Cultivating public media’s strong future in Illinois
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

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 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.

Moss Bresnahan
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.

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

innovating technology

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.

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.

expanding coverage and reach

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

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

Old WILL-AM transmitter being removed

New WILL-AM transmitter

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).
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

**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.

**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.

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*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.*
Saying goodbye

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

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 Assets Conference brought together more than 300 in Bloomington-Normal.

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.

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

nourishing spirit and mind

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

cultivating an Ag legacy
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.

Fiscal 2015 financial report

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<tr>
<th>OPERATING REVENUES</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Funding</td>
<td>1,296,130</td>
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<td>Membership Contributions</td>
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<td>Program Underwriting</td>
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<td>State Grants</td>
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<td>Other Grants</td>
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<td>Community Service Grants and other Federal Grants</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td><strong>Total operating revenues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>NON-OPERATING REVENUES</th>
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<th>2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect Support</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total revenues</strong></td>
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<td>Local Programming and Production</td>
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<td>Broadcasting</td>
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<td>Promotion and Development</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6,371,559</strong></td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Support</td>
<td>2,489,425</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>149,216</td>
<td>149,216</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,711,554</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,708,794</strong></td>
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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 sustainer**, 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.

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

**2016**

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

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

@willpublicmedia

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will.illinois.edu

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Info at
will.illinois.edu/willradioapp