Idaho Public Television announced on May 21, 2021, that General Manager Ron Pisaneschi will retire on June 30, 2021, or as soon thereafter as a replacement can be named.

“After more than 35 years at Idaho Public Television and eight of those as general manager, I have decided to retire and let someone new lead the organization into an exciting future,” Pisaneschi said. “It has been the greatest privilege and joy to be part of the Idaho Public Television family and to lead this extraordinary organization. We have an amazing, talented and dedicated staff that I am honored to have had the chance to work with and lead.”

Pisaneschi has been part of Idaho Public Television since 1985, during which time he served as director of content, director of programming, director of public information, and director of marketing and development before taking on his current duties. He became general manager in August 2013. Pisaneschi is responsible for a staff of 70 full-time and more than 40 part-time employees and a $9+ million budget. Under his leadership, Idaho Public Television has been one of the most-watched and best supported PBS stations per capita in the nation.

Pisaneschi recalled some of the milestones and most successful achievements of his tenure. “I am proud of the successes we have had in recent years, including strong support from our viewers and donors and increasing viewership across multiple platforms. We have enhanced our local production offerings, including the launch of our newest ongoing production, Idaho Experience. We built a new education department that is having real impact on the lives of
students, educators and families, especially during this pandemic year. And we have embraced new technologies and platforms to make sure that our content and services are available whenever and wherever viewers want them via services like the free PBS Video app, smart TVs, YouTube TV, live linear streaming on our website (idahoptv.org) and more. I want to thank my family, my colleagues, our viewers and donors, the Friends of Idaho Public Television Board of Directors, the Idaho State Board of Education, and so many others for their support over the years. I know the future is bright for this wonderful organization.”

Two of Pisaneschi’s longtime colleagues reflected on his leadership and legacy. Jeff Tucker, director of content at Idaho Public Television, said, “Ron’s time in the PBS and public media system has really benefitted not just Idaho Public Television but public media nationwide. His work here in Idaho has been strong and his compassion shows. What he’s managed to achieve over his eight years as general manager and over three decades with IdahoPTV is remarkable. His influence and expertise will be greatly missed.”

Bruce Reichert, Idaho Public Television executive producer, added, “I’ve worked with Ron for three decades. He’s been a steady, caring administrator and a stalwart supporter of our locally grown productions. He’s represented the agency well, especially when certain advocacy groups were willing to bend the truth to make a point. And he’s warned PBS officials back east that they need to do a better job listening to the concerns of rural states like Idaho. Ron has moved the needle, and Idaho is the better for it.”

Douglas Balfour, president of the Friends of Idaho Public Television, sent congratulations on behalf of the nonprofit that helps IdahoPTV publicize its services and secure financial support. “The Friends of Idaho Public Television congratulate Ron Pisaneschi on his retirement. Under his management, IdahoPTV has continued to provide amazing national shows and brilliant original productions. No wonder IdahoPTV is recognized as being among the best public television stations in the nation. With his leadership, IdahoPTV has focused on the wonderful people and places we have in the Gem State, with local productions like Idaho Reports, Outdoor Idaho and Idaho Experience. Ron will be missed, but we will carry on in the tradition he established.”

Debbie Critchfield, Idaho State Board of Education member, said, “The commitment and work ethic of Ron Pisaneschi is the reason Idaho Public Television has the state and national status that it does. It’s because of his leadership and absolute belief in quality programming that we have had a public television system that reflected the needs and values of Idaho. We acknowledge his efforts and thank him for his dedication.”

The Idaho State Board of Education, which oversees the operation of Idaho Public Television, will form a committee to conduct a nationwide search for Pisaneschi’s replacement. For more details on the replacement process, contact Mike Keckler, chief communications and legislative affairs officer at the Idaho State Board of Education: mike.keckler@osbe.idaho.gov.
COMMITTEE NAMED TO VET IPTV GENERAL MANAGER CANDIDATES

The Idaho State Board of Education’s executive director has formed a screening committee to interview candidates interested in becoming the next general manager of Idaho Public Television.

Ron Pisaneschi, the current GM, announced last week that he plans to retire after more than 35 years working at IPTV, including eight years leading the statewide public broadcasting system.

“Idaho Public Television is a tremendous asset to the State of Idaho,” Dr. David Hill, member of the State Board of Education said. “IPTV operates several channels and online platforms broadcasting high-quality programming and educational resources to our citizens. We need a new general manager who can continue the momentum established over the years that made IPTV one of the top public broadcasting systems in the country.”

The screening committee includes:

- Doug Balfour – president, Friends of Idaho Public Television
- Dr. David Hill – member, Idaho State Board of Education
- Judy Meyer – board member, Friends of Idaho Public Television, and former member of the Idaho State Board of Education
- Peter Morrill - former IPTV general manager (retired)
- Matt Freeman - executive director, Idaho State Board of Education

The committee will recommend a finalist to the Idaho State Board of Education for appointment.

Here’s a link to the job announcement: https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/idaho/jobs/3096857/general-manager
Idaho Public Television’s online auction, Experiencing Idaho, lets you can bid on exciting and uniquely Idaho-related items and adventures while supporting your local PBS station. Bidding and sweepstakes registration will open on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 12:00 a.m. Mountain time and close on Sunday, June 13, 2021 at 9:00 p.m. Mountain time/8 p.m. Pacific time. All funds raised will go to support Idaho Public Television in fulfilling its mission of harnessing the power of public media to encourage lifelong learning, connecting our communities, and enriching the lives of all Idahoans.

Awards

Best of 2020 Award Winners

The Idaho Press Club’s mission is to promote excellence in journalism, freedom of expression and freedom of information. Each spring, they sponsor an annual journalism contest to recognize the best work in Idaho.

Here are IdahoPTV’s winners:

ALL MEDIA
Videographer of the Year, Jay Krajic - Outdoor Idaho

TELEVISION DIVISION
Outdoor/Environmental Reporting
First Place - Bill Manny, Jay Krajic - Outdoor Idaho “The 12ers”
Third Place - Joan Cartan-Hansen, Al Hagenlock, Cassandra Groll, Jenessa Carson, Eric Westrom - Science Trek: Climate “Climate Change”

Arts and Entertainment Reporting
First Place - Forrest Burger - Idaho Experience: Drive Ins
Second Place - Marcia Franklin, Andy Lawless, Jay Krajic, Andy Lawless, Eric Westrom - Idaho Experience: Limberlost Press

Serious Feature
Honorable Mention - Aaron Kunz, Marv Hagadorn - Memorial Day

Television Writing - Program Length
First Place - Forest Burger - Outdoor Idaho “Barns of Idaho”
Second Place - Jennie Sue Weltner - Idaho Experience “Ahead of Her Time”
Third Place - Lauren Melink - Outdoor Idaho “Urban Wildlife”
Television Writing - Single Story
First Place - Marcia Franklin - Idaho Experience: Limberlost Press

Education Reporting
Second Place - Andy Lawless, Tammy Scardino, Hank Nystrom - American Graduate “Explore COSSA”

Election Reporting
Second Place - Melissa Davlin, Troy Shreve, Devon Downey, Logan Finney - Idaho Reports “Applying Lessons Learned”

Government/Political Reporting
First Place - Andy Lawless - American Graduate “Workforce Development Council Youth Apprenticeship Initiative”

Documentary
First Place - Forrest Burger, Aaron Kunz - Idaho Experience “Through Youthful Eyes”
Second Place - Jennie Sue Weltner, Marcia Franklin, Andy Lawless - Idaho Experience “Ahead of Her Time”
Third Place - Bill Manny, Eric Westrom - Idaho Experience “Idaho Constitution Revealed”

TV Graphics
First Place - Cassandra Groll - Science Trek

Public Affairs - Studio
Third Place - Melissa Davlin, Troy Shreve, Devon Downey, Logan Finney - Idaho Reports “Extraordinary Special Session”

Public Affairs - Field
First Place - Kris Millgate, Jay Krajic - Outdoor Idaho “Trailblazers”
Second Place - Jay Krajic, Bill Many, Bruce Reichert, Lauren Melink, Forrest Burger, Peter Morrill, Pat Metzler, Troy Shreve, Sauni Symonds, Terry’ Mule’ Lee - Outdoor Idaho “Sawtooths On My Mind”
Third Place - Lauren Melink, Bruce Reichert, Aaron Kunz - Outdoor Idaho “Urban Wildlife”

Videography - Program Length
First Place - Jay Krajic - Outdoor Idaho: composite
Second Place - Forrest Burger - Outdoor Idaho “Barns of Idaho”

ONLINE DIVISION
Online Only Video Program - General
First Place - Marcia Franklin, Dave Butler - The 180 “Johnathan Amissa”
Third Place - Marcia Franklin, Jay Krajic - The 180 “Howard Oliver”

Best Website - General: Television
Second Place - Stephanie Dickey, Cassy Rider - Idaho Public Television

Best Website - Special Purpose
First Place - Stephanie Dickey, Cassy Rider, Joan Cartan-Hansen, Janna DeLange - Science Trek

Best Audience Engagement
Third Place - Lauren Melink, Aaron Kunz - Outdoor Idaho “Urban Wildlife”

WEEKLY
Election Report
Third Place - Melissa Davlin - Idaho Reports Blog
More congratulations are in order for our amazing production and communications teams for the honors they were bestowed at the 54th annual WorldFest Awards this month.

**Platinum**
Outdoor Idaho “Barns of Idaho” - Agriculture
Outdoor Idaho “Sawtooths on My Mind” - Travel/Tourism
Outdoor Idaho “State of Change” - Informational
Memorial Day “In Honor of our Heroes” - Public Service

**Gold**
Science Trek “Virus” - Educational Instructional - Children
Science Trek “Satellite” - The Space Awards
Outdoor Idaho “Urban Wildlife” - Community Affairs
Idaho Experience “Albion Normal: A Teachers College” - Education
Idaho Experience “Idaho’s Constitution Revealed” History & Archaeology
Idaho Experience “Ahead of Her Time” Cultural
Idaho Experience “Through Youthful Eyes” - Informational
Resilient Idaho “Father David” - Religion/Ethics/ Spirituality

**Bronze**
Idaho Reports “Extraordinary Special Session” - Government Relations
The 180 - Web Series

Here are our Telly Award winners:

**Silver** (first place)
Idaho Experience “Albion Normal: A Teachers College” - TV shows - History
Idaho Experience “Idaho’s Constitution Revealed” - TV shows - History
Idaho Experience “Ahead of Her Time” - TV shows - History
Idaho Experience “Through Youthful Eyes” - TV shows - History

**Bronze**
Outdoor Idaho “Sawtooths on My Mind” - TV Shows - Travel/Tourism
Outdoor Idaho “Urban Wildlife” - TV Shows - Nature/Wildlife
Outdoor Idaho “State of Change” - TV Shows - Information
Idaho Reports “Special Session” - TV Shows - Political/Commentary
Science Trek “Viruses” - Online - Education
In the Community

2021 IdahoPTV PBS Kids Writers Contest Winners

The winners of IdahoPTV’s 27th annual PBS KIDS Writers Contest have been chosen. A team of volunteers judged the entries on creativity, originality, language skills and illustrations.

There were 318 wonderful stories submitted. The PBS KIDS Writers Contest is a great way for children to engage in an activity that helps them develop better language skills and creativity — abilities that are vital in today’s world. Congratulations to the winners! Each winner receives a $100 contribution to their IDeal college savings account, books, and other fun items.

Eastern Region
Kindergarten
1st – “Elsa the Dreamer” by Charlotte
2nd – “The Magical Treasure Chest” by Emma
3rd – “The Little Girl Who Lost a Tooth” by Oakley

First Grade
1st – “How to Train Your Parents” by Whitlee
2nd – “The Boy and the Panther” by Austyn
3rd – “I’m a Raspberry Dude!” by Saraya

Second Grade
1st – “Friendship“ by Juliet
2nd – “Flook the Flowercorn” by Madelyn
3rd – “The Dragon’s Bite” by Caroline

Third Grade
1st – “Life of a Teddy Bear” by Emika
2nd – “Did You Ever Wash Your Shirt?” by Unity
3rd – “The Mushroom Hunt” by Kooper

Southwest Region
Kindergarten
1st – “Penguin’s Big Adventure” by Juliette
2nd – “Mermaid Lilly’s Adventure” by Addy
3rd – “The Lost Dad” by Gabriel

First Grade
1st – “How to Train Your Parents” by Whitlee
2nd – “The Nutella Banana Sandwich” by Sophie
3rd – “The Camping Trip” by Rodrigo

Second Grade
1st – “Friendship” by Juliet
2nd – “Flook the Flowercorn” by Madelyn
3rd – “The Dragon’s Bite” by Caroline

Third Grade
1st – “The Flowers Quest” by Paige
2nd – “The Nutella Banana Sandwich” by Sophie
3rd – “The Camping Trip” by Rodrigo

Northern Region
Kindergarten
1st – “The Lonely Bear” by Delilah

First Grade
1st – “My Dancing Fly Guy” by Kortnee
2nd – “The Vampire Who Lost His Tooth” by Alex
3rd – “Catboy” by Joshua

Second Grade
1st – “The Stuck Dress” by Sierra
2nd – “Holly the Kitten: Finally Having a Happy Life Book #1” by Hadley
3rd – “The Adventures of Samantha and Sage” by Liberty

Third Grade
1st – “Friendship Always Wins” by Genevieve
2nd – “The Lazy Lemur Hutson” by Kenna
3rd – “The Horrible Marvelous Year” by Amelia
Resilient Idaho Webinar Series - Domestic Violence Awareness

Join us Tuesday, June 15, at 6:00 p.m. Mountain time/5 p.m. Pacific time for a special presentation of the documentary Resilient Idaho: Hope Lives Here and a live discussion on domestic violence awareness. We will have special guest Sheriff Kieran Donahue from the Canyon County Sheriff’s Office and Tia Simpson, Social Change Associate with Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence. The evening will be hosted by producer and writer, Joan Cartan-Hansen with Idaho Public Television. We will start the evening with the Hope Lives Here film and then wrap up the evening with a live discussion and audience Q & A. To register, click HERE.

IdahoPTV in the News

Ron Pisaneschi to leave IdahoPTV
By Julian Wyllie, Reporter | May 24, 2021

Ron Pisaneschi announced that he will retire as GM of Idaho Public Television.

His retirement is effective June 30, but he will continue working for the station until a successor is hired. The Idaho State Board of Education, which oversees the station, will form a committee to lead the search.

“Nothing has driven me to this decision except a desire to kick back, relax, travel and try new things that working has not really allowed,” Pisaneschi said in a memo to public television GMs. “I have been thinking about this for a while now and have gone way past the normal State of Idaho retirement time.”

Pisaneschi joined the station in 1985 and has worked as director of content, director of programming, director of public information and director of marketing and development. He was appointed GM in 2013.

In the memo, Pisaneschi said he’s leaving the station “in strong shape financially.” He also said the station “made it through another legislative session with our budget intact, albeit not without some crazy debate.” Some legislators objected to PBS children’s shows and programs about race and climate change, but Idaho’s House of Representatives passed a bill to give the station $2.7 million in state funding for fiscal year 2021.

Pisaneschi also cited the launch of Idaho Experience, a series produced in partnership with the Idaho State Historical Society, as a “major success.” The series, launched in 2018, has included episodes about Ernest Hemingway’s ties to the state as well as NASA astronauts training in Idaho for the moon landing in 1969.

As a member of an advisory group, Pisaneschi helped lead discussions about PBS’ YouTube TV deal.
In a news release, Debbie Critchfield, a member of the state’s board of education, said Pisaneschi “is the reason Idaho Public Television has the state and national status that it does.”

Jeff Tucker, director of content, and Bruce Reichert, an EP for IdahoPTV, also praised Pisaneschi.

“I’ve worked with Ron for three decades. He’s been a steady, caring administrator and a stalwart supporter of our locally grown productions,” Reichert said in the release. “He’s represented the agency well, especially when certain advocacy groups were willing to bend the truth to make a point. And he’s warned PBS officials back east that they need to do a better job listening to the concerns of rural states like Idaho. Ron has moved the needle, and Idaho is the better for it.”

“His influence and expertise will be greatly missed,” Tucker said.