The PBS Western Reserve President’s Report is published for the Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio Inc. Board of Directors, major funders of the station and other community members interested in the organization’s activities.

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Documentary chronicling station’s history premieres

Advancements in technology and industry can change the world seemingly overnight — from the advent of television to the creation of the Public Broadcasting Service. PBS WESTERN RESERVE: A STUDY IN PERSISTENCE, which traces the groundbreaking history of public television through the lens of this local station, premiered on PBS Western Reserve on Wednesday, Jan. 3.

Documenting the ups and downs of 50 years on air for WNEO and 48 years for WEAO, the production examines the dedicated efforts of PBS Western Reserve to bring outstanding programs and lifelong educational services to neighborhoods across Northeast Ohio. Through insightful interviews, archival photos and cinematic reenactments, it details how public television persisted with the help of Mr. Rogers, local heroes and loyal staff members.

The documentary is produced and directed by W. Drew Perkins of Rubicon Productions, with retired PBS Western Reserve President and CEO Trina Cutter serving as executive producer. Margie Lenhart is narrator. Production support is provided by members of PBS Western Reserve. It is available for free viewing on demand at PBSWesternReserve.org/luminus.

Inaugural meeting of Community Advisory Council held

The station held its first Community Advisory Council (CAC) meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 16. Composed of nine members from across PBS Western Reserve’s vast viewing area, the council is a non-governing board that provides feedback on programming to ensure the station is responsive to the varied interests and needs of its viewers. To view the list of CAC members and meeting dates, go to PBSWesternReserve.org/CAC.
Community Outreach

Station opens doors for WNEO anniversary celebrations

On Thursday, Nov. 30, PBS Western Reserve staff celebrated WNEO’s 50th anniversary on the air by holding a community open house in the afternoon and a VIP event in the evening. Attendees enjoyed tours, a glimpse of how the station operates, special appearances by The Cat in the Hat and a woodworking demonstration by Richard Grell, the subject of the local production THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN.

Station staff also presented a sneak preview of PBS WESTERN RESERVE: A STUDY IN PERSISTENCE, the new documentary about the organization’s history. The production’s broadcast premiere was on Wednesday, Jan. 3.

Staff members participate in charitable events to benefit Kent Social Services

In December, station employees helped Kent Social Services by donating food and toys and volunteering at one of its hot meals programs. At the KSS dining hall, employees learned more about the center’s vital services and helped to stock shelves and prepare food for the day’s meal.

Area events promote local programs and more

Community members had several opportunities to attend station-sponsored program screenings:

- On Nov. 14, to celebrate Native American Heritage Month, we hosted a MOLLY OF DENALI event at Warren-Trumbull County Public Library
- On Nov. 18, 75 attendees enjoyed a screening of the first episode of MARAUDER MEN: IN THEIR OWN WORDS at MAPS Air Museum in Canton
- On Jan. 21, we hosted a screening of THE WORLD ACCORDING TO POLKA during intermission of The Chardon Polka Band’s performance at West Side Bowl in Youngstown
- On Feb. 21, as part of The University of Akron’s Black History Month programming, we hosted a screening event of AN ANSWER FROM AKRON that included a panel discussion with the show’s producer, Drew Perkins

New PBS Books Readers Club is introduced

PBS Western Reserve is participating in a new national initiative that pairs PBS shows with acclaimed books. The PBS Books Readers Club is a monthly digital-first series that brings its members behind the stories of favorite books and shows, including conversations with favorite authors and PBS personalities.

Readers Club resources can be found on Facebook, YouTube and the PBS App, with extended interviews available for PBS members on PBS Passport.

Members-only event to feature sneak preview of “Nolly”

PBS Western Reserve members are invited to enjoy a free exclusive screening of the first episode of MASTERPIECE, “Nolly.” The event will be held Saturday, March 9, at 5 PM at The Kent Stage, 175 E. Main St., Kent.

Starring Helena Bonham Carter, “Nolly” tells the story of soap opera legend Noele “Nolly” Gordon, one of the most famous faces on British TV in the 1960s and ’70s.

Community Coffee Chat sessions held

PBS Western Reserve has enjoyed meeting with community members at multiple Community Coffee Chat sessions. Held since November at coffee shops throughout our viewing area, the sessions included conversations about the future of PBS Western Reserve, communities’ needs and this organization’s role in meeting them.
Let the adventures begin!

Introducing PBS Western Reserve Adventure Club, a family membership option that unlocks a world of educational exploration and fun for the whole family. Annual membership starts at $60, which includes exclusive offers from destinations across Northeast Ohio using a special Adventure Card. Members also enjoy an on-air birthday shoutout; a subscription to PBS Western Reserve Passport’s streaming library; access to PBS KIDS games, activities and shows; and more. Membership is best suited for families with children ages 2-8. Find out more at PBSWesternReserve.org/adventure-club.

Station experiments with local sponsorship and membership spots on streaming services

PBS Western Reserve has been selected to be an early participant in a program designed to increase revenue from streaming services.

Beginning May 1, the station will participate in a three-month onboarding process enabling us to insert corporate underwriting and membership spots in general-audience content across applicable PBS-managed streaming platforms, including Passport and the PBS video app. The placement of messaging will be split evenly between corporate support and membership.

Wine enthusiasts enjoy event with special guest Rick Steves

On Tuesday, Feb. 6, PBS Western Reserve sponsored a virtual wine-tasting event with renowned European travel expert Rick Steves and a professional sommelier. Seventeen people registered, several of whom became new station members.

Ohio Learns 360 initiatives include virtual field trips

The statewide initiative Ohio Learns 360, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, continues to release virtual field trips and family webinars.

Three new virtual trips were taken to Gorman Heritage Farm, Providence Metropark and Toledo Museum of Art. Family webinar topics included addressing test anxiety in young learners, cultivating active lifestyles for children and nurturing math literacy at home.

More than 100 Camp-in-a-Box kits to foster STEM learning in grades 3-5 were distributed to area out-of-school-time programs.

Area educators receive technical development training

On Nov. 7, Holly Cartwright, project manager, presented at the 2023 Trumbull County Professional Development Day. More than 60 K-3 teachers from Lincoln Elementary participated in sessions on using PBS Learning Media and Chrome Extensions for elementary education.

The event provided a valuable platform for professional development, fostering collaboration among educators in the Trumbull County community.

Tuesday’s for Toddlers offers monthly fun

The monthly Tuesday’s for Toddlers is held at Eastwood Mall in Niles and will continue through December.

Staff members present “Everyday Writing with Coach Write”

On Nov. 9, Educational Services staff members Jeff Good and Holly Cartwright delivered a presentation in Columbus to the Broadcast Educational Media Commission that showcased PBS Western Reserve’s most recent multimedia project, “Everyday Writing with Coach Write.”

During the session, they provided the commissioners with a comprehensive overview of the project and highlighted the integration of outreach events tailored for families with children in grades K-3.

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Staff News

Station welcomes three interns from Kent State University

The Production Department welcomed two interns to its staff in January.

Cassidy DeVol is in her final semester at Kent State University and is preparing for her graduation in May with a major in digital media production and minor in graphic design. Cassidy is interested in writing and producing film and aspires to be a professional filmmaker.

Christopher Wilder is also studying digital media production at KSU with a focus on film production. He has written film reviews for the Kent State — Twinsburg newsletter as well as co-hosted and produced a comedy podcast for Black Squirrel Radio.

Both interns will assist with prime-time promo production and closed-caption preparation for local productions. They will get hands-on production experience in the studio and in the field.

In the Educational Services Department, Elena Scirocco is assisting in the development of Tuesday’s for Toddlers materials and The Connected Educator Newsletter, and will help with the department’s local events. She is working on a degree in professional studies at KSU.

Ryan Donchess gives presentation at Miami University

In mid-February, Ryan Donchess, programming and production manager, spent the day at Miami University in Oxford. He met with students to talk about how a local public television station acts as a presenting station for the distribution of local productions.

PBS Western Reserve is the presenting station for the Miami University-produced documentary TRAINING FOR FREEDOM, which premiered in February 2022.

Fred Barrett is competition judge

On Jan. 26, Fred Barrett, emerging media learning and development manager, served as a judge in the broadcast and podcast production categories of the 2024 Ohio Business Professionals of America Region 11 competition held at Kent State Trumbull.

The BPA is a national, cocurricular career and technical organization for students in middle school, high school and college business and technology programs.

Station participates in Christmas parade

Interim President and CEO Jeff Good drove the station van in the Youngstown Christmas parade. (L-R) Megan Good, Jon Cibella and Laura Good helped to spread holiday cheer.