



2024 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024

"Local news coverage is a real gem to a rural community. Featuring the unique and amazing northern MN events, arts, history instills so much community pride and fosters a willingness to continue investing in this great spot of the world!"

Viewer feedback, 2024 Program Preference Poll

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 local TV newscast in northern and central Minnesota, Lakeland News, since 1998. Our public affairs program, Lakeland Currents, chats with local experts about the topics that matter to our communities. We host live political debates so viewers can learn about the candidates hoping to represent them. Through the Legacy Amendment funding, our local series and documentaries highlight local arts, culture and heritage. Lakeland PBS engages with viewers of all ages such as through PBS Kids’ read-alongs, parades, and Masterpiece screenings.

Through antenna and local cable broadcast, Lakeland PBS currently reaches approximately 383,500 individuals over an estimated 7,500 square miles in northern and central Minnesota. Another 773,200 individuals south of our primary market have the ability to receive our signal via satellite broadcast with reach as far as neighboring states. 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 TV newscast 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 seeks out and showcases the area's vibrant artists, artisans, cultural events, and history. Backroads features local musicians from across the state of Minnesota, filmed at the authentic Rail River Folk School in Bemidji, MN. Both shows broadcast on Thursday nights at 7:00pm and 7:30pm or you can stream them any time on our website.
- **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 master birding naturalists, rosemaling, a metalsmith workshop, and local weekly summer concerts.

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 #1510 Metalsmith Workshop



Backroads #2704 Kitchi Boogie



Dedicated to Care: LTC Hortense McKay Screening at Crow Wing History Museum

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 five documentaries, both in-house and through outside partnerships. Those stories included following a local craftsman as he built his own boat; time traveling back to the early days of drive-up fast food restaurants; meeting individuals who pursue careers in the agriculture industry, and two separate military documentaries on WWII veterans.

Partnerships:

Numerous arts, history, and cultural organizations have been featured on Common Ground and other Legacy documentaries. These have included Crow Wing County Historical Society, Lady Slipper Scenic Byway Committee, Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, 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 26th 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 2024 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.



Molly of Denali Read Along Events

Lakeland PBS hosted four Molly of Denali Read Along events across our broadcast communities. Locations included:

- Four Pines Book Store in Bemidji
- Wolf & Beagles Books & Bindery in Park Rapids
- Brainerd Public Library
- Wildflower Bookshop in Grand Rapids

These were a fun and easy way to engage with our youngest viewing audience and leverage the PBS KIDS brand. We were also able to promote free educational materials on the PBS LearningMedia website.

Field trips to the Bemidji TV Station

Throughout the year we provide station tours of the studio to groups from various backgrounds including local public schools and homeschooling groups, all the way from kindergarten to high school. Students get to learn about the green screen and how we use our studio. They even get a chance to read from the teleprompter! These tours allow us the opportunity to connect with educators and parents about the vast free educational resources such as lesson plans and activities on PBS LearningMedia and the free PBS KIDS app.

Screenings: Local & National Programs

Lakeland PBS hosted several screenings over the past year from new local shows and specials to Masterpiece programming sneak-peaks:

- Order Up! premiere (Bemidji)
- Order Up! screening for Paul Bunyan Vintage Car Club (Bemidji)
- Dedicated to Care: LTC Hortense McKay premiere (Brainerd)
- Boys of Bataan premiere (Brainerd)
- All Creatures Great & Small (Bemidji & Brainerd)
- Nolly on Masterpiece (Bemidji & Brainerd)
- Grantchester on Masterpiece (Bemidji & Brainerd)
- Marlow Murder Club (Bemidji & Brainerd)

Parades, Fairs, and Festivals

The following events provided great exposure and community connection:

- 50th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade (Crosslake)
- Night We Light Parade (Bemidji)
- Crow Wing County Fair (Pine River)
- Harmony Co-op Harvest Fair (Bemidji)
- Dragon Boat Festival (Bemidji)



Molly of Denali Read Along in Grand Rapids, MN



Bemidji Studio Group Tour



Masterpiece Screening Event in Brainerd



Crosslake 50th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade

**Quality Programming and Educational Resources**

Besides believing in providing quality national programs and locally produced series featuring area residents and a regularly produced local newscast throughout the year, Lakeland PBS strives to be a reliable and trusted partner in the communities we serve. We're proud to be a safe space for children to learn and engage, through our programming and events, PBS KIDS app, and on PBS LearningMedia.

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.

"I love Lakeland PBS. I feel connected to this beautiful area and state because of you!"

"Shows the range of life in the north – it's not just hunting and fishing."

"They add to the richness of living in this area, by making us more aware of all the interesting people and things that are a part of our community."

Anonymous viewer comments from program preference poll.

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 Boards. These volunteer groups of Lakeland viewers gather quarterly at both our Brainerd and Bemidji stations 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.
