



2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

"Lakeland PBS is a necessary part of our lives for not only entertainment, but for keeping us informed and aware of the world around us!"

Program Preference Poll anonymous comment.

Lakeland PBS educates, informs, and enriches our viewers with the programming we produce right here in and about northern and central Minnesota.



Lakeland PBS values integrity, truth, transparency, and lifelong learning. At Lakeland PBS, we strive to engage with our citizens and showcase the unique neighborhoods and people that make our region thrive. And as a community public service organization serving northern and central Minnesota, education is a core value for us – from our children’s programming to our local news coverage. Lakeland PBS is committed to being a reliable source for in-depth, thoughtful, and high-quality content.

We produce the only nightly television newscast in northern and central Minnesota, Lakeland News, since 1998. Our public affairs program, Lakeland Currents, interviews local experts on the topics that matter to our coverage area. Through the Legacy Amendment funding, Common Ground, Backroads, and many documentaries have highlighted our local arts, culture and heritage. We also host political debates so viewers may learn about the candidates who hope to represent the values and needs of our communities. Lakeland PBS also engages with viewers through our multiple community engagements.

Lakeland PBS currently reaches approximately 383,500 individuals over an estimated 7,500 square miles in northern and central Minnesota. Viewers can watch us via several different sources which include: off-air (antenna), cable, satellite and internet streaming. Another 773,200 individuals south of our primary market have the ability to receive our signal via direct broadcast satellite with reach as far as Iowa, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas. Streaming has allowed us to share our local content across the globe.

How does Lakeland PBS serve the citizens of Minnesota?

As the only source for local news and local television programming throughout north central Minnesota, Lakeland PBS is a beacon for our community that promotes our region and serves our citizens in the following ways:

- **Locally Produced Newscast:** Lakeland News is a half-hour newscast produced Monday through Friday that broadcasts at 10 p.m. on Lakeland Prime. It is the **ONLY** local television news program that serves the citizens of Bemidji, Brainerd and surrounding communities of north central Minnesota with news, weather, and sports specifically relevant to them.
- **Local Arts, Culture, & History Programming:** Common Ground is a weekly half-hour local program that airs Thursday nights at 7 p.m. Common Ground seeks out and showcases the area's vibrant artists, artisans, events, and history. Backroads is Lakeland PBS' filmed music production featuring local musicians from across the state of Minnesota. Backroads is a weekly half-hour local program that airs Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m.
- **Local Public Affairs Programming:** Lakeland Currents is a weekly half-hour local public affairs program that airs Fridays at 8:00 p.m. Our hosts bring in the area's local experts and organization leaders to help viewers understand an event or organization's mission and goals which serve and aid the regions we live in.
- **Educational Children's Programming:** Serving children has always been a top priority for Lakeland PBS. Every day we air over eight hours of high quality, non-violent, educational children's programming on our primary channel. In addition, as part of our digital television multicast service, Lakeland PBS has dedicated an entire 24x7 channel to educational children's programming. We provide the only true safe haven for our kids where they can learn and grow in a safe, nurturing environment.
- **Native American Programming:** Lakeland PBS is pleased to provide the local broadcast of the FNX channel dedicated to telling the stories of Native Americans across the United States – First Nations Experience: FNX. Through Native-produced and/or themed documentaries, dramatic series and arts programming, the FNX channel illustrates the lives and cultures of Native American and indigenous people around the world.
- **Live Televised State Legislative Session Coverage:** With our digital broadcast capability, Lakeland PBS broadcasts gavel-to-gavel state legislative coverage, free to the public, over-the-air throughout north central Minnesota. This broadcast feed is picked up by cable systems throughout northern and central Minnesota and is also being received throughout the region by people with digital televisions in their homes.
- **Live Televised Legislative Debates:** During state elections, Lakeland PBS brings the candidates into citizens' homes by televising a series of one-hour debates for State House and Senate seats serving our viewing area. These live debates being broadcast in primetime on our primary channel are the only widely distributed local debates where citizens throughout the region can learn about the various candidates' views on important area issues, helping them make informed choices.
- **Community Service:** Lakeland PBS provides service organizations and communities on-air opportunities to promote upcoming events, such as workshops, fundraisers, and group activities. Our Lakeland Calendar airs several times per day, seven days a week.

LAKELAND PBS & LEGACY FUNDING continue to highlight the rich cultural heritage our communities are preserving and passing on to future generations.

Legacy Productions

Funding for Legacy productions is provided by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Common Ground

Common Ground connects viewers at home with talented artists, artisans, and cultural traditions throughout north and central Minnesota. Some of these topics included a painter using birch bark as her canvas and a sculpture artist who also uses organic materials found in nature, multiple people coming together to construct a yurt with a wool mural exterior, following the central Minnesota barn quilt trail tradition, and a community coming together to give their downtown a mural facelift, and a day-long local water summit for 5th graders held by community experts and educators.

Backroads

Lakeland PBS' music production show, Backroads, features musicians from across the great state of Minnesota. Original performances and interviews are recorded on location at the Rail River Folk School (RRFS) in Bemidji. Backroads exposes viewers to local, lesser known musicians they might not otherwise be familiar with. Musicians featured on Backroads have noted that the exposure gained through the broadcasts has helped them promote their performances and increase awareness of their recorded work.



Common Ground #1404 Wool Yurt



Backroads #2601 Present Company



Aerial view of Marcell Experimental Forest

Legacy Specials

Along with Common Ground and Backroads, the Legacy Amendment funding has allowed Lakeland PBS to produce stand-alone documentaries about different topics throughout central and northern Minnesota. This past year we produced four documentaries, both in-house and through outside partnerships. Those stories featured the Marcell Experimental Forest north of Grand Rapids, the history of the Northern Pacific Railroad which was originally headquartered in Brainerd, a history of the significance one-room schoolhouses had on early public education in rural Minnesota areas, and a history of how the Minnesota Forestry Service and wildfire management came to be through the years.

Partnerships:

Numerous arts, history, and cultural organizations have been featured on Common Ground and other Legacy documentaries. These have included the Sebekka Historical Society, Croft Mine Community Committee, Sustainable Sheep and Fiber Community of Northern Minnesota, Henning High School biology students, the North Country National Scenic Trail, and the Rail River Folk School among many others.

Reach in the Community:

These Legacy-funded productions expand Lakeland PBS' ability to share the talents and stories of northern and central Minnesota's rural and culturally diverse people. Not only do we hope to ignite new interests and renew commitments to arts, history and cultural heritage amongst our viewers, but we look forward to expanding the station's partnerships with artists, organizations and historians across the region. Through these new relationships that are fostered, we anticipate continued interaction and feedback regarding the impact of these new productions in their respective fields.

Now in its 25th year, **Lakeland News** is proud to be the ONLY television station in our entire broadcast service area to provide local television news and report on local sports. We also produce and air weekly feature segments as a means for showcasing the talents and stories of local individuals and a place to promote the diversity of people, cultures and resources in northern and central Minnesota. During the school year, we air an educational segment called Golden Apple and a Fishing Tips segment during the summer. We also have feature segments highlighting area local businesses (In Business), an arts and cultural segment (In Focus), and an outdoors segment (Northwoods Experience).



Lakeland Currents is our half-hour weekly public affairs program produced from both our Brainerd and Bemidji studios. Our host brings in local leaders, citizens and experts for a stimulating conversation about the issues and events that affect north and central Minnesota. Some topics from 2023 have included learning about what our local cities are doing to promote community engagement through family friendly activities and resources; new medical treatments available at smaller, rural health care facilities; and what authorities are doing at the local level to conserve, preserve and protect our natural resources for the future.



Debate Night

During state elections, Lakeland PBS brings the candidates into citizens' homes by televising a series of one-hour debates for State House and Senate seats serving our viewing area. These live debates broadcast in primetime on our primary channel and are the only widely distributed local debates where citizens throughout the region can learn about the various candidates' views on important area issues, helping them make informed choices.





2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Lakeland PBS has been able to interact with community members throughout the region this past year. Although all of the events garnered thoughtful conversation, insight and feedback, a couple events saw the highest engagement.

Most notably would be the 5th Annual Leech Lake Welcoming Babies Event where we connected with over 100 families providing at home activities and educational resources to families in the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. At this event Tribal leaders and elders welcomed the newest members of the Leech Lake Reservation and other Indigenous communities while local organizations provided information about resources and outreach programs available to them. Lakeland PBS set up a PBS KIDS display with take home materials including information on all the PBS KIDS free educational apps, games, and programs along with take home activity sheets, coloring pages, and parenting resources. The community was excited to have us be a part of this special, annual event with every family stopping by our booth to let us know what programs and characters their kids loved most. Majority were unaware of the free apps and resources available to them so this was a great success in connecting with younger families in our community.

The second most notable event would be the Community Cares Health & Wellness Fair in Pine River Minnesota. Pine River is a small rural community in Northern Minnesota that boasts a population of only 895 people. This inaugural event was aimed at providing the community with information, inspiration, and resources about health and wellness. Lakeland PBS set up a booth to provide individuals with watch lists of free programs available on demand on the PBS App around movement, healthy cooking, mental wellbeing, kids' health, and documentaries. We connected with over 40 individuals who were excited to learn about free yoga and activity programs that they did not realize were available. The community was excited to think of PBS in a new light.

Other community outreach opportunities included two screening events for the Common Ground episode on the Sebeka Finnish-Built Log Schoolhouse, Bemidji Home Sport & Travel Show, Brainerd Lakes Home Show & Expo, Brainerd Chamber of Commerce Blue Ox Business Academy, the Lakeland News 25th Anniversary Open House, the Anishinaabe Art Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Beltrami County Fair, and a public screening for the premiere of Unforgotten on Masterpiece.



Park Rapids Common Ground screening



Lakeland News 25th Anniversary Open House



5th Annual Leech Lake Welcoming Babies event



Prescreening of Unforgotten on Masterpiece



Annual Program Preference Polls

The information and feedback provided each year from the program preference poll is the most comprehensive and useful regarding our programming services. Based on the remarks and opinions our members provide, we are able to make well-informed decisions on the purchasing and scheduling of our programming.

“Great reminder of all that is so special about our “special place” here on the Northern Tier!”

“We have attended events and explored areas in the state/area that we learned about on Lakeland.”

“Since I’m rather new to this area, I’ve learned so many cultural things about the Lakeland community.”

Anonymous viewer comments from program preference poll.

Online Educational Resources and Opportunities

Lakeland PBS partnered with a local educator to create Educator Lesson Plans available to anyone wanting to engage student learning with activities using our locally produced programming. These Educator Lesson Plans can be found on our website along with *PBS LearningMedia* – an on-demand media service for educators that provides easy access to classroom-ready, curriculum-targeted, multi-platform resources – at www.lptv.org under the About tab followed by selecting Education.

While many stations use Nielsen ratings as key measures of success, Lakeland PBS’s primary coverage area lies over 200 miles north of the Twin Cities (our designated market area) thus skewing accurate rating information. Therefore, we choose to focus on IMPACT, seeking to quantify not just how many people have seen a program, but how many people have become more informed as a result, been moved by, and have acted because of public television.

One means by which Lakeland PBS will measure the success of productions will be through feedback received from our Community Advisory Councils. These volunteer groups of Lakeland viewers gather bi-monthly in both our Brainerd and Bemidji studios to provide programming feedback and inform staff of the general pulse of Lakeland PBS in their communities. In addition, we have documented website downloads and unsolicited comments that come directly to the station via phone and email. We also distribute a survey to those individuals and organizations that have been featured or involved with Legacy productions. Our goal is to gauge the degree of impact their involvement with Lakeland’s Legacy productions has had, on our local communities and economies.

Lakeland PBS will be recognized as an integral part of the community, and its future will be ensured through growth, technology, community collaborations, and self-sustaining endeavors.
