



State of the Station – July 2026

A summary of Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026), and the organization's standing

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SUMMARY

This year marks the station's 25th anniversary of serving the community. "LPCTV" was first formed in early 2001, and delivered its first telecast on Adelphia cable channel 8 in September of that year. From the days of broadcasting from VHS tapes in the former home ec room in the Ludlow Elementary School building to an entirely digital workflow and robust local programming archive, video on demand, live 24/7 streaming of our 2 TV channels, plus our own app - and now, on the precipice of launching a community radio station in addition - it would be an understatement to simply say that we've evolved. So much has happened along the way to make this all happen and to put us in this position. We have had a dedicated staff and Board of Directors, strong community support, and help along the way, including strokes of luck here and there, which all together have enabled us to be in the position where we find ourselves today.

The past fiscal year was full of significant organizational changes, as we continued to not only evolve and grow, but also prepare ourselves for a new chapter, one that includes a brand new operation (WLUD) as well as new leadership (welcome B.J.!). It's an exciting time, but also one with real challenges, mostly financial. Diverse revenue streams, including a more serious focus on fundraising and fee for service work, along with operational efficiency, are imperative in order to be able to sustain what we have built, while also allowing for future growth. For these reasons, we rebooted the process to begin a new strategic plan, which is something that went through a few starts & stops in recent years. We now have the support and systems in place to make this happen.

There is a strong foundation in place, but changes are both imminent and necessary.

BUDGET & FINANCES

Financial challenges that we have long recognized are now staring us in the face. Cable "franchise fee" payments, still by far the largest and primary sources of revenue, saw a 7.8% drop in FY26, coming after a 7.7% decline the year before. This funding gap has been bridged somewhat through an annual appropriation received from the State of Vermont, thanks to our collective advocacy among the Vermont Access Network (our statewide membership organization) and its State House lobbyist, Action Circles. We are fortunate to have such a strong coalition, along with allies in the legislature and State government. However, starting next year (FY28), the State appropriation is not a sure thing; there is a lot of work being done behind the scenes to advocate for a new revenue source to fund community media (both TV & radio).



For the FY2027 budget, we have made cuts where we can with various operating expenses, and have set high yet realistic targets for our two primary annual fundraising initiatives: the membership drive and business underwriting. These projections should be well within reach, but it will require an organization-wide concerted and collected effort, as with any other fundraising activity. We did not budget for a fundraiser event, as we did last year.

We operate on razor-thin margins, but we have historically made it all work. There is rhythm and a flow to the funding, as we have benefited from the payments from the cable providers arriving each quarter, like clockwork. While we benefit from this dependability, there is not much, if any, wiggle room in the budget; it does not take much to throw things out of order, such as when we incur larger than normal expenses. This happened in May and June with payroll, which caused cascading ramifications to end the fiscal year and to start FY27.

This past year we also addressed the long-anticipated building renovation project, which also had an impact on the budget. This project was funded through grants (with the big one being from the VT Arts Council's "Cultural Facilities" grant), donations, and our own savings. We received a few significant contributions from local donors, which helped us in raising over \$8,000, but the overall effort was not as robust as was needed. This put some additional strain on that "razor thin" budget.

PROGRAMMING

During FY26, Okemo Valley TV televised and streamed a total of 978 new programs, across both its channels. Of these, 647 were produced locally, whether that was by community producers or Okemo Valley TV staff. More than 200 of the 647 local shows were local government meetings, most of which were recorded and processed by Okemo Valley TV staff. Other large volumes of local programming consisted of local church services, youth Summer basketball league games, the weekly "VT's 100 Covered Bridges" series, and season 2 of the "The Tasty Twist" studio show.

While we have never been able to access viewing data on the cable TV channels, we do have such data for online viewing. Over the last 12 months, there have been 3,279 views of our linear streams (the TV channels). Most of this viewership has been through the website (72%), with a smaller audience watching the channels through the Okemo Valley TV app (28%). Over the same period, there were more than 49,000 views on our YouTube channel. Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, I do not have accurate data to report for our video on demand (VOD) on our website; there is a technical problem with that part of the reporting feature on our vendor's software. I am working on getting that corrected, but suffice it to say that there is some viewership of the website VOD, but the total views was likely in the single-digit thousands over the last year, significantly less than that on YouTube (but more than over the app). The key difference between these platforms is that viewership on the website tends to be from local community members viewing new programs, while YouTube viewership is broader and more geared towards specific programs that may or may not be current.



The annual community producer awards this year go to: Pat Moore (Producer of the Year), Julia McGuire & Connor Southworth (Youth Producers of the Year), Shawn Kershaw (Community Impact Award), and - for the 2nd straight year - Phill Gatenby (Outstanding Achievement). The Debut Producer Award went to Jillian Getman & John Bannon. The award ceremony can be viewed on our website: <https://okemovalley.tv/okemo-valley-tv-producer-awards-2026>

OUTREACH & FUNDRAISING

The last year was a big one as far as community outreach and fundraising activities went. There was the big Oktoberfest event, hosted by Off the Rails in Ludlow, which generated a net of just over \$5,000.

In addition, we hosted two donor appreciation events, to thank those who have supported us. The first one was at The Killarney in August, and the other one was a holiday mixer hosted at Super Roasted in Proctorsville. The consensus was that we needed to build on this and continue to host such events, as a way to thank current & past donors, and to let them know what we are up to and how their contributions have been used. This would be especially important to do this coming year, as we just completed our building renovation project, which was funded in part from local donors. As mentioned previously, over \$8,000 was raised through this fund drive, which was vital towards helping us to get the job done.

And there is a great opportunity this year, with the 25th anniversary, entering a new chapter, and with the launch of WLUD. There has been discussion about doing an event, but something would need to be planned soon.

BUILDING RENOVATIONS

The renovation project began in early March, with DCI Concepts of Ludlow acting as general contractor, and Mark Blanchard / VIS Construction Consultants as an owner's representative. Prior to the work starting, we had to move everything out of the way - most of it was put into the studio. This took a lot of work and time, but was certainly worth the extra effort. This project was several years in the making and has - at long last - the improvements have transformed our space into one that is more accommodating for all users and efficient. There is now a radio studio & control room for WLUD, a new & improved TV studio control room, 2 edit suites, a more welcoming lobby area, a Director's office, and carpeting throughout. Due to budgeting and available finances, some aspects of the overall scope of work needed to be cut, leaving it for us to take care of ourselves, including painting. The construction was mostly wrapped up in mid-May, with the carpet flooring and studio window installations taking place. And then there was moving everything back into place - this work took us well into June, and actually beyond. There is still some work that remains, to get each room set up properly and items into place.



OKEMO VALLEY TV

The project has definitely allowed us to create and offer a more inviting space for all to enjoy. While the lionshare of the build out (which we began in 2011) is now behind us, there are still more improvements to be made, especially in terms of both HVAC efficiency and acoustics. I encourage us to look ahead at the next steps, so that there is a plan in place and finances in order when the time comes to do the work. I recommend reaching out to DCI Concepts in the near future to go over a prospective scope of work and to get some rough cost estimates so that it can be incorporated into any fundraising. There is also an opportunity to work with the Town on fundraising for improvements- in particular, anything related to energy efficiency and exterior site work (including drainage & rainfall management, snow removal, lighting, landscaping, and paving). We are in a good position with having a strong working relationship with the Town, and can demonstrate a solid private-public partnership, which many funders prioritize.

WLUD

Ever so slowly, but steadily, we are getting closer to getting the community radio station off of the ground. Thanks to Carmine Iannace for leading the way with the engineering and other technical aspects of building the station (his work for which over the past year has totaled well into hundreds of volunteer hours), and to the broader support of other community radio stations in Vermont (and beyond), we are getting there. However, we need a couple of things to happen in short order: we need more people involved, especially on the production & programming side of things, and we also need to get the site use agreement with Okemo Mountain Resort / Vail Resorts signed & executed. This latter item is contingent on us being able to provide Okemo / Vail with a Certificate of Insurance, which should not be a problem but has been taking quite a bit of time, and has in some ways bogged down our progress. Once the agreement is executed (expected to be sometime in August), we will be able to get into the transmitter site and start installing the equipment. We are fortunate for the support we are receiving to make this all happen - from Okemo, from Carmine, and from Ludlow Electric, as well as the financial support that we are receiving from both the Town of Ludlow and the State of Vermont.

On the other hand, the financial piece is also proving to be a bit of a challenge; while the start-up funds for the station are mostly being financed through the Town of Ludlow's \$20K ARPA fund allocation, and another \$10K has been committed by the State of VT (for backup power), these are reimbursement funds, meaning we need to spend it first. And that means we actually need to have the funds liquid & available to be used; we will not be in a position to do so until after we receive the next quarterly payments from Comcast and VTel.

The Board of Directors has indicated the desire to put 10 hours per week of staff time into WLUD station & project management. This will be helpful with moving the operational and administrative tasks forward, but there needs to be a plan for financing it.

The good news is that WLUD now has a studio, and is well equipped, and ready for action. And the



A transmitter site on Okemo will soon be built. The focus needs to now be on developing programming, policies & procedures, community outreach, & fundraising.

WEBSITE

I announced last year at this time that we were really close to launching the new website. Well, some things move slowly around here - and that's for no other reason than we take on a lot with limited resources. We were about to launch the site this past Spring but ran into a technical issue that is now being resolved. As I write this, in late July 2026, I can safely state that we are finally ready for launch. Look for the all new okemovalley.tv in August!

Soon after, we will be able to launch the WLUD website, which will be based off of the okemovalley.tv site, and much more basic.

A FINAL NOTE

The organization is well positioned to enter this exciting new chapter. It has been my privilege to serve at the helm for nearly 24 years, and I am delighted to welcome B.J. Finnell as our new Executive Director. I have every confidence that B.J.'s leadership, vision, and commitment will guide the organization successfully into its future.

I am grateful to the Board of Directors for the support in this leadership transition, and to the community we serve for helping to shape and strengthen the organization, turning it into a valued local resource.

I remain committed to supporting the organization during this transition. I stand ready to assist with the many important initiatives currently underway, including strategic planning, the launch of WLUD, and ongoing production and technical projects, to help ensure a smooth and successful path forward.

- Patrick