Arkansas PBS nourishes the cultural and civic life of our statewide community, forging a vibrant bond through inventive engagement and authentic stories that matter. We serve as an indispensable resource for educators and learners by delivering compelling and relevant multiplatform content that educates, informs, engages and inspires.

FY 2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Arkansas PBS is the leader in telling Arkansas stories – delivering daily and essential educational and inspiring content to communities statewide for 50+ years – on all the platforms people watch now including livestream and increased on demand options.

Arkansas PBS is a leader in convening partners and communities to screen relevant content, provide opportunities for engagement around issues and form deeper relationships.

Arkansas PBS is a leader in Arkansas education—providing professional development and community education – to impact student achievement and support families statewide.

In FY 2021, Arkansas PBS provided vital local services:

Local programming and engagement around COVID-19 continued to keep Arkansans informed and updated.

Daily and essential local programming addressed issues Arkansans are talking about including race relations, elections and politics, veterans’ issues and combatting learning loss.

AR PBS recognizes the vital role sports play in the education and development of young adults and connects audiences statewide during high school championship games. Games are broadcast and specially produced stories feature outstanding students, communities and athletes.

Arkansas PBS local services had deep impact in Arkansas:

Reading in the Delta and Sesame Street in Communities partnered with communities across the state to keep our kids and communities learning.

More than ever, AR-CAN was a critical avenue to share daily COVID-19 updates from the Governor and state officials.

ArkansasIDEAS provided essential content, including child maltreatment, anti-bullying strategies and more to educators.

“Celebrating Black Lives All Year Long” kicked off during Black History Month with a campaign featuring Black stories, a vlog and specialized YouTube playlist.

“Shout out to AR PBS for an incredible performance at the 6A State Softball Championship game today. The quality of the broadcast easily rivaled major network quality. Research, knowledge, and key play call...truly amazing” – S. Perry, viewer
“PBS American Portrait” Arkansas PBS worked with communities to share their true-life experiences for “PBS American Portrait,” a national conversation about what it means to be an American today. Seven workshops and one live event were carried out to encourage Arkansans to submit their stories online. Arkansas PBS also partnered with #SeeALICE, to raise awareness about the working poor situation in Arkansas (ALICE=Asset limited, income-challenged employed.)

“The Dumas Lunch Lady” is a character-driven verité documentary short about Arnetta Pugh who lives and works in Dumas, Arkansas. Arnetta’s dream job is being the lunch lady at Dumas Elementary School. She loves to feed children and give to others; her job, however, barely earns her enough to feed her own family. Arnetta arrives at the school every weekday at 6:30 a.m. to start putting together individual breakfasts to be delivered to the classrooms and cook lunch that will be served beginning at 10:30 a.m. We see her in action in the cafeteria and at home, talking about the financial decisions she has to make at the end of every month. Arnetta is one of the PBS American Portrait storytellers connected to the Arkansas #SeeALICE campaign supported by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. The piece was included in the Arkansas broadcast of “PBS American Portrait Special: The Story of Us.”

Arkansas PBS produced the free virtual event “PBS American Portrait: Achieving Civil Discourse Through Storytelling" Wednesday, March 31. The event featured a screening and discussion led by Clarice and Kwami Abdul-Bey with the Arkansas Peace and Justice Memorial Movement, highlighting personal stories’ role in civil discourse. A distinguished panel of guests convened to discuss strategies to address difficult topics through civil discourse by using storytelling.

AR PBS Virtual Professional Development: American Portrait (for educators) - Promoting Virtual Engagement through Storytelling with American Portrait: The webinar ‘American Portrait in the Classroom’ examined the purpose of the initiative as well as the positive learning outcomes that could be gained by bringing American Portrait into the classroom. The workshop presented methods for using American Portrait to practice social-emotional skills, expand media literacy, and hone speaking and listening skills.

Arkansas PBS planned a "Telling Your Own Story" workshop in partnership with The Yarn at the Six Bridges Book Festival in Little Rock to encourage storytellers to share with PBS American Portrait. This turned into two virtual storytelling workshops with The Yarn. We were able to host a very diverse group of people from all over the state.

We have a very strong relationship with our Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs and several affiliated groups. We came together with a synergistic plan to connect American Portrait stories with their outreach effort to Korean War veterans. They provided us with the veterans' connections and contacts, and we produced posts and stories that we shared via social media. Interns Maya Kreczmer and Connor Holmes traveled to Saline County and Northwest Arkansas to interview Korean War veterans.

Arkansas PBS held an event with Me and McGee Market, an open-air farm stand that sees 400-500 people come through on any given Friday or Saturday. We set up a booth utilizing the American Portrait Event-In-A-Box backdrop and had Arkansas PBS materials and a free t-shirt for anyone willing to tell their American Portrait Story. We had a team of college interns collecting the stories. myarkansaspbs.org/americanportrait

“Hemingway” engagement
In addition to promoting the broadcast premiere and digital content, we worked with our libraries, museums and Division of Heritage to promote the national “Conversations on Hemingway” series. AR PBS and the Division of Arkansas Heritage partnered to share the author’s Arkansas story and cohosted a screening event in March. Other joint efforts included a virtual tour of the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum and Educational Center in Piggott, archival content and a blog series with a Hemingway biographer, Hendrix College professor/historian, Director of the Museum, National Historic Site manager, and a timeline/Arkansas feature. We co-hosted a local screening event with our Division of Arkansas Heritage that included the Pfeiffer-Hemingway Museum in NE Arkansas. The State Secretary of Heritage pre-recorded a welcome/local history lesson intro. We hosted a giveaway of 10 sets of Hemingway’s books. We shared local content around Hemingway’s time in Arkansas in a YouTube playlist and on social media.

Toad Suck Daze event
Arkansas PBS partnered with Toad Suck Daze 2021 to host Boom Art, an event with family friendly activities and the opportunity to color a 12x30 foot Toad Suck Daze mural. The event, held at the network headquarters, welcomed more than 150 people, and featured favorite characters Clifford the Big Red Dog, Croaker and Dazey.
Since the beginning of the pandemic, Arkansas PBS has created specialized programs to support Arkansans as they were isolating at home:

“Arkansas Week” - Weekly public affairs and news updates about the pandemic with special guests.


“Exploring Arkansas: Swimmin’ Holes” - Top swimming holes were identified in the state to help Arkansans enjoy summer safely distanced.

“Exploring Arkansas: Trails Less Travelled” - Remote trails were identified in the state to help Arkansans enjoy the outdoors safely distanced.

“Cookin’ with Kat & Friends” – Author and foodie Kat Robinson hosted this cooking show with easy-to-follow recipes to make while stuck at home.

**AR PBS Sports – Football, Basketball, Baseball and Softball:** Arkansas PBS produced and broadcast the 2020/2021 high school football, baseball and softball state finals live in partnership with the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA), offering families and fans a safe viewing option in uncertain times. In addition, profiles of student athletes and stand out schools were broadcast during the games and archived online. [myarkansaspbs.org/sports](http://myarkansaspbs.org/sports)

“Urban Forge: Ozark Artistry”: In Mountain View, Arkansas, a talented group of men and women keep the time-honored tradition of metal smithing alive through their daily work at Urban Forge, a blacksmith shop dedicated to creativity, skill and artistry. The process is labor intensive and rewarding in equal measure, producing great works of art forged in fire with attention, sweat and love. Arkansas PBS goes behind the scenes and illuminates their craft in the original one-hour documentary “Urban Forge: Ozark Artistry,” which has since been made available for stations nationwide for pledge programming. The program ranked No. 3 behind Suze Orman and Ken Burns for the December pledge drive in both total pledges and total dollars. More than 30 stations have picked up the program for pledge programming. [myarkansaspbs.org/urbanforge](http://myarkansaspbs.org/urbanforge)

“Worth Fighting For” Arkansas PBS explored the struggle to save veteran lives as suicide rates rise. An experienced panel discussed mental health resources, coping with loss and other issues that can lead to suicide ideation.

“Rap Squad” The feature-length film is an intimate verité documentary about Arkansas high school hip hop artists who seek healing for themselves and equity in their community through their music.

**Quiz Bowl** showcases scholars competing in this historic annual program in partnership with The Arkansas Governor’s Quiz Bowl Association.

**Arkansas PBS KIDS Writers Contest:** The Writers Contest encouraged children in grades K-3 to celebrate creativity by submitting their original stories and illustrations. Entries were judged on originality, creative expression, storytelling and integration of text and illustrations. Each entrant received a participation certificate, and 12 winners – three from each grade – received a prize pack. First place winners also received a PBS KIDS Playtime Pad. [myarkansaspbs.org/writerscontest](http://myarkansaspbs.org/writerscontest)

**Red Ribbon Week campaign:** Arkansas PBS, ArkansasIDEAS, and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education partnered for Red Ribbon Week to provide resources, a series of PSAs and a special episode of “Arkansas Week,” and promoted a statewide screening established by the Arkansas Drug Director, Little Rock FBI office, DESE and the Arkansas Department of Health to help fight the opioid crisis. [myarkansaspbs.org/redribbonweek](http://myarkansaspbs.org/redribbonweek)

**AR PBS KIDS Writers Contest** Each year, Arkansas PBS carries out the statewide Arkansas PBS KIDS Writers contest, soliciting stories from all Arkansas schools, parents, and communities.

**Teacher Professional Learning – “Portraits of Courage: The Story of Women's Suffrage in Arkansas.”** The story of women’s suffrage in Arkansas is largely undocumented and sometimes unclear. In 1917, Arkansas ultimately became the 12th state to grant women the right to vote. The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified three years later, granting American women the right to vote. ArkansasIDEAS, in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education’s Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), worked to share this special history through a professional development course to fulfill the law-based history requirement for Arkansas K-12 licensed teachers.
“Blueberry’s Clubhouse”
Arkansas PBS brought back our pre-K-2 children’s program featuring Blueberry, a curious puppet guide to engaging and insightful activities for students out of school for the summer months. Initially created as part of “Arkansas AMI,” Blueberry evolved into a stand-alone program designed to provide a safe, at-home summer camp experience, focusing on social and emotional issues. Kids joined Blueberry on adventures across the state on broadcast and weekdays in a digital summer series. Blueberry introduced various topics to help young viewers learn and play. The series was produced in partnership with the Arkansas Arts Center. More than 15 other statewide partners came together to provide support. myarkansaspbs.org/blueberrysclubhouse

“You Decide: Know. Think. Participate. Civics Education in an Election Year”
For this election season, we created a multifaceted campaign to grow AR-CAN and share educational resources to schools and parents.

Educator created “Assemble” toolkits were shared, loaded into PBS LearningMedia. All states have visited.

We developed a digital series/new voters’ campaign - digital shorts and video diaries win partnership with University of Central Arkansas first-time voters.

Four short interstitials (broadcast and digital) were developed to teach children PreK-3 essential civics concepts and tools.
1. Voting
2. Communication
3. Research
4. Debates

AR-CAN (Arkansas Citizens Access Network): AR-CAN provides unprecedented access to state government, giving Arkansas citizens a front row seat to legislative proceedings, board and commission meetings, and other government hearings and activities through livestreaming. AR-CAN allows equal government access to all Arkansans. myarkansaspbs.org/arcan

“Election 2020: Arkansas PBS Debates” and “Election 2020: Ballot Initiatives” Candidates in four races participated in our debates which livestreamed on youtube.com/ArkansasPBS and broadcast in prime time same day. Arkansas PBS also produced “Election 2020: Ballot Initiatives.”

By the numbers
Total social reach: 316K/Engagement rate: 3.58%
134 Facebook and Instagram stories (first time voters)
100+ live tweets and responses=90K impressions and 3.76K engagement (over 4% engagement rate) on Twitter over 3 days of debates coverage

Total video views: 37,119
Email campaigns: 23% open rate, 5% click rate on 82 campaigns reaching approximately 48K contacts

Media reach:
20.9M (182 media mentions) Debates (dominated social media and media for more than two weeks)
1.81M AR-CAN
88.4K Civics education
44.9K First time voters
myarkansaspbs.org/civics

“Dream Land: Little Rock’s West 9th Street” 232,557 views since 2018 premiere --our top video in YouTube at FY end.
Education highlights

Reading in the Delta Arkansas PBS hosted four free Fun Family Reading Events during May 2021 as part of Reading in the Delta, an initiative to provide literacy resources and encourage family engagement through educational activities. Each event included a meal and story time featuring "Dragons Love Tacos," followed by a discussion and activity. Families also received an Arkansas PBS family engagement literacy gift bag – including a copy of “Dragons Love Tacos,” literacy resources, a journal, a taco kit and more – and snack bag to take home. Spanish versions were also available. Events were carried out in Parkin, Forrest City, Helena- West Helena and Eudora. This program was designed to seed high-quality books and literacy experiences in areas challenged by distance and isolation from libraries and other community assets including digital connectivity. Reading in the Delta was made possible by the Joan R. and Charles M. Taylor II Memorial Endowment Fund.

NASA Livestream event In the fall of 2020, Nettleton STEAM Intermediate School in Northeast Arkansas was selected to share a live, downlink conversation with astronauts aboard the International Space Station. This downlink was a historic first in Arkansas, and a celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the first long-term mission aboard the space station. The Arkansas Department of Education called on Arkansas PBS to help livestream the event.

https://www.myarkansaspbs.org/nasa-downlink

“We cannot say enough thank yous to be sufficient enough for all that you have done for us and STEAM. It is very rare to find people who share the same passion for education as we do, and we are thankful for your support, partnership, and love.”

Sesame Street in Communities Sesame Workshop partnered with Arkansas PBS as part of a new initiative to enhance the early childhood education programs in rural communities. Made possible with generous support from CPB, the initiative included training for local providers who serve preschool children and virtual events for families, all using the Sesame Street in Communities resources. Resources are available to early childhood educators, caregivers, parents and families. AR PBS held four workshops training 103 participants Partners included AR Kids Read, Community Action Program for Central Arkansas (CAPCA), Childcare Aware Northcentral Arkansas and Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office. myarkansaspbs.org/ssic.

ArkansasIDEAS

ArkansasIDEAS is a partnership between Arkansas PBS and the Arkansas Department of Education to bolster professional knowledge, impact student achievement, and maintain teaching licenses online for K-12 Arkansas educators at no charge. ideas.myarkansaspbs.org.

By the Numbers

75,000 users served
245,000 courses completed
7,698 new users added
31.5 additional credit hours
35 new courses
730 total courses

Top 10 Most Course Completions

Sit With Us: Anti-Bullying Strategies for AR schools
The Science of Reading Parts 8 – 14
Human Trafficking: Arkansas Act 765 of 2017 - Inside Arkansas Schools
Professional Licensure Standards Board Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators: Ethical Scenarios in Education (2020)

What teachers are saying...

Be the Reason: The Educator’s Role in Combating Child Maltreatment
“l really appreciated the inclusion of educational neglect and remote learning. The personal story was very touching!”

We Are All in This Together: Building Student Relationships
“Wonderful! Think all new teachers should see these teachers’ ideas and techniques.”

The Science of Reading Series
“This was an excellent series. Thank you.”

Sit With Us: Anti-Bullying Strategies for Arkansas Schools
“This was one of the best educating bullying videos I have seen.”
Education. Engagement. Arkansas’s storyteller.

Arkansas PBS works every day to provide the most educational, informative and entertaining content to all Arkansans. This past year, our role as public media leaders in Arkansas was even more critical as COVID-19 cases soared, political tension increased, and race relations were top of mind. We continue to be innovative digital leaders – to be everywhere our audiences consume content. We will continue to convene conversations and provide content about issues on the minds of all Arkansans.

Awards

Mid-America Emmy Awards:
- Director, Non-Live (Post-produced) - “Men & Women of Distinction: Mike Beebe”
- Lifestyle Program – “A Garden Home Christmas”
- Historical/Cultural – Program Feature Segment - “Hazel Walker’s Arkansas Travelers”

Public Media Awards:
- Overall Excellence in Education
- Overall Excellence in Community Engagement
- Education – Educational Resources for the Community
- Education – Teacher Professional learning
- Marketing/Communications – Integrated Media Campaign (Gobbledybook)

What our audience says about us

“Election 2020: Arkansas PBS Debates”
“Having the debate with Mr. Harrington was a rare moment of pure journalistic integrity. Thank you for giving millions of us a voice.” - J. Fields, viewer

AR-CAN
“All of the legislative meetings and other government meetings that are broadcast give everyone the chance to see what is going on in their state government. Keep up the good work!” – Sen. Jane English

AR PBS Sports:
“Awesome! I thoroughly enjoyed being able to watch the high school football championship games … with the weather being so poor this past November, it was a wonderful and pleasant surprise to be able to watch them on TV in the comfort of your home!! This is why I love watching [Arkansas PBS] programming! Keep up the great work!” – Wayne Garner of Magnolia