



2020 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



"We have sponsored Public Media in various ways over the years because we believe that public radio and TV are vital to the communities we live in. It is critical that we all have access to quality and accurate programming to help educate, entertain and enrich us."

-Todd A. Vonderheid, Custom Container Solutions

WVIA educates, inspires, entertains, and fosters citizenship, diverse cultures, and perspectives to nurture community.



WVIA is a valuable part of Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania, bringing quality local and national programming to over 497,830 households per the Nielsen 2020 TV Household DMA Ranking Report.



"The Weis Center supports WVIA because it is one of the most trusted and reputable sources for news and information in the Central PA region.

Lisa Leighton, Weis Center for the Performing Arts at Bucknell

In 2020 WVIA aired 294 hours of local programming content. Programming highlights include our new public Affairs series, "Keystone Edition" which focused on local and regional issues including, COVID 19, Voter Registration and Services for Senior Citizen. The goal of this series is to connect viewers with resources and promote collaboration amongst regional non-profits. In addition, WVIA produced Season Two of our multiplatform initiative called "Battling Opioids". This season focused on the impact the COVID 19 Pandemic had on those in recovery. WVIA partnered with the six other Pennsylvania Public Television Stations to create a series of programs and online content by connecting viewers to resources.

In 2020 WVIA reached approximately 2,028,990 residents with our television coverage and has many partnerships with many area foundations such as the Robert Spitz Foundation, Reidler Foundation, Sordoni Foundation, Central Susquehanna Community Foundation, Richard L. Yuengling Foundation and Ross Family Foundation.





Member Day Events

Family Ski Day at Elk Mountain

(January 2020)

WVIA hosted a Winter Family Ski Day at Elk Mountain in Uniondale, PA on January 9, 2020. WVIA Members received free Ski Packages which included Ski Rentals and Lift Tickets. WVIA Corporate Sponsors received free Lift Tickets. WVIA and Elk Mountain welcomed 1,402 Members and Corporate Sponsors to Ski Day.

WVIA Family Ski Day at Ski Sawmill

(February 2020)

WVIA hosted a Winter Family Ski Day at Ski Sawmill in Morris, PA on Monday, February 24, 2020. WVIA Members received free Ski Packages which included Ski Rentals and Lift Tickets. WVIA and Ski Sawmill welcomed 145 Members and Corporate Sponsors to Ski Day.

Partnering with WVIA, Agora Cyber Charter is able to leverage the brand trust inherent in PBS platforms and allows us to provide an opportunity for exploration for parents, students, and teachers. Through this collaborative partnership, Agora uniquely positions itself as a valued educational resource in our communities.

- Ilene King, Agora Cyber Charter School

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES



WVIA's Learn at Home:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/learn-at-home/>

Spearheaded by the Grants and Education Officer, Kirsten Smith, WVIA's Learning at Home is a program born out of community need. PBS Education shows are featured during the school day with their coordinated lessons and activities on [wvia.org](https://www.wvia.org). In response to the equity gaps that exist in our region due to lack of technology and/or connectivity, WVIA began a robust initiative to provide our region's children with quality educational programming to augment and enhance their education at school. When learning went full virtual, we sprang into action by not only providing the educational programming and coordinated educational resources for all grade levels, all ability levels, but we also partnered with the region's teachers to air teacher-created lessons on the channel, coordinated with the educational programming, and covering all ages and all ability levels. In total, the initiative lasted 4 months and continues even this school year with educational programming and coordinated educational resources offered on the state level. Additionally, we aired Senior Salutes to honor the graduates of the region and Storytime with WVIA each night on our social media platforms to encourage reading at home.



Educational Lessons:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/learn-at-home/educational-lessons-grades-3-4/>

As part of WVIA's Learning at Home Initiative, the WVIA education department reached out to area teachers to create virtual lessons and activities that aired midday on WVIA-TV. All lessons were then uploaded to the Learning at Home page at [wvia.org](https://www.wvia.org). We featured 100 teacher-created lessons during the entire month of May.



PBS Kids in the Classroom:

<https://www.wvia.org/kids/pbs-kids-in-the-classroom/>

Longtime running program that features a WVIA educator visiting area Elementary School classrooms. Students partake in a themed lesson, activity, PBS character meet and greet, and are given a free book to take home. In the 2019-2020 school year, WVIA Education visited 13 school districts and reached well over 350 students. Because of COVID, the school year was cut short and the WVIA Education Department had to convert the program into a virtual experience. Students will receive their free books and complete an activity led virtually by a WVIA Educator. Students then skype with a favored PBS Kids Character.



<https://www.wvia.org/education/>

As part of our mission, WVIA celebrates students who strive to excel in academics and the arts. That is why we established WVIA's Enhanced Scholar Program. We have forty districts in our program, serving approximately 90,000 students under the care of more than 5,000 teachers.



Artist of the Week:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/artist-of-the-week/>

Artist of the Week showcased area high school students and their work in Art, Dance, Singing, Theatre, and Music. Student artists are featured every week on the Artist of the Week page at www.wvia.org, on all of WVIA's social media handles, and in a television promotional campaign directing the audience to the website.

We've featured over 75 students from area school districts this past year and we are currently filming for this year's initiative.



Scholastic Scrimmage:

<https://www.wvia.org/tv/scholastic-scrimmage/>

A quiz bowl game show that features area High School teams competing for a cash prize. Over 40 school districts from the NEIU, CSIU, and LIU participated in 2020's competition. 42 competitions aired on WVIA-TV leading to Selinsgrove Area High School taking 3rd place, Wyoming Area taking 2nd place, and Wallenpaupack High School winning 1st place overall!



Young Writers Contest:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/great-teachers-essay-contest/>

Elementary students have the chance to write and illustrate their own stories. Winning stories are featured on the Young Writers page at wvia.org and the first-place winners have their story animated and narrated by WVIA Radio Host, Lisa Mazzarella. This year, with hundreds of entries nationwide, kids from Hazleton, Dallas, Springbrook, Forty Fort, Duryea, South Abington, and Lewisburg placed in the competition overall.



Poetry Out Loud:

<https://on-demand.wvia.org/video/2020-poetry-out-loud-regional-competition-jabgnl/>

WVIA partnered with NEIU #19 to host the regional competition for Poetry Out Loud in December, 2019 and broadcast the show (TV and radio) in April, 2020 for National Poetry Month. This competition showcases high school students reciting poetry from memory, with the winner advancing to statewide competition.



Great Teachers Essay Contest:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/great-teachers-essay-contest/>

High School Senior Students can write an essay about a teacher whom they believe is a great teacher. The winning student essays are transformed into a mini-documentary that is featured on [wvia.org](http://www.wvia.org) and the students receive \$500 scholarships for their future education. The winning essays for the 2019-2020 season feature students and teachers from Susquehanna County Career and Technology, Mountain View High School, and Pittston Area.



Storytime with WVIA:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/nightly-storytime/>

Area educators and WVIA employees read children's stories that are posted on the WVIA Education Facebook page every weekday at 7 pm. To date, WVIA has featured and read nearly 200 stories on our social media handles reaching thousands of families quarantined at home.



Salute to Seniors:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/senior-salutes/>

WVIA's initiative to salute area High School Senior Students who were robbed of a proper graduation ceremony. Schools produced their own 15-minute slideshows that WVIA edited and then aired nightly on WVIA-TV. Over thirty High Schools were then able to see their salutes on TV and share their Salutes on their school's webpage.



Conversations in Science:

<https://www.wvia.org/education/conversations-in-science/>

In partnership with Sanofi, WVIA asked area middle schools to create a 3-minute feature about a science topic. Students were asked to brainstorm, research, and film their own features which were then posted on the Conversations in Science page at wvia.org. With the school year being cut short due to COVID, this feature remains ongoing. The WVIA Education Department is currently still recruiting schools.

WVIA has once again been granted status as an **Educational Improvement Organization with the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Opportunity**. This status allows VIA to accept EITC donations from Pennsylvania businesses to be used toward select pieces of our Enhanced Scholar Program.

PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES



Call the Doctor:

<https://www.wvia.org/tv/call-the-doctor/>

WVIA's bi-monthly medical program, *Call the Doctor* now in its 33rd season, discussed various topics including "Opioid Addiction." Our panel of healthcare experts discussed available regional resources so viewers and their families can get the support and care they need.

Our Town Series:

<https://www.wvia.org/tv/our-town/>



The series aspires to inspire in viewers a sense of pride and of its place in the constellation of communities that reflect the quality of life in northeastern Pennsylvania and the Central Susquehanna Valley. Undoubtedly, such collaboration has produced many new friendships for the station, and further empowers the station's mission. In 2020 the community of Moosic was highlighted. WVIA has produced 38 "Our Town" programs to date.



VIA Short Takes:

<https://www.wvia.org/tv/short-takes/>

WVIA's newest digital series which premiered in January 2019. It made it's television series debut in 2020. Short Takes is a documentary series featuring topics ranging from dramatic and edgy to cute, quirky, thrilling and much more. It aims to provide an entertaining look at the people and places that make Pennsylvania (and beyond) so unique. There were five 30-minute VIA Short Take television programs released in 2020.



Battling Opioids:

<https://battlingopioids.org/>

Pennsylvania has one of the highest opioid overdose death rates in the nation. Every day, thousands of Pennsylvanians.

Season Two of Battling Opioids focused on the impact the COVID 19 Pandemic had on those in recovery. Three 60-minute programs were presented - January, April and September to increase awareness and empathy to reduce the stigma around opioid use, aid prevention, and help people find treatment.

Pennsylvania PBS stations WHYY (Philadelphia), WITF (Harrisburg), WLVT/PBS39 (Greater Lehigh Valley), WPSU (State College), WQED(Pittsburgh), WQLN (Northwestern Pennsylvania), and WVIA (Northeastern Pennsylvania) are collaborating to produce educational programming that focuses on the opioid crisis and its impact.



Keystone Edition:

<https://www.wvia.org/tv/keystone-edition/>



For more than 50 years, WVIA has served the people of Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania by identifying and addressing the region's most pressing needs through constructive journalism. WVIA connects viewers and listeners with resources to affect change in their neighborhoods.

With this idea in mind, WVIA is proud to present Keystone Edition, our new flagship public affairs multi-platform series.

Keystone Edition facilitates a conversation among viewers, change agents, and visionaries who impact their communities while providing an accurate portrayal of socially relevant topics from multiple perspectives.

This weekly, half-hour, multi-platform series goes beyond the headlines to offer thoughtful insights through a fresh journalistic perspective with the thorough attention to detail and authenticity viewers expect from public television.

Each week, our hosts will inspire audiences to engage in conversations that highlight critical stories in our region. WVIA's Larry Vojtko and Erika Funke, as well as Kris Jones (Entrepreneur/Author) and Tonyehn Verkitus (Executive Director of the Lackawanna and Luzerne County Medical Societies) serve as moderators.

Guided by research from [The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development](#) and ideas from a volunteer editorial advisory panel, including veteran journalists throughout the region, Keystone Edition explores important topics in economic development, community affairs, education, workforce development, business, public health, organized labor, climate change, arts and culture, all with a goal of improving the quality of life in our region.



PA Congressional District Debates:

<https://www.wvia.org/tv/2020-congressional-debates/>

Debate for the 8th Congressional District with incumbent Congressman Matt Cartwright (D) and challenger Jim Bognet (R) aired on Sunday, October, 18, 2020 at 7pm.

The Debate for the 9th Congressional District featured incumbent Congressman Dan Meuser (R) and challenger Gary Wegman (D) aired on Tuesday, Tuesday, October 20th at 7pm.

Digital Content



January 2020 - Re-launched wvia.org website on PBS' Bento 3.0 platform

March 2020 - Launched [Coronavirus Resource and Support Page](#) on wvia.org

March 2020 - Launched [WVIA Learn-at-home webpage](#) to compliment on air programs with curriculum

April 2020 - Launched [WVIA TV Livestream on YouTube TV](#)

October 2020 - Launched [WVIA TV Livestream on wvia.org](#) and PBS Video App

Digital episodes premiered in 2020:

Short Takes 10 Episodes

- Episode 35: [Through the Mask of Noh](#)
- Episode 34: [Denison House - Window on The Revolution](#)
- Episode 33: [Bill Wennington: Giving Pickleball His All](#)
- Episode 32: [Mark Sauerhoff: Art is Not Pristine](#)
- Episode 31: [Amilcar Arroyo: Tomatoes, Newspapers, Opportunity](#)
- Episode 30: [Creating Conservation Contributors: The Lehman Sanctuary](#)
- Episode 29: [Rough & Tumble Steam Tractors](#)
- Episode 28: [Electric City Trolley Museum](#)
- Episode 27: [Keystone Iron Works: Keeping A Tradition Flowing](#)
- Episode 26: [Alan Finn: Police Dog Trainer](#)

Community Engagement Events



WVIA's plan for a busy year of community engagement events was off to a good start before the COVID-19 pandemic forced a shutdown in March. In early January we held 3 free community screenings previewing the new PBS Masterpiece series Sanditon including presentations by English faculty about Jane Austen. In February we hosted a screening of the cooking and culture show No Passport Required followed by a reception featuring Delicious Desserts from area food service establishments and a culinary school, wrapping up our online project mapping "Cultural Treasures of the Region" nominated by viewers. And we observed Black History Month by presenting a local historian identifying Underground Railway locations in the area before a screening of Harriet, the story of Harriet Tubman. WVIA was on the verge of hosting additional screenings for the Masterpiece World War II drama World on Fire when the coronavirus outbreak brought public gatherings to a standstill.

Venues & Partners:

Dietrich Theater, Tunkhannock, PA
Berwick Theater, Berwick, PA
Pocono Cinema, East Stroudsburg, PA
Campus Theatre, Lewisburg, PA
Community Theatre League, Williamsport, PA
University of Scranton, Scranton, PA
Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA
East Stroudsburg University, East Stroudsburg, PA

The COVID-19 pandemic closed the door on the original community engagement plan... but opened a window for even greater impact. Even though most staff were working from home, we recognized the needs of students, teachers, and parents and quickly pivoted to Learning at Home. With schools closed and many students without internet access, WVIA reprogrammed our main TV channel with PBS Kids, Nature, Nova, and other programs selected to align with Pennsylvania curriculum standards, pre-K- grade 12. WVIA.org posted free educational resources for students, teachers, and parents coordinated for each program. And working with 4 intermediate units and dozens of school districts, we broadcast over 100 video lessons produced by teachers at all grade levels, again linked to the program subject matter. We recorded interstitial messages introducing Learning at Home programs and daily radio promos saluting the participating teachers and districts. WVIA staff members and teachers took turns reading stories online for children each evening. In June WVIA aired Senior Salute videos from more than 20 school districts honoring their graduating classes.

Since the schools lost a lot of instructional time this spring, WVIA assembled a summer schedule of educational programming with free online resources. All this has led to a new partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Pennsylvania PBS stations are an important part of the PDE official Continuity of Education plan.

WVIA's Learning at Home broadcasts with coordinated online educational resources continued as schools partially reopened in the fall. GEERS grant funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Education allowed WVIA and the other 6 Pennsylvania PBS stations to launch a new service of datacasting, using a portion of the broadcast spectrum to send educational materials to devices in homes without internet access, thus bringing an alternative to online learning to students in unwired homes and communities. And grant funding enables WVIA to distribute many "Grab and Go bags" filled with preloaded Raspberry Pi tech devices, other educational resources, and trauma-informed care materials to families throughout our 21-county coverage area, all in coordination with 4 educational intermediate units and scores of school districts.



Other community engagement initiatives of the year include a contest giving away complete DVD sets of the Ken Burns documentary National Parks: America's Best Idea to promote the summer broadcast series. In September we introduced new President and CEO Carla McCabe to the region with a community preview screening of coming attractions, a virtual screening, and a Q&A session with the new President. WVIA convened a Diversity Task Force from the board of directors, and staff members participated in numerous webinars and virtual discussions on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice organized by the Scranton Area Community Foundation, Scranton Martin Luther King Commission, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce DEI Committee, and several public media organizations. We participated in a public meeting explaining the new strategic plan for the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, and in December we partnered with Scranton Civic Ballet to broadcast their annual production of The Nutcracker, since the continuing COVID-19 pandemic makes a live performance with the audience impossible.

For over 50 years WVIA's number one commitment has been to public service in our region.

WVIA Mission

WVIA educates, inspires, entertains, and fosters citizenship, diverse cultures, and perspectives to nurture community.

WVIA Vision

A joyful, engaged, well-informed, compassionate community via public media.