OKEMO VALLEY TV

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FY19 ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Founded in 2001, Okemo Valley TV is an independent, nonprofit community access television station and media center serving the Towns of Ludlow, Plymouth, Cavendish, Mount Holly, Andover, Reading, and surrounding region. We operate two channels on the local cable TV systems: the community access channel (Comcast channel 8 in Ludlow, Plymouth, & Cavendish, Comcast ch. 20 in Mt. Holly and on VTel ch. 166) and the Educational / Government access channel (Comcast ch. 10 in Ludlow, Plymouth, & Cavendish / Comcast ch. 21 in Mt. Holly / VTel ch. 167). We also operate a website (okemovalley.tv), featuring local programming (video-on-demand) and community announcements. We also provide community members with access to media production equipment and our facility, for the purposes of creating programming. We offer this, including hands-on trainings and workshops, free of charge.

During FY19, our portable "field production" equipment (cameras, tripods, microphones, etc.) was signed out a total of 225 times (this number includes staff use). Our editing systems were used by community members on 55 occasions (not including staff use). The studio was used to record programming on 37 occasions; this is a reduction from previous years due to the facility being under construction during part of the year (details below).

In FY19, 1,410 new, unique programs were televised on our channels, for a combined total of 1,212 hours. Of those, 497 were locally-produced, amounting to 432 program hours. We created 250 community announcements for 128 different organizations, which played on the TV bulletin board, in between programming, & were published on our website. One of the key services that we provide is our "gavel-to-gavel" coverage of local government meetings. In total, during FY19, we covered / televised 165 local government meetings.

At the end of each fiscal year, during our annual meeting, we present awards to community members who made an impact through the use of our services. These were Zach McNaughton (for "Producer of the Year"), Natasha Fortin ("Youth Producer"), Ludlow Fire Department ("Outstanding Achievement"), and Kelly Stettner / Black River Action Team ("Community Service").

In November 2018, were recognized by the Northeastern chapter of the Alliance for Community Media with a 2nd place "Nor'easter" award, for our work with the Weston Playhouse on a short video showcasing the opening of the Walker Farm facility.

By far, our largest source of funding comes from cable TV franchise fees, which are charged to the cable providers, in exchange for their use of public rights-of-way. In Vermont, these fees are paid directly to the community access providers such as Okemo Valley TV. Our annual revenue in FY19 was $194,839, down 7% from the previous year; the loss was due to changes in the way Comcast accounts for franchise fees. This was an unanticipated and permanent decrease to those funds. In addition, there are numerous other threats to this funding model for community access stations. In response, we have cut our operating budget by 10% in FY20, while we also look for ways to create efficiencies with our neighboring colleagues. Simultaneously, we look for ways to strengthen other revenue sources. These other sources of revenue include Town support, memberships, business contributions (through our underwriting program), and grants. Outside of our annual operating budget last year, we raised $30,000 through grants (from the State of Vermont Buildings & General Services and The Marro Family Trust), for the building renovation project that gave us new control rooms and a classroom / conference room. This work was completed during May 2019. The end result is a dramatic improvement to operations, workflow, and our offerings to community producers, volunteers, and other users of our facility.