

Rocky Mountain PBS
Local Content and Services Report
Fiscal Year 2014

Executive Summary

In the past few years, Rocky Mountain PBS has undergone a complete reshaping, from an organization with a broadcast television focus to a nimble and adept technology company with a focus on public service journalism and a digital future. With these goals in mind, this past year has been one of even clearer focus and gratifying growth.

Rocky Mountain PBS is taking advantage of all that technology has to offer, while ensuring our core values remain strong. That means continued commitment to education, arts, culture, heritage and community, public service journalism, smart programming and entertaining content – offered across more platforms than ever before. To be sure, we still air seven hours of award-winning quality programming for children every day and reach 99 percent of Colorado homes the good old-fashioned way – TV over-the-air.

We are pleased to say our partnerships grew last year and now include a variety of early childhood organizations, universities, public schools, libraries, hospitals, museums and arts organizations across the state. I-News and Inside Energy partnerships with other media outlets are thriving and gaining recognition both locally and nationally as we share our in-depth, public issues reporting free of charge. In addition to being regularly broadcast on the NBC affiliate 9News KUSA, several stories have appeared on NPR, PBS NewsHour and even the front page of USA Today.

As always, we were very active with Colorado’s student population. We conducted our 34th season of “Super School News,” where fifth graders from around the state come to the studio and learn the art of broadcasting, creating a personalized production for their school that is also broadcast on-air. For the first time, our television show “Match Wits,” a “Jeopardy”-like program for high school scholars, included participants from around the state, and our annual writing contest for middle schoolers drew more than 700 entries!

Local programming was also a focus and our three flagship programs gained momentum both in higher production values and ratings. “Colorado Experience” has developed a strong following and is already funded for its upcoming third year of production. “Colorado State of Mind” has transformed itself to work more in tandem with I-News, now utilizing a news magazine format, and local segments produced for “Arts District” have seen increasing national play. All of these efforts were recognized at Emmy time with 16 nominations and three wins!

There were many other highlights from the past fiscal year of which we are very proud. In no particular order:

Our jazz radio station, KUVU, was recognized by British newspaper *The Telegraph* as one of the top three jazz stations in the world, and *Downbeat* magazine listed KUVU as the number one reason to love jazz.

For the third consecutive year, readers of *Colorado Parent* magazine voted Rocky Mountain PBS their “family favorite” television station.

Our Emmy award-winning producer Lisa D. Olken was selected by the U.S. State Department to debut her documentary “Urban Rez” in several cities in Kazakhstan where she also taught Kazakh film students.

Our digital education video library, PBS Learning Media, a free online service for teachers and students, topped 100,000 catalogued entries.

Our membership reached an all-time high of 70,000!

More than 161,000 Coloradans watched the Season Four “Downtown Abbey” finale.

Many of our community outreach events were filled or at near capacity. This included a Q & A with famed documentarian Ken Burns about his new series, “The Roosevelts;” a panel discussion and screening of “Coming Home with Wes Moore” for returning soldiers; Kids Fun Fest celebrations in Grand Junction, Colorado Springs and Denver, which cumulatively drew more than 15,000 Coloradans; family nights with the Colorado Avalanche and the Denver Nuggets; family outings at the Colorado Railroad Museum with Thomas the Tank Engine; the first annual (but certainly not the last) “Downtown Abbey”-themed costume ball in Denver, and candidate forums with the Colorado Nonprofit Association and other area nonprofits.

Perhaps one of the largest indicators of our success last year was the total amassed on Colorado Gives Day, a 24-hour online giving period in which all Colorado nonprofits are invited to participate. More than 1,400 people gave a total of \$189,712 to KUVU, I-News and Rocky Mountain PBS in that one day, an astounding affirmation of the work we dedicate ourselves to every day.

Much of last year’s success can be attributed to hard work, new hires and job realignments, our strengthening public media partnerships and an improving economy. But we think a lot of it also has to do with the simple fact of geography. We live in a state where education is priority number one, citizen’s value in-depth journalism and robust arts, culture and heritage, and where our mission is embraced by more families than ever before all across the Rocky Mountain region. It was, indeed, a very good year!

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4.1 In what local community outreach or educational activities has your station been involved this year that supports unserved or underserved audiences? Please describe in detail: outcomes, audience served, community response.

Rocky Mountain PBS is dedicated to every Colorado citizen and we believe the network has a unique role to play when it comes to the state's underserved residents. Our renowned television programming is free to all and takes viewers to every corner of the globe. Nationally, PBS produces unparalleled programming, akin to giving every viewer a front-row ticket to some of the best concerts in the world and direct access to complex news and current events as they unfold around us every day.

Our commitment to children and education is well documented. This is where many of our most devoted followers first meet us, as they watch "Curious George," "Clifford the Big Red Dog," "Sesame Street" and "Sid the Science Kid." These PBS characters are as beloved as any – rock stars in the eyes of children – and able to convey potent and important messages. Again this year, national surveys demonstrated that we are the most trusted institution in our country, as well as the most trusted television and online source for children. This is an honor we do not take lightly -- especially as it relates to underserved children, whose resources may be limited.

From our station's inception 59 years ago, education has continued to be a cornerstone for us, and a multi-faceted service we are proud to provide for our community. Children learn to read with us, to identify colors, to make friends. Before entering public school, we are the trusted providers of educational information; as studies have shown, and we help get young children ready for school.

In 2014 we continued with some of our most cherished educational outreach programs, such as "Homework Hotline," and a Jeopardy-like program for high schoolers called "Matchwits" which, for the first time, was opened to high schools statewide, with the final rounds being aired on television. This generated a lot of buzz, along with some friendly regional competition, and we are already in production for the next season.

We completed our 34th season of Super School News, where 5th and 6th graders learn the fundamentals of television journalism and prepare a report for their schools. Hundreds of students from more than 70 Colorado schools participated in the program. We also sponsored a writing contest for middle school students called "StoryMakers," and received more than 700 submissions. The winners were honored at a special event and these compelling stories are posted on our website at rmpbs.org/storymakers. For teachers, we implemented a powerful online resource called LearningMedia, which has grown to include 100,000 free digital assets to

PreK-12 educators, including thousands of classroom-ready, curriculum-targeted interactives, videos and images.

Rocky Mountain PBS had a banner year when it came to producing more local content for Coloradans, both on air and on the web. “WorldDenver Talks,” about activists, who are doing hands-on work to make our world a better place, is just one example of the way we use the internet to provide valuable content that doesn’t fit into our on-air schedule. On TV, we air three weekly, locally produced television series of which we are extremely proud: “Colorado State of Mind,” “Arts District,” and “Colorado Experience,” created in partnership with the Colorado History Museum. “Colorado Experience” aired its second season in 2014, covering such topics as Jewish Pioneers, the Dust Bowl, the Sand Creek Massacre and Justicia y Libertad, about the rise of Colorado’s Chicano movement in 1968. We are proud to say that the upcoming third season has already been funded.

“Colorado State of Mind,” our weekly news and public affairs program, regularly addresses issues of interest to underserved populations, often with local experts and an accompanying list of resources, which are also posted on our website. Last year we taped episodes on everything from accessing mental health and how to navigate the state’s new health insurance exchange, to mitigating student debt and helping veterans. Our locally produced content was recognized by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences with 16 Emmy nominations and three wins!

Once again, we took our community outreach efforts seriously by hosting events across the state designed to appeal to a diverse cross-section of Rocky Mountain PBS viewers. Our most popular event is Kids Fun Fest, a free health-oriented party for children and their families, which we hold in Colorado Springs, Grand Junction and Denver. Cumulatively, more than 15,000 people attended this year. We held a free panel discussion and screening of a film produced by veteran Wes Moore about the hardships of veterans re-acclimating to civilian life, which was extremely well attended. We joined with the Colorado Nonprofit Association and other civic organizations to present election forums and debates. We continued our very successful Community Cinema outreach program, where free screenings of films produced for the PBS series “Independent Lens” are shown at multiple locations around the state each month, often with receptions and panel discussions following the screening. We proudly hosted a variety of events for fans of all ages – everything from discounted tickets for the family with the Colorado Avalanche and Nuggets to an evening with renowned CSU animal activist Dr. Temple Grandin.

We continued our commitment in 2014 to the third year of the multiplatform initiative called “[Women and Girls Lead](#).” With the help of a local advisory board of more than 75 powerful women and key community partners from Girls, Inc. to The Women’s Foundation of Colorado, our statewide campaign – an effort to celebrate, activate and create programs supporting women and girls across Colorado – has clearly struck a chord. Through Women and Girls Lead, we are shedding light on important women’s issues, including violence prevention, economic equity and leadership development, with the trust and care that our public has come to expect

and rely on from Rocky Mountain PBS. This campaign is successfully raising the profile of women with grassroots partnerships, inspiring stories and trusted information – and we are doing it in both English and Spanish. Women and Girls Lead content airs on Vme, Rocky Mountain PBS’ Spanish-language station – and is critical outreach to Colorado’s growing Latino community. In conjunction with a national PBS’ initiative aimed at raising the profile of Latino Americans, we conducted a local project asking people to upload video and share their stories of growing up Latino in Colorado, which received a healthy response. We always enjoy sharing the stories of Colorado’s unsung heroes, activists and hard-working individuals who are quietly making a difference every day.

4.5 CPB is interested in learning more about stations' significant activities planned for the upcoming year - both broadcast and beyond broadcast. What types of on-air programs and off-air activities are you planning in the upcoming year that will connect your station more closely with your community? What goals are you setting in conjunction with these initiatives, and how will you measure your success?

In the coming year, we’re excited to continue and grow our local programming, both online and on the air. A third season of “Colorado Experience” begins taping shortly and will debut in October 2015. For the first time, it will include a “Viewers’ Choice” episode, in which fans submit episode ideas through social media and cast their votes for the one they want to see aired. “Arts District” is gaining new viewers weekly and also has plans for user-submitted content in 2015. Both shows have an increasing audience on YouTube and the PBS video platform Cove, in addition to on television. “Colorado State of Mind” airs its 13th season in 2015, and this year we will focus on promoting clips of the show on social media more than ever before.

Of course, we will also continue to create original documentaries that serve the public – one such documentary currently in production is “Red Power Energy,” about the valuable energy resources on Native American reservations across the country and their potential to raise the standard of living. We’re also exploring opportunities to expand our successful “Women and Girls Lead” campaign and follow it up with one that focuses on men and boys of color.

Our beloved public events will continue in 2015, including Kids Fun Fest, KUVU’s annual “Live at the Vineyards” jazz celebration. We will mark KUVU’s 30th anniversary in 2015 with a series of virtual and physical events. We’ve also expanded the Downton Abbey-themed costume ball to Colorado Springs and Grand Junction in addition to Denver. And we’re planning to host screenings of the newest Ken Burns documentary about cancer in three locations this year, as well.

Our social media reach and participation levels have also exploded in the past year. Most of our programming can currently be accessed through such avenues as COVE (our Rocky Mountain PBS video application), YouTube, Roku, Netflix, X-Box, Amazon Fire TV stick and Amazon Prime, Hulu and Chromecast. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and Instagram are all also thriving. Recently, we recorded some 180,000 page views on our website in a one-month period, and

reached over 163,000 individuals on Facebook during the same time. Both are important, and combined with our other digital assets, we are now able to reach broader and more diverse audiences than ever before. We project nothing but growth in this arena.

Despite this extraordinary expansion of technology; however, one guiding principle remains the same: we must strive to create excellent content to share across all of these platforms and be relevant to all our diverse constituents. In this increasingly digital world, Rocky Mountain PBS will never lose sight of the responsibility we have as the public's most-trusted media outlet – *this* is the attribute that distinguishes public media from all others, and the one we hold most dear.