



Cultivating public media's strong future in Illinois

## Award-winning programming, news and public affairs

- **Backyard Industry** was awarded two **Bronze Tellys** for both videography/cinematography and as a web series.
- **ART/BTS** was awarded a **Bronze Telly** as a web series.
- **Best Investigative Report** in the downstate radio division of the **Associated Press Broadcasters Association Contest** for a three-part series on the 2014 Farm Bill lobbying.
- **Best Reporter** in the downstate radio division of the **Associated Press Broadcasters Association Contest** was awarded to former WILL reporter Sean Powers for a series on mental health; a feature about a chef camp to support small, sustainable farms; and coverage of Champaign County's move to offer marriage licenses to same-sex couples.
- **2nd Place Long Form Documentary** in the national **Public Radio News Director's Inc. (PRNDI)** awards for **Unmet Needs: Living with Mental Illness in Central Illinois**.

## Increasing capacity in the newsroom

WILL News joined reporting forces with CU-CitizenAccess.org and The Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting to bring you more in-depth, data-driven news coverage.

Brian Moline joined WILL Radio as **Morning Edition** host in June. His news experience, local



Brian Moline, host of *Morning Edition*

roots and energy have helped make your mornings with us even more responsive and relevant.

Devyn Tammons spent the spring semester as the newsroom's Donald P. Mullally intern, honing his skills in telling stories of injustice.

In partnership with the *Daily Illini*, our new summer internship program broadened the range of multimedia reporting skills of three U of I College of Media broadcast journalism students. Dan Collins, Senait Gebregiorgis and Masaki Sugimoto spent the summer learning how to report on-air and online, while helping us bring you more comprehensive coverage.

Senait Gebregiorgis went on to serve as the newsroom's Mullally intern during the fall semester, continuing her professional goal of giving voice to the voiceless through focused local reporting on racial and minority issues.



*2015 was a year of stewardship here at Illinois Public Media. We expanded our coverage and reach through things like our Longer Listen project and the formation of Illinois Newsroom. We evolved with the ways you watch and listen via dynamic web series and an upgraded mobile app. We updated our technology and equipment. And we connected with our communities through educational outreach, agricultural conferences and Bump Up the Volume.*

*Whether you found us online, at an event or on the air, our stations grew in their reputation as the destination for stories, projects, programs and entertainment that reflect a sense of place. Despite the changing media landscape, public media is still the only entity that provides programs that expand the minds of children, offers universal access to the arts, provides in-depth coverage of the issues and inspires people to learn more about the world. In fact, if you look across all of the various avenues we use to reach our audiences, Illinois Public Media puts out 456 hours of content per day.*

**We strive to be Illinois' recognized leader in telling stories that matter, but we can't tell them without you. We hope you'll join us as we continue to grow and strive to cultivate a strong future for public media in Illinois.**

Moss Bresnahan  
President and CEO



Tim Meyers (**ART/BTS**) and Lisa Bralts (**Backyard Industry**)



[will.illinois.edu/longerlisten](http://will.illinois.edu/longerlisten)

Moss Bresnahan (back right) in the AM580 control room with Tiffany Jolley (far left), Scott Cameron (front left), Amanda Honigfort (middle left), Brian Moline (middle right) and Jeff Bossert (front right).

## expanding coverage and reach

### Taking a Longer Listen

Local stories can sometimes leave you wanting more. Put together by the WILL newsroom and designed to offer a deeper dive off the air, **Longer Listen** has already covered a variety of local topics in its first year.

Expanded interviews, visuals, and more audio for that ear-catching story are available online after it originally airs.

### Reflecting our sense of place

Illinois Public Media is leading a new statewide journalism collaborative spanning seven public media stations. **Illinois Newsroom** (working title) will expand our ability to provide in-depth reports, series, investigations and video programs for all platforms.

It will also bring together community members, civic leaders, students and journalists through events, discussions and workshops around issues of importance to Illinois.

Eight journalists will focus on reporting across three key topic areas across the state: political issues, education, and health and environment.

 750,000 from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting +  7 stations = **Illinois Newsroom**

## connecting communities

### Keeping our air local

**Bumps** (n): common industry term for the musical interludes you hear before or after a news or agriculture report or between your favorite local and NPR programs, lasting anywhere from 10 to 40 seconds.

This year our bumps went entirely local, connecting our listeners to the community in new ways. The **Bump up the Volume** project continues to work with artists from across central Illinois to build a library of bumps showcasing our area's varied music scene.



### Upgrading WILL TV/Radio equipment

Transmission lines are an essential part of the broadcast infrastructure, carrying our signal from the transmitters up the tower to the antenna and to your home. In May, Illinois Public Media replaced both the FM and TV lines after over 40 years of use.

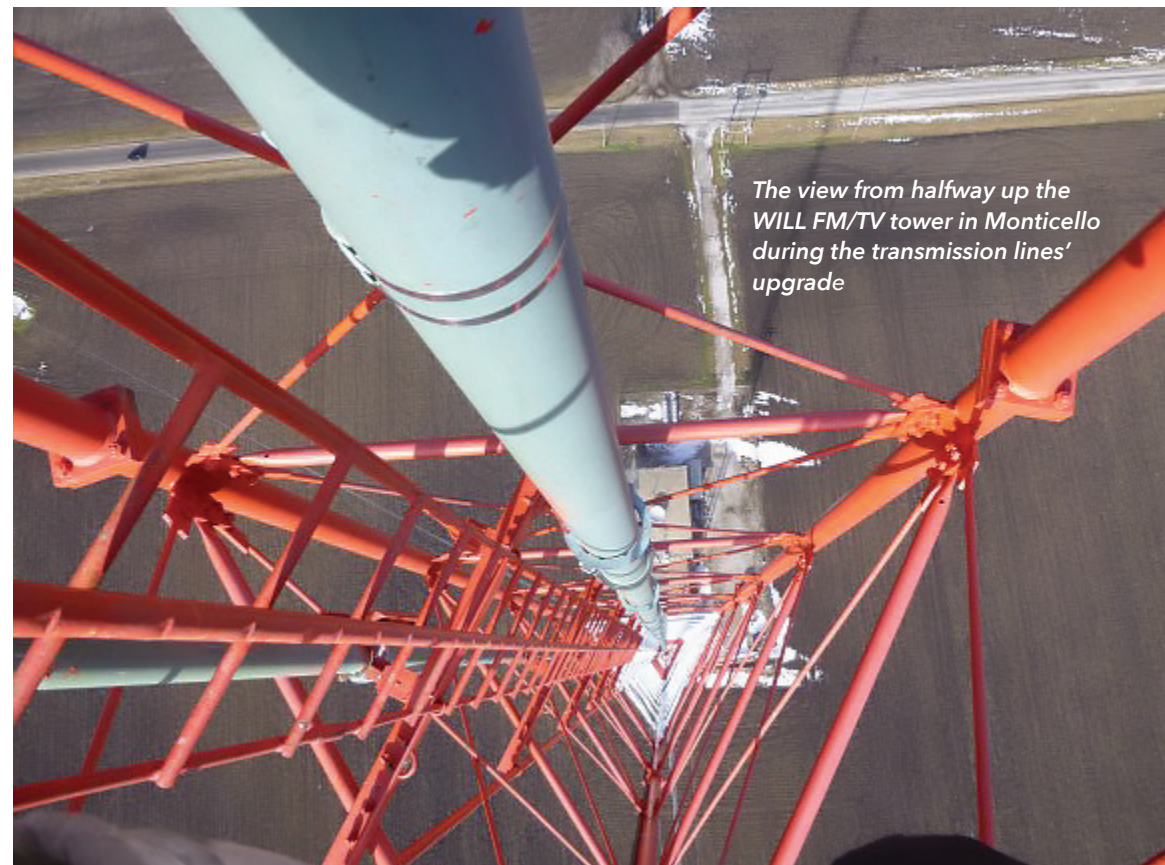
In June, WILL Radio got a new automation system. The system incorporates all our station audio resources into one network, linking seven work stations, six studios and our broadcast operations system center, creating a more efficient operation. This upgrade project was funded by a \$1 million legacy gift from an anonymous Friend of WILL.

WILL purchased a new transmitter for AM580 in October, replacing the old transmitter after 50 years of operation.



Old WILL-AM transmitter being removed

## innovating technology



The view from halfway up the WILL FM/TV tower in Monticello during the transmission lines' upgrade

## Thriving web series

**Backyard Industry** continued to enlighten, inspire, and encourage viewers with short video stories about the frequently hidden intersections between food, tradition, community, projects and practice in central Illinois and the Midwest.

From tattooing to performance art to hip-hop, **ART/BTS** went behind the scenes and into the creative minds of an eclectic mix of artists throughout central Illinois.

Season 1 explored the influences, styles and inspiration behind:

- T.R.U.T.H.
- Thomas Nicol
- Ryan Groff
- Nina Paley
- Langston Allston
- Deke Weaver
- Ann Coddington Rast
- Ainslie Heilich



Artist John McDevitt (right), owner of the Vault Collective, works on a mixed-media wood/paint piece while Isaac Musgrave (far left), WILL crew member, films the process for season 2 of ART/BTS.



**Evolving with the ways you watch**

WILL's latest mobile app upgrade came with many new and exciting features, including a video-on-demand option. Watch and listen at your convenience from anywhere in the world!

Other new features include:

- setting reminders to ring 10 minutes before your favorite show starts;
- ability to receive notifications about breaking news, events and new shows;
- easy content search capabilities;
- and accessibility to both Radio and TV at the same time.

Available for iOS and Android.

**viewing** the world differently



## Living with cancer in central Illinois

Incredible advances are being made in cancer research and treatment right here in our community. WILL teamed up with WTVP in Peoria to produce **Living with Cancer in Central Illinois**—a multi-platform companion to the national PBS series, **Cancer: The Emperor of All Maladies**—to spotlight local doctors, researchers and institutions on the cutting edge of cancer care right here in our community.

- **Strategic Treatment** followed doctors and patients during innovative procedures and treatment plans.
- **Seeking a Cure** sat down with doctors from the U of I College of Medicine at Peoria to learn about the progress they are making in their research, clinical trials and diagnostic tools.
- **Diagnoses & Decisions** brought doctors, families and cancer survivors together in the WILL studio for a half-hour community conversation, hosted by Illinois Public Radio's Amanda Vinicky and airing on WILL-TV.

Photo left: Illinois Public Radio's Amanda Vinicky (right) hosts *Diagnoses & Decisions* in the WILL-TV studio. Panelists include Dr. Rohit Bhargava (back left), bioengineering professor at the U of I; Dr. Jo-Mel Labayog (front left), oncologist and medical director of Presence United Samaritans Cancer Center in Danville; and Barbara Bello (middle left), Presence oncology RN.

# cultivating an Ag legacy

## Saying goodbye

In June, Agricultural Services Director Dave Dickey retired after 28 years at WILL. Dave worked to grow the WILLAg audience on-line, pioneering the use of podcasting, before the term “podcast” was in common usage. He also expanded the WILLAg audience at in-person events.



Dave Dickey



An attendee talks with Strategic Farm Marketing's Greg Brucker (left) at WILLAg Farm Assets Conference.

## Engaging the public

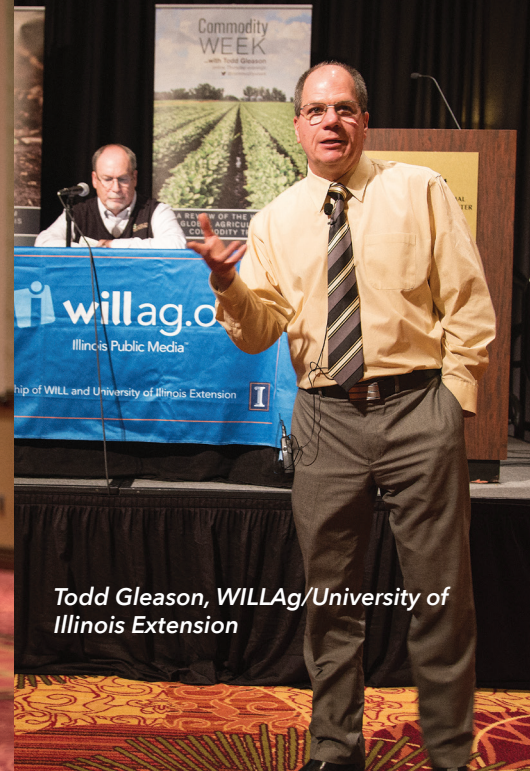
WILL's presentations of panel discussions featuring commodity analysts attract audiences in the hundreds. Building on the long-standing success of the annual March meeting, engagement with the agricultural community now also includes an annual meeting in November.

The annual **All-Day Ag Outlook** meeting saw over 325 in attendance in Covington, Indiana.

The second **WILLAg Farm Assests Conference** brought together more than 300 in Bloomington-Normal.



John Jansen, Vice President of Climate Ag Services at Monsanto Company, presents on Climate Corporation's Fieldview software. The WILLAg Farm Assets Conference explored how **BIG DATA** streaming from farm equipment will inform decisions in the tractor cab and the home office.



Todd Gleason, WILLAg/University of Illinois Extension

# nourishing spirit and mind

**WILL-FM remains your only on-air source for Opera in central Illinois.**



## New host, same classics

After 30 years of hosting **Classics by Request** on WILL-FM, John Frayne bid the program farewell in September, with Vincent Trauth, host of WILL-FM's **The Evening Concert**, stepping into the role.



Vincent Trauth

## Talking classical with a modern twist

For the second year in a row, WILL-FM **Classic Mornings** host Vic Di Geronimo joined NPR's Jeremy Hobson for the classical version of **Here & Now's DJ Sessions** in October. Vic shared music from a number of classical artists in their thirties who are doing interesting things with established pieces.

Vic's musical insights extend beyond the mic, sharing classical knowledge twice a month through his blog. [will.illinois.edu/classicmornings](http://will.illinois.edu/classicmornings)



Vic Di Geronimo



Denise Jones-Torres, from *Watch Me Learn* in Savoy, teaching local children math and science literacy with the help of PBS learning games.

*“I’m always looking for a fresh approach. The PBS apps help me bring in different resources to help them learn. I didn’t know anything about using a tablet before this project. So receiving the technology and the training on how to use it helped me bring a little bit of technology into my childcare program.”*

**Juanita Rogers, A Child’s Compass, Urbana, Ill.**

Uni High students and members of the Illinois Youth Media project with WILL’s Dave Dickey.

## facilitating education

### A match made for learning

Illinois Public Media, along with WSIU-TV in Carbondale and WTVP-TV in Peoria, received a \$105,264 grant to work with schools and parents to expand school readiness projects in central Illinois. Through the **PBS Ready To Learn** project, we were able to give iPads to six Champaign County home Head Start providers. PBS has developed apps and online games to help increase math and science literacy in these pre-kindergarten students.



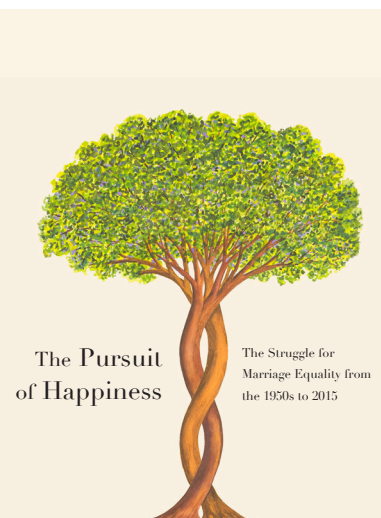
*“With the iPad, they get to play games with Elmo and other characters. They think they are playing games, but they’re learning. That’s the beauty of the iPad.”*

**Denise Jones-Torres, Watch Me Learn, Savoy, Ill.**

### Pursuing happiness

Continuing a 20-year tradition, students at University of Illinois Laboratory High School (Uni High) worked with Illinois Public Media to turn 16 student-led interviews into short radio spots, a project website and a one-hour radio documentary.

**The Pursuit of Happiness: The Struggle for Marriage Equality from the 1950s-2015** examines changes in laws, ideas, attitudes and practices regarding interracial, intercultural and same-sex marriage from the perspectives of individuals, couples, and families in east central Illinois during that time.





## Growing friendships

During the month of February, Illinois Public Media set a goal to make 100 New Friends. Not only did we meet our goal, we surpassed it and welcomed over **150 new Friends of WILL**. These friendships, new and enduring, help support public media in central Illinois, enriching lives and communities through ensuring we have a strong future together.

In 2015:

**55% increase in sustainers**, going from 954 to 1486

**61% increase in sustainer revenue**, going from \$225,398 to \$364,264

**13** named endowments, including a new **Anonymous Endowment** to support technology upgrades for WILL, in particular WILL Radio.

Other recent endowments created or infused with gift income include the **Howard J. Rutan Broadcasting Fund** and the **Terry and DiAnne Hatch Endowment for Illinois Public Media**.



## 2016

*Thanks to your generous support of Illinois Public Media, we look to bring you new and exciting things in 2016*

**The 21st** is a new hour-long talk show. Listeners will hear a mix of interviews and conversations—everyone from farmers, business people, artists, politicians, and most importantly, residents across Illinois—on everything from news to politics to arts, culture and everyday life.

- *SciTech Now, the latest in science and technology, both nationally and locally*
- *More podcasting*
- *National/International Productions Documentary Unit*
- *The Barns Documentary*
- *Ebertfest 2016: Center of the Universe*
- *Vietnam series*

*Mid-American Gardener Nursery Trip and Live Studio Event in May 2015*



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