 people, including 40 members of the Country Music Hall of Fame. Written by Duncan, the documentary chronicles country music’s early days, from southern Appalachia’s songs of struggle, heartbreak and faith to the rollicking Western swing of Texas, California’s honky-tonks and Nashville’s “Grand Ole Opry.” Duncan said he can’t wait to tell the tale of West Virginia’s impact on country music. Duncan said about West Virginia’s influence: “West Virginia — its artists, its radio stations, and its fans — has had a significant influence on the evolution of country music. We were thrilled to interview Little Jimmie Dickens, Connie Smith, Kathy Mattea and Charlie McCoy to tell their stories — and the life of Hawkshaw Hawkins is an incredibly moving tale...”

When we learned that renowned filmmaker Ken Burns would be releasing his Country Music series in the fall of 2019, we knew it was a special opportunity to tell West Virginia’s part of this important story. West Virginia Public Broadcasting’s companion film — In Tune: A Community of Musicians — was produced by award-winning documentarian Russ Barbour and premiered in September 2019.
In Tune: A Community of Musicians celebrates the history and preservation of traditional or “old-time” mountain music. The film examines its origins and features the stories brought to life in old-time songs.

Through use of archival film, the program pays tribute to musicians of the past, while performances today showcase the musicians who are teaching our next generation of old-time players.

As a special celebration of the music and the film, WVPB sponsored four community film screenings before the premiere broadcast with support from partners around the state. These included: Clay County High School, West Virginia University, the West Virginia Culture Center and Shepherd University. The film is available online and with a classroom curriculum through West Virginia LearningMedia.

PRODUCTION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

WVPB’s production team continually works in the community to produce special projects such as:

- Filming West Virginia Lottery drawings six days a week, 52 weeks a year;
- Producing promos, web features and short-form video for special projects like our focus on recovery from the opioid crisis and our ongoing American Graduate program;
- Creating videos showcasing winners of the Governor’s Service Awards;
- Producing documentaries like In Tune: A Community of Musicians and Tractor: The Movie;
- Live-streaming Mountain Stage from the West Virginia Culture Center, as well other events like Arts Alive, History Bowl and the West Virginia Symphony;
- Producing and broadcasting WVPB’s production of Bob Thompson’s Joy To The World, an annual live holiday concert that also airs on The West Virginia Channel and WVPB Radio.
For more than 36 years WVPB’s Mountain Stage, hosted by Larry Groce, has been an institution of public radio, presenting live music from the Mountain State to the world. Last year alone, more than 12,000 music lovers attended a live Mountain Stage show. The program, which has been recognized for lifetime achievement during the Governor’s Arts Awards and for being a “Star of the Industry” by the Division of Tourism, is experiencing unprecedented growth — up 59 percent in station carriage since 2015. Our weekly listeners — all 146,400 of them — gave us an increase of 36 percent from 107,600 since Spring 2015.

Last year, 8,000 people attended 18 Mountain Stage events at the Culture Center Theater in Charleston, and 4,000 people attended one of our five on-the-road events. We welcomed 114 guest artists to 23 live events, including 13 regional artists and 14 international performers from Mali, Faroe Islands, Sudan, London and Montreal.

Mountain Stage is heard weekly on 247 public radio stations across the country. New radio networks include Alabama Public Broadcasting (five stations), North West Public Broadcasting (16 stations), and stations in Knoxville, Tenn., Panama City, Fla., Beaumont, Texas, and Bethlehem, Penn. Listenership via our podcast is also at an all-time high, and 41 guest artist segments from our shows were featured at the NPR Music website, npr.org/mountainstage.

The show has four national underwriters, including three tourism industry organizations, that have their messaging heard weekly during Mountain Stage — West Virginia Tourism Office, Bailey & Glasser LLP, Adventures on the Gorge and The Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau.
US & THEM

Us & Them is a podcast and radio show that focuses on the fault lines that divide Americans. Each episode features passionate people on either side of the culture war divide – from conservative Christian preachers and creationism advocates, to moderate Muslim imams and flamboyant drag queens – not to determine who is right or wrong but rather to showcase their humanity.

The show won a 2018 Public Media Journalists Award for “My Friend From Camp,” an episode on the unlikely friendship between a Guantanamo Bay Prison guard and his prisoner.

Host Trey Kay was chosen to do an extensive investigative journalism piece by public media stand-out Reveal, and Us & Them partnered with Los Angeles public radio station KCRW on an original spinoff show called Red State Blue State, which examined the differences and stereotypes of life in conservative “Trump Country” to that of life in the liberal-leaning “Blue Bubble” of the West Coast. Us & Them and Trey Kay are being recognized outside West Virginia as a positive voice for West Virginians.

READ FOR THE RECORD

The WVPB team, along with many of its friends, read the book “Thank You, Omu!” by Oge Mora, to students across the state on November 7, 2019, as part of Jumpstart’s international initiative, Read for the Record. All of West Virginia’s 55 counties were covered by 200 readers taking place at 54 libraries, 53 schools, Head Start programs, home school programs, after-school programs and day care facilities. In all, more than 4,000 children participated. The hope was to promote strong literacy skills and a passion for reading. See a video of staffers reading the book at wvpublic.org.

-MORE-
WVPB PBS Kids Channel

The Challenge: Kids are watching more and more programming on nights and weekends, but our main channel only has children’s programming during the day.

The Solution: Our WVPB PBS Kids Channel provides 24/7 quality educational programming over the air, on cable and as an online video stream.

**PBS Kids reaches our youngest, neediest children.**

- PBS Kids is the #1 provider of programming for children under 9, both online and on television.
- All PBS KIDS programming is designed to promote literacy, math skills and social & emotional development.
- Low-income children are MOST LIKELY to depend on PBS Kids programming.

-MORE-
CPB’s Community Engagement model has worked for WVPB.

The commitment will continue in 2020.

PROMOTING APPALACHIAN CULTURE
INSIDE APPALACHIA FOLKWAYS PROJECT GROWS

West Virginia and Appalachia have a rich and unique culture, but it is often stereotyped and misunderstood. We are building a regional reporting network to tell the true story of Appalachian culture to ourselves and the world.

In 2018, Inside Appalachia hosted its first live listening event in Beckley sharing stories of two successful small businesses, a broom making operation and a grist mill. In 2019, we welcomed our first cohort of reporters as part of our focus on folkways reporting. We held a workshop for our new Inside Appalachia Folkways Corps at Pipestem Resort State Park focusing on folklife, audio story collection and production, and a discussion of still and video photography. Those reporters have been filing radio features about folklife in the region.

The Folkways Reporting Project is made possible through a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

Going forward in 2020 and beyond, we look to expand the Folkways Reporting Project, enabling WVPB to cover a six-state region. A new training session is in the planning stages for Spring 2020.

-MORE-
LOOKING ABROAD
INSIDE APPALACHIA FOLKWAYS PROJECT LOOKS TO WALES

West Virginia Public Broadcasting’s Inside Appalachia Folkways Project will send a team of reporters to Wales this spring to expand their knowledge and understanding of the connections of Appalachian folk life and culture to the culture and folk life of the British Isles.

The team will interview artisans, musicians and folk artists in Wales, exploring links to folk arts and culture found at home in Appalachia. Team members will investigate musical traditions featured at the Fire on the Mountain music festival near Aberystwyth, Wales.

Students in Lincoln County, West Virginia, schools have already been working on projects with Welsh students in cross-cultural exchanges as a part of this project, and WVPB reporters will continue to work with students in Wales on this trip.

Content gathered on the trip will be used in production of Inside Appalachia, WVPB’s podcast and radio show. The Inside Appalachia Folkways Project is made possible by a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.
Workforce Development
AMERICAN GRADUATE: GETTING TO WORK

As part of CPB’s American Graduate: Getting to Work program, WVPB educates young people about career paths that don’t require a four-year college degree.

This program successfully targets youth and their adult influencers and highlights different pathways to good careers that don’t require a four-year degree. We created a web page that houses all the content we have developed, wvpublic.org/jobs, and our social media campaign in 2019 gained 404,568 impressions. We also broadcast more than 16 hours of content.

Going forward, we are hopeful about continuing this effort as we see the value of engaging with all of our workforce partners across the state – from educational institutions to students.

At left is a promotional ad for American Graduate: Getting To Work from the West Virginia Education Summit in 2019.

YOUNG LEARNER DEVELOPMENT
ALL IN!

Education’s latest initiative, ALL IN, has been developed to increase awareness and support for the importance of community and family involvement in the education of young learners. ALL IN will provide educators with easy lessons for family engagement nights moving to encourage parents to take a more active role in their child’s education.

Its tagline, “We All Have A Hand In Student Success” also reflects the partnerships WVPB has developed with libraries, schools and other community programs.

In 2020, we will increase collaborations with our local partners to bring our respected PBS Kids programming and education-rich content using a variety of platforms like tablets, engagement tools and games designed to engage and motivate our young learners and encourage family involvement at a time when families come in many forms such as traditional families, single-parent families and grandfamilies.

-MORE-
YOUNG LEARNER DEVELOPMENT

INQUIRE WITHIN

Earlier this year we launched “Inquire Within” a collaborative project with 11 libraries in the state. Libraries host a minimum of five events including a launch party to engage the community in a celebration of the new partnership. Participating libraries have seen record turnout at events while witnessing family involvement and interest in family-centered activities. Other libraries across the state have shown interest and are hoping to come on board this year.

We’re planning to expand to at least three more libraries in West Virginia. We are continuing to look for underwriting and grant opportunities to expand the program further.

Children participate in a hands-on WVPB Inquire Within event.

NEWS PARTNERSHIP

OHIO VALLEY RESOURCE

The Ohio Valley ReSource is a regional public media collaborative that includes seven stations across Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia. As the election season kicks off, the “America Amplified: Election 2020” initiative, led by KCUR 89.3 in Kansas City, will fund eight public media networks that will produce innovative journalism from community engagement efforts, including the collaboration between OVR and WVPB. Each of these networks will receive funding from the initiative, which is supported by a $1.9 million grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Partner public radio stations, like WVPB, will collaborate to gather data and engage communities in a variety of ways, including listening events, public forums, texting clubs and social media. The stations will share insights, stories and content with national broadcast collaborators such as NPR, PBS, the BBC and podcast producers.

In collaboration with OVR, the WVPB news team will continue its partnership with the Ohio Valley ReSource in 2020 to expand its capability to explore the issues that drive people (or don’t) to the polls during an election year.
BRIDGING THE CULTURE DIVIDE
US & THEM

National award-winning Us & Them, in collaboration with Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, has two events coming up in Spring 2020 that are all about the power of bridging cultural divides across the ideological and political spectrum.

The first event will feature Us & Them host Trey Kay in a TEDxMarshallU event at Huntington City Hall in mid-March. In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TED Talks has created a program called TEDx, that features local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. Called “Bridges,” Marshall’s event is designed to spark deep discussions and connections in a small group setting. The evening will feature a diverse group of speakers, including Kay, who will share experiences, motivation, and concepts that address this theme in the Marshall community and the Appalachian region.

The second event will be a live exercise in crossing cultural divides for students, faculty and members of the community and is presented by the John Deaver Drinko Academy, an organization that champions the idea that democratic societies depend upon the collective commitment of citizens to the rule of law, to civility in debating all matters, and to active and informed participation in self-government.

During the event, participants will be put into “conversation pairs” and asked to share their views and differences in thoughtful, civil and productive conversation without trying to change each other’s minds. Participants will explore a diverse range of beliefs, ideals, values and perspectives held by themselves and others and learn how to find common ground instead of reverting to ridicule of or hostility toward those who hold different views.

The hope of the Us & Them team is that utilizing this conversation model will encourage understanding instead of polarization and be of value in West Virginia as Mountain State residents have incredibly diverse opinions that range all along ideological and political spectrums.

There are three main goals of the event.

1. **Mutual respect based on truly getting to know each other.** At a time of intense national polarization, when people often marginalize and ridicule those with different opinions and values, they avoid getting to know those who aren’t like them. The hope is that this event fosters conversation to help participants discover that they do have some things in common.

2. **A deeper understanding of West Virginians.** The hope is that Kay and the Us & Them team gain insight into the perspective of West Virginians to see what issues and values they hold important and examples of commonality and consensus.

3. **Will this work elsewhere?** The team hopes to discover if the format of this event could serve as a model for future Us & Them events throughout West Virginia, and even broader, throughout Appalachia, to foster better understanding and acceptance of differing opinions.

-END-