



## 2015 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Since 1975, Louisiana Public Broadcasting has been the public television network for the state of Louisiana with stations in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe and Shreveport. LPB is also affiliated with WLAE-TV in New Orleans. In addition to its award-winning documentaries about the history and people of Louisiana, LPB is dedicated to helping children throughout the state develop their literacy, math and science skills through its numerous educational outreach programs.

Throughout 2015, LPB celebrated its 40th anniversary. To be precise, LPB signed on the air at 11:58 a.m. on September 6, 1975, but we decided to make it a year-long celebration. We received “happy anniversary” wishes from everyone from Martha Stewart to the **Sesame Street** Muppets.

The culminating event of the year was the biggest single day event that LPB has ever hosted: LPB’s Family Fun Fest. With the help of a grant from Hit Entertainment, LPB brought **Thomas the Tank Engine** to Louisiana. The venue was the John M. Parker Coliseum on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. In addition to Thomas, LPB also brought in Super WHY!, Princess Presto, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and Curious George. LPB offered free booths to area non-profit agencies. Approximately 40 groups participated including Operation Lifesaver, Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital, East Baton Rouge Parish EMS, American Red Cross, LSU Museum of Natural Science, and many more. In addition to the booths, Thomas, and the characters, the Red Barn Farm was there with a petting zoo that was a hit with children and adults alike. Over 3,000 people attended LPB’s Family Fun Fest, some driving from hours away to attend.

*“LPB is a constant source of educational programming, news, award-winning documentaries, and local programming that spotlights Louisiana culture and history. Our stories introduce us to the rest of the country and the world, making us ambassadors for Louisiana.”*

- Gwendolyn “Gigi” Carter, Chair,  
LA Educational Television Authority Board  
2016



LPB had a new production that tied into our 40th anniversary. **LPB's Musical Roots: A Look Back**, which premiered in December, was a retrospective of some of the best live musical performances captured throughout the years. A kaleidoscope of diverse Louisiana musicians was featured, including Fats Domino, Beausoleil, Buddy Guy, Wynton Marsalis, Harry Connick, Jr., Buckwheat Zydeco, Louisiana's LeRoux, Allan Toussaint, and others. Nick Spitzer, a folklorist and a professor of anthropology and American studies at Tulane University, hosted.

LPB launched the Louisiana Digital Media Archive on January 20, 2015. The LDMA is the first project in the nation to combine the collections of a public broadcaster and a state archives. Over 2,000 new videos were added to the site throughout the year. We now have over 3500 videos available to the public. Each month, the LDMA highlights a new topic. The topics highlighted in 2015 included Black History Month, Women's History Month, the 5th anniversary of the BP Oil Spill, the 10th anniversaries of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Louisiana Governors, and more. The website – [ladigitalmedia.org](http://ladigitalmedia.org) – makes complete LPB documentaries that tie into the month's topic available for viewing throughout the month.

**Louisiana: The State We're In**, Louisiana's only statewide newsmagazine, celebrated its 39th year on the air. The series continued to cover hard-hitting news such as the BP Oil settlement, theater shootings in Lafayette, the anniversaries of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and medical marijuana. Charlie Whinham and Shauna Sanford also covered lighter topics, such as the Christmas Eve bonfires, the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, and the Louisiana Book Festival.

**Louisiana Public Square**, LPB's monthly roundtable discussion series, tackled a number of hot topics during 2015. Topics included: *Louisiana After Ferguson*, *Dollars per Barrel: Oil Prices and Louisiana*, *Cancer in Louisiana*, *Back on Track: Louisiana Graduates (part of the American Graduate initiative)*, *Innovation Matters*, *Symbol or Statement: History in Public Plac-*

*es*, *Louisiana Post-Katrina: A Decade of Difference*, *Agenda Louisiana*, *Funding the Future: Early Childhood Opportunities (also part of the American Graduate initiative)*, *Living Below the Line*, plus a **Louisiana Public Square**, called *Election 2015: An Analysis*.

2015 was an election year for the office of governor of Louisiana. LPB hosted two gubernatorial debates. The first debate was broadcast statewide on LPB and on WYES in New Orleans on Wednesday, October 14th. It was carried live from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette campus, and was streamed at [lpb.org](http://lpb.org). Viewers submitted questions for the candidates.

On Tuesday, November 10th, LPB hosted a gubernatorial run-off debate in the LPB studios. The debate was between David Vitter (R) and John Bel Edwards (D). Both debates engaged many of LPB's Twitter followers.

LPB's **Louisiana Young Heroes Awards** celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015. Eight more outstanding students in grades 7 through 12 were honored with a day of awards, gifts, and a banquet where they first saw video profiles demonstrating why they were selected for the tribute.

LPB's **Louisiana Legends** also celebrated a milestone in 2015 – the 25th anniversary of the accolade, which spotlights the best and brightest of Louisiana's sons and daughters who have distinguished themselves in a variety of disciplines and have brought prestige to the state. This year's honorees were The Honorable Kathleen Blanco, former Governor of Louisiana; Robert Crais, award-winning novelist and screenwriter; Joe Dumars, two-time NBA Champion with the Detroit Pistons; Rolland Golden, renowned southern artist, and Roger Ogden, real estate developer, civic leader, and philanthropist.

In addition to the Louisiana Legends Gala, Friends of LPB held two **Downton Abbey**-related events. In December, Friends of LPB traveled with a group of **Downton Abbey** fans to England on a special holiday tour to discover all that fascinates viewers about this popular series. Included was a private visit to Highclere Castle, the home of the "Lord & Lady Grantham" and principal filming location of the series. They visited historic sites in London, Bath, and Oxford led by experts and scholars to explore the manners and customs of the indelible characters, upstairs and downstairs, whom our viewers know so well. LPB's exclusive England tour was limited to only 25 guests.

Also in December, a group of Friends of LPB was the first to see a preview of the much anticipated new season of **Downton Abbey**, the most popular series on







Louisiana Public Broadcasting and PBS in the last two decades. They enjoyed a leisurely afternoon of tea and delectable pastries with Alastair Bruce, historical advisor for the hit drama series, followed by a special preview of Season 6.

LPB premiered two episodes of **Louisiana Travels with Charlie Whinham** in 2015. The first episode debuted in August. Charlie Whinham traveled throughout the state, visiting the people and places that make Louisiana a great tourist destination. From the Gothic Revival Architecture of Baton Rouge’s Old State Capitol to the quaint and colorful city of Natchitoches; from the prehistoric earthworks of Poverty Point to the unforgettable experience at The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, **Louisiana Travels** made the rounds to these unique locations, showcasing sites no one should miss.

The second episode of **Louisiana Travels with Charlie Whinham** launched in December. Charlie hit the road again in a vintage 1966 Chevy Suburban to showcase some of Louisiana’s top travel destinations. He took viewers on a photography field trip through the Atchafalaya Basin with world renowned nature photographer C.C. Lockwood. Charlie then went on safari at the Global Wildlife Center in Folsom. The Global Wildlife Center is the largest free-roaming conservation area in North America that educates and entertains visitors of all ages. Charlie also visited the Eddie Robinson Museum on the campus of Grambling State University, which draws football fans and American history buffs from all over the world.

LPB was chosen as one of 34 public media stations to participate in the American Graduate: Let’s Make It Happen initiative. The American Graduate dropout prevention program is supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and allows LPB to identify people and organizations that are helping decrease the high school dropout rate in the communities it serves.

LPB was featured twice during the national **American Graduate Day 2015** broadcast, the only station in the country receiving this amount of attention. A “mini-

doc” about the LSU College of Engineering’s XCITE STEM Camp for high school girls and a live studio interview with members of the Baton Rouge Youth Coalition was produced by LPB. The American Graduate Day 2015 broadcast aired on over 100 public media stations in 138 national markets including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

As a lead up to the October 3rd broadcast, Baton Rouge Mayor-President “Kip” Holden declared the last week of September as American Graduate Week in the Capital City. LPB also recognized over 20 American Graduate Champions from the Baton Rouge area at a station event with Mayor Holden. These individuals work diligently with students in our local community to support the American Graduate goal of reaching a 90% national graduation rate by 2020.

LPB held three weeks of literacy and technology summer camps for 4 and 5 year olds. For four year olds, week one focused on literacy and technology, while week two focused on math, science, and technology. Five year olds enjoyed a fun-filled week of math, science, and technology. The camps utilized successfully tested programs to help 4 - and 5-year-olds develop the literacy, technology, science and math skills needed to transform them into super reading heroes!

Another timely LPB production this year was **Katrina Ten Years After: A Second Life A Second Chance**. The program that premiered on LPB right before the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. It looks back at those ill-fated days and how, ten years later, the city of New Orleans has achieved what seemed almost unimaginable a decade ago – the resurrection of one of America’s most beloved cities. It was something that no one had ever witnessed before - images of what appeared to be the total destruction of a major American city. Many of Katrina’s survivors will never return to New Orleans. But others—both long-time residents and new arrivals have come together, determined to rebuild their city—maybe better than before... because it’s home.

LPB's Educational Services Department had a busy 2015. Through two Digital Learning Fests, LPB provided two hours of fun, hands-on, educational activities for children, parents, and teachers using PBS digital media. They were held in East Baton Rouge Parish at the Freeman Matthews Head Start, and in New Orleans at the Dolores T. Aaron Charter School. Each Fest consisted of adult participants learning how to teach children using devices such as iPads, smart phones, and computers. The children watched their favorite educational PBS shows, read books, and did hands-on activities. LPB provided a mobile lab of iPads and laptop computers. A portion of the Fest was devoted to teaching parents how to effectively work with their children using the PBS media resources. During the remainder of the Fest, parents interacted with their children implementing what they learned and receiving suggestions to improve their interactions. Parents received apps for mobile devices, books, and take-home materials including effective parenting tips.

LPB hosted a six-hour hands-on SciGirls workshop for local educators attending the joint Louisiana Science Teachers and Louisiana Association of Teachers of Math Conference to learn and practice proven strategies for engaging girls (and boys) in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). SciGirls is an Emmy-award winning PBS KIDS television series and website dedicated to changing the way millions of girls think about STEM. Teachers left with access to online resources and creative ideas for engaging children in STEM such as building devices to measure wind speed, wiring a dough creature to light up a room, and many more fun educational ideas.

Using the weeklong Odd Squad Camp curriculum associated with the PBS KIDS series **Odd Squad**, LPB partnered with the Exxon-Mobil YMCA in Baton Rouge to offer a "Be the Agent" summer camp for forty 5 to 7 year old children. The camp helped the children develop early math skills through structured group activities, interactive content, and games and crafts.

LPB continued the partnership with Entergy of New Orleans to provide monthly teacher professional development to teachers at 10 childcare centers in New Orleans. The monthly sessions showed teachers how to effectively use the resources of the popular PBS children's program **Sid the Science Kid** to teach preschoolers how to think like scientists and conduct age-appropriate science activities.

With funding from Verizon, LPB partnered with the Sulfur Library to provide **Dinosaur Train** activities at the Literacy Library Kick-off at Harbor Edge Pavilion

in Calcasieu Parish. Parents and children learned how to access the PBS KIDS apps on mobile devices. Super WHY! made a special appearance at the event.

In October, LPB was awarded a grant by the Walmart Family Foundation and the Louisiana State Giving Advisory Council to implement a Success in the Workplace program. With this grant, LPB is partnering with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge to establish the core instructional content that will update clients' work and technology skills to meet current employment expectations such as, preparing online applications and resumes, online job searches, and computer and technology skills. This program will help provide career opportunities for the unemployed in eight parishes in the Baton Rouge region who have barriers to employment and need assistance. These include the chronically unemployed, seniors re-entering the workforce, and new arrivals into the country. The content is being delivered through online videos, face-to-face interaction, hands-on activities, and via workbook and online activities.

In November, LPB continued what has become an annual tradition of family-friendly screenings with the cost of admission being a donation to a local charity. This year, on the Monday before Thanksgiving, LPB hosted two screenings of new **Bob the Builder** episodes before they aired on LPB. Cost of admission was a donation of a non-perishable food item for Mighty Moms, a local organization that provides needy school children bags of food for the weekends. We were able to collect several large boxes of food to help the agency in their mission. In addition to watching **Bob the Builder**, the children made a Thanksgiving craft to take home, and received **Bob the Builder** stickers, pencils, and coloring pages.

On Wednesday, December 2nd, at their annual meeting and luncheon in Baton Rouge, the Council for a Better Louisiana presented LPB with an award. LPB President/CEO Beth Courtney accepted the award which stated, "CABL recognizes Louisiana Public Broadcasting for 20 years of partnership producing debates that further the civil discourse on issues of importance to Louisiana." Following the award presentation, Governor-elect John Bel Edwards was the guest speaker.

LPB continues to connect with its viewers through social media. The number of fans on the Louisiana Public Broadcasting Facebook page topped the 12,000 mark in 2015. LPB continues to connect with viewers through weekly e-newsletters, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and Periscope.

LPB looks forward to 2016 with new productions and exciting events and programming.