



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

"Your stations are terribly vital during this shutdown when we can't see people, can't touch, which is particularly acute for those of us who live alone and have no family. I turn on my radio, I feel connected, and that is no small thing. Your stations not only connect – they transport. Keep up the fantastic work!"

- Esther Merve, Middlesex County

WHRO Public Media is dedicated to expanding minds, enriching lives, and enhancing education through the power of public media.



WHRO is a valuable part of eastern Virginia's advancement.

21 local public school divisions own WHRO.

WHRO provides digital education courses and video streaming services to local students.

WHRO engages the community through its media and journalism services and fosters community conversations on important issues.

In 2021, WHRO provided vital local services:

In partnership with the Virginia Department of Education and a committee of history teachers, professors, and historians, developed a digital African American History course for high school students in the Commonwealth.

Produced award-winning content for television, radio, and digital platforms that focused on the pandemic, education, race, arts, sea-level rise, and other topics of interest in our community.

WHRO's local services had deep impact in eastern Virginia.

WHRO broadcast services cover just over two million households in eastern Virginia.

270,000 educators, students, and parents across Virginia accessed tens of thousands of searchable, SOL-correlated, rich-media learning objects through eMediaVA, the on-demand digital content delivery service owned by WHRO.



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

WHRO Public Media

Long known for its public service mission, WHRO Public Media is the only public broadcasting station in the United States owned by 21 public school divisions. Since its founding in 1961 as **Home Room One**, we have established educational programming and services as WHRO's core mission. WHRO continues its efforts to meet critical challenges faced within the community, such as early childhood education, local journalism, civility, sea-level rise, inequity and justice, and veterans and the military. Our goal is clear: to be an essential partner in improving the future for generations to come.

WHRO is a distinctive institution that links diverse constituents throughout eastern Virginia through its ownership and outreach. Whether on radio, television, in the classroom, or on the digital platform, most residents are touched in some way by the services that WHRO Public Media offers.

- eMediaVA, a service of WHRO Education, is an on-demand digital content delivery system offering tens of thousands of searchable, digital learning objects, including regionally produced and acquired content from Virginia educational, scientific, and cultural organizations, content from across the nation through PBS Learning Media and content created by WHRO's digital learning and production departments. eMediaVA is available free of charge to every public, private, and homeschool educator in Virginia through a contract with the Virginia Department of Education and local philanthropic funding and is an integral component of the VDOE's long-term virtual learning strategy.
- Governor Ralph Northam directed the Virginia Department of Education to collaborate with WHRO Public Media and committees of history teachers, historians, and history professors to develop a new African American history course for high school students. The full-credit course introduces students to key concepts in African American history, from early beginnings in Africa through the transatlantic slave trade, the Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights era to the present. WHRO continues to produce additional videos for this series.
- WHRO's Literacy Van made several visits across the region in 2021, delivering First Books and other reading resources to Title 1 kindergarten through 5th-grade classrooms. In addition, the WHRO STEM Van provided resources to classrooms, and WHRO staff members conducted virtual classroom visits sharing STEM-related activities in correlation with the VA Standards of Learning. While visits were limited and adhered to the CDC guidelines, WHRO still engaged local classrooms and the community.
- Nearly 1,800 educators across the Commonwealth participated in WHRO Education Professional Development sessions in 2021. Sessions included: Distance Learning Tools, Blended Learning, Social Emotional Learning, Instructional Use of Web Conferencing Tools, and Using Digital Media to Enhance Learning Goals and Engagement.



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

- In its second full year of operation, the WHRO newsroom has impacted our community. Key reporting focused on housing and eviction laws, inequity and justice, the pandemic, and sea-level rise. The team maintains a diversity tracker to use across the newsroom for sources, talk show guests, and experts. Our reports are shared weekly throughout the Commonwealth on partnering Public Media stations. Several of our news reports have been featured nationally on NPR.
- WHRO celebrated the sixth anniversary of the WHRO Emerging Leaders Board. The board's mission is to seek opportunities to engage new and diverse audiences in public media. With authenticity and engagement at its core, the ELB's continue to create engaging opportunities to connect WHRO's audiences with public media content. Most recently, in partnership with Independent Lens/POV, the ELB hosted five Indie Lens Pop-Ups in 2021. Additionally, they are working with radio staff to launch an upcoming musician showcase. We are proud to share that three ELB members have joined our governing board.
- WHRV jazz host Jae Sinnett shares his love of cooking through WHRO's digital series *Cooking with Jae*. Each week he shows viewers how to prepare and serve a delicious healthy dish while sharing his recipes in the process. Our partners include Executive Chef Robert Patton at Old Dominion University and Feast Virginia, which provides free food education courses and training to underserved communities in Hampton Roads.
- WHRO released a new podcast series on iTunes and WHRO.org. *Open Channel* celebrates our region's layered history and current activity, broadcasting our community's stories and voices. Continuing podcasts include *WHRO Reports*, *Arts Conversations*, *Bird Notes*, *Another View Selected Shorts*, and *Out of the Box Album of the Week*.
- *Watching America*, celebrating its third year, is a weekly program hosted by British-born professor Dr. Alan Campbell. The program combines interviews and deep-dive talks into our local and national culture through the eloquent and ever-curious lens of a "Brit" who has spent over two decades' figuring it out. The program airs Friday at noon and is one of our most downloaded podcasts.
- WHRO Classical FM's Wayla Chambo hosted a virtual Classical Open Mic that celebrated the vibrancy and resilience of our local music community. The evening featured guest artist Rachel Ordaz from the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, who gave a performance and answered questions from the audience and open-mic participants. This event was initially planned at a local arts venue but moved to virtual due to the pandemic.
- The 32nd Annual Virginia Children's Festival was outdoors at Norfolk's waterfront. Hundreds of families joined WHRO for hands-on workshops, arts and crafts, and the PBS Kid's Village featuring our own Ms. Martha, Mister Steve, Super Why, Sid the Science Kid, and Skip the Straw - a character featured on the WHRO Batten Environmental van.



NOVA Partnership

Funded by a grant from CPB, WHRO is one of five stations selected to produce broadcast and digital content in partnership with WGBH and NOVA. The project highlights stories at the intersection of science and society, providing an exceptional opportunity for national audiences that resonate with our local community. WHRO created three videos in 2021, *Buried History: First Baptist Church*, *Cannabis Sniffing K-9s: Out of a job?*, and *A Story of Patients: Epilepsy and Pharmaceutical CBD*. Videos can be viewed on You Tube @WHROPublicMedia.



Curate 757 & Curate

WHRO launched the sixth season of the Emmy-award-winning *Curate 757*. The successful digital-first series explores the thriving art scene in eastern Virginia by featuring local artists. In addition, each episode airs in the parent broadcast series *Curate*, which highlights artists from various cities through the MMG arts content initiative. *Curate* and *Curate 757* receive support from five city production grants and support from local museums. Produced in partnership with the Old Dominion University Cinema Department, the 13-part broadcast series premieres each fall/winter. WHRO.org/Curate.



Another View

On Thursdays, WHRV broadcasts *Another View with Barbara Hamm Lee*. The live call-in program, produced by award-winning senior producer Lisa Godley, celebrates its 11th year on the air and focuses on conversations from the African American perspective. This year the program facilitated community-led discussions on racism, race-based health disparities, politics, voter suppression, Civil rights, and history. The conversations are timely and welcoming to all listeners. Visit whro.org/anotherview to hear our program.





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STORIES OF IMPACT

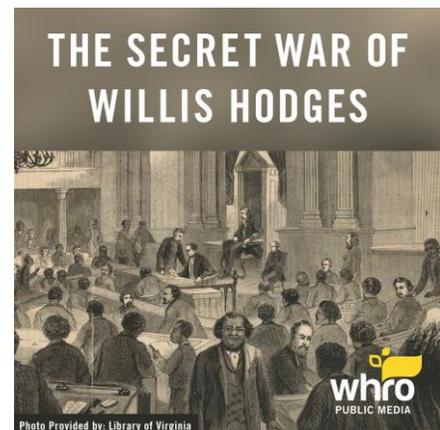
Ms. Martha Reads

Our award-winning Facebook series, *Ms. Martha Reads*, continued in 2021. Developed to serve young children during the 2020 pandemic, Martha Razor, manager of early childhood learning, reads a new story aloud each week. Rather than choosing books that children may already know or could find on their shelves at home, Martha reads stories submitted in previous years to the WHRO annual *Young Storytellers Contest*. Virginia's First Lady Pamela Northam joins Martha and author Madison for the episode pictured here.



The Secret War of Willis Hodges

Funded in part through a grant from the Virginia Humanities, *The Secret War of Willis Hodges* is an investigative podcast series that uncovers information about a network of free Black people who helped enslaved people escape Virginia in the years before the Civil War. The series shed new light on a nationally significant figure from Virginia and the mechanics of the Underground Railroad in Hampton Roads, revealing details about the community of free Black people who lived here. WHRO created the series in partnership with local historians.



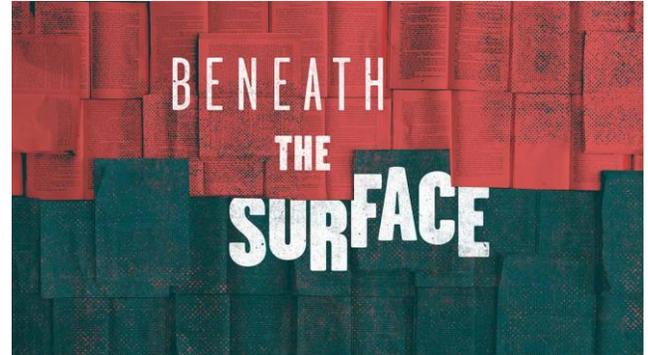
Batten Environmental Van Program

Launched in 2021, the Batten Environmental Van joins our fleet of mobile education units. The Van provides teachers with pre-and post-lesson plans and interactive learning objects related to the animated *Greenbeats* video series. WHRO and the Virginia Stage Company have also partnered to offer an environmental musical assembly to schools modeled in the style of *Schoolhouse Rock! Greenbeats* is a compilation of fun, inspiring animated songs for kids about the environment and the simple things we can do to care for it.



Beneath the Surface

There has been unequal access to basic public services for specific demographics throughout our history. One essential service is education, a foundation for life success and personal fulfillment. This is particularly true for African Americans. WHRO has been exploring this issue and how it affects the local community throughout the year. Through conversations and coverage of this topic in our multiplatform series *Beneath the Surface*, a project funded in part by the Hampton Roads Community Foundation and the Virginia Humanities.



WHRO Public Media Acquires WFOS-FM

An oldies station operated by Chesapeake Public Schools for more than 60 years transferred ownership to WHRO Public Media in June of 2021. Under its new brand, the *Time Machine Radio Network*, WFOS-FM continues broadcasting an extensive collection of oldies music on 88.7 FM and 99.3 HD-2. The station began in the 1950s as a 10-watt high-school outlet where students learned the ins and outs of broadcasting. The call letters WFOS represent prominent business owner and civic leader Oscar Frommel Smith.



Virginia Media Spelling Bee

WHRO and Tribune Publishing collaborated to produce and host the 14th Annual Virginia Media Spelling Bee. 25 of Hampton Roads' finest young spellers and local spelling bee champions competed virtually using an online platform developed by Scripps. This innovation was developed and put in place to ensure students' recognition opportunities and events remained in place during the pandemic. WHRO CEO Bert Schmidt congratulates Hampton Roads Academy winner Parker Muench.



At A Crossroads

Reach in the Community:

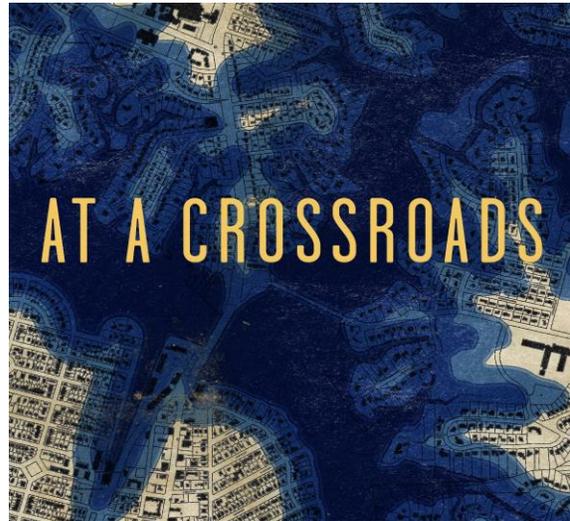
For centuries, the water bodies around Coastal Virginia have helped it grow and thrive. Now, they're a threat. It's no longer a question of if some areas will go underwater, but when. As a result, people's homes, livelihoods, and lifestyles are at risk. "At A Crossroads" explores how local communities are grappling with this reality — launched in 2021, and funded in part by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting as part of its nationwide Connected Coastlines Reporting Initiative. This multi-media project includes a website, radio series, podcast, website articles, and a social media campaign.

Partnerships:

Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting
Old Dominion University

Impact and Community Feedback:

Journalism as we know it has been slowly disappearing. Locally, we are now at a critical point. Because of layoffs, buyouts, and voluntary exits, there is a roughly 40-person newspaper staff between our two major newspapers, covering almost 2 million people. WHRO has helped fill that void through our dedication to local journalism and focus on areas of crucial importance. WHRO will ensure that Eastern Virginia does not become a news desert through future financial resources.



Broadcast and Podcast Nationally:

NPR's *Here and Now*
NPR's *All Things Considered*
Climate One Podcast

Statewide Broadcast on Public Media Partner Stations:

VPR Blacksburg, Charlottesville
VPM Richmond
WAMU Washington DC
WMRA Harrisburg

"One day, there's gonna be water here, and you're not going to be able to live here unless you get [around] by boat because this global warming — it's serious." — Bobby Buxton, Poquoson VA



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT SUMMARY



“I’ve been a member since 1981. I appreciate the balanced, unemotional, in-depth reporting that is the result of not being beholden to advertisers.” – *Gayle Johnson, Virginia Beach*

In 2021, WHRO earned five Regional Emmy Awards, two NETA awards, eleven Telly awards, seven Virginia Association of Broadcasters Awards, one Associated Press Broadcasters Award, one NETA Award, and four Addy Awards.

WHRO’s website has over 5,616 unique page visits a day and 2,049,959 unique visits annually and 3,674,518 podcast downloads in 2021.

The WHRO newsroom produced local reports that were carried statewide and nationally on NPR.



WHRO Public Media is the largest single media organization in the market, with four television stations, four radio stations, and many powerful digital platforms.

We reach an audience of just over 2.2 million through social media platforms. Our social media accounts are comprised of 60,000 unique users.

We are WHRO Public Media. We embrace education as our foundation and our future. We listen first, then listen more. We treat others with respect. We are non-partisan. We rely on facts and science. We embrace diversity and inclusion. We stand against social injustice and bigotry.