



SHAPING
THE FUTURE
TOGETHER

witf 

A Pennon Organization

ANNUAL
REPORT

FY24

FORWARD

INTO THE FUTURE

WITF has a rich history in Central Pennsylvania. Since our founding in 1963 as the South Central Educational Broadcasting Council, WITF has been a trusted, valued supplier of programs and services that both satisfy and stimulate curiosity for residents in every community in over 19 counties across the region. Our vision has always been to strengthen our communities by providing information and opportunities for engagement.

In July 2023, Steinman Communications, Inc. of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, gifted their legacy newspaper, LNP|LancasterOnline, to WITF, and set us on a path to innovate a new model for local news, community education and civic engagement in Central Pennsylvania. With seed funding from The Steinman Foundation, WITF also established The Steinman Institute for Civic Engagement (TSI) to support the development of this new model and to advance innovations in the areas of local news consumption and delivery, media literacy and ways in which citizens participate in civic life.

Here are highlights of what our combined organization has accomplished since July:

- Pennon Education, formerly known as WITF Education, engaged nearly 6,000 educators in professional learning and processed over 11,000 hours of continuing education credits.
- Pennon Education also designed and launched a new STEM & Innovation Studio and Creator Studio at the Public Media Center, welcoming nearly 1,000 young learners through community engagement events and field trips in the studios' inaugural year.
- WITF, LNP and TSI partnered with Franklin & Marshall College to hold two deliberative forums, a community-building experience designed to cultivate civil dialogue and consensus decision-making about pressing local issues.
- TSI is sponsoring a regional chapter of Press Forward, a national movement designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of local news and information, which will support local journalists and news outlets.
- TSI is making additional investments in WITF and LNP to support quality journalism and newsroom innovation, including new beats, expanded coverage and unparalleled reporting of local government throughout Lancaster County and the region.

In addition to these accomplishments, this year has been one of deep listening and reflection, as we have worked to integrate two trusted organizations and chart a path forward. As part of this process, we conducted extensive research ... and we have learned a lot!

While we have a wonderful audience, there is much more we can do to better connect with and reflect all the communities we serve.

We must transition to digital delivery of our products as quickly as possible or we risk becoming obsolete.

Building trust and making connections with the next generation of news and information consumers will be critical to our success.

Thank you for all your support as members of our most loyal audience! We now look to the future, with a renewed vision for a connected and engaged community committed to lifelong learning, local news and information. We hope that we can count on your continued support and engagement as we take bold steps to lead the way for journalism and education in Central Pennsylvania.



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BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

STRENGTHENING LOCAL JOURNALISM • ADVANCING EDUCATION • BUILDING COMMUNITY TRUST

PENNON

In September 2024, we announced the launch of Pennon — a new home for WITF as we work alongside LNP|LancasterOnline and The Steinman Institute for Civic Engagement to strengthen trust in local journalism. A pennon is a flag or banner often flown at the front of a ship, a fitting metaphor for a public media organization dedicated to forging a new path forward in

community-centered journalism and education. The name “Pennon” subtly echoes the name of our home state, Pennsylvania, too. It reminds us of our deep responsibility to serve our community — and the commonwealth — with the news, information and entertainment that matters most to them.

PENNON



EDUCATION

Pennon Education engages lifelong learners with developmentally appropriate, timely and rigorous educational experiences. The core of our mission is to address opportunity gaps in our community by offering high-quality, inquiry-based academic experiences to learners who might not otherwise have them. We engage learners in innovative literacy programs that address fundamental shifts

in the media and information landscape, support educators with science and technology resources that align with PA's adoption of STEM (STEELS) standards and amplify youth voices. Our programs are implemented in schools, after-school and out-of-school programs, higher education and the community so we can reach learners of every age.

JOURNALISM

The WITF News team has worked tirelessly to engage with our audience, reach new audiences, and produce news stories that focus on the issues most important to our community. The team hosted four **News & Brews** and co-hosted **A Candidate's Night to Listen**, all designed with community issues and civic engagement in mind. *Climate Solutions* | *StateImpact PA* collaborated

with Sankofa African American Theatre Company to present ***Between Hevan & Eartha: A Not-So-Tall Tale About Climate Change*** — a unique play written by Francesca Amendolia and Sharia Benn about the impact of climate change — at Gamut Theatre in Harrisburg, too. The team remains committed to collaborative, insightful journalism that centers and uplifts our communities.



PRODUCTION

WITF produces audio and video content that highlights the fascinating people and unique places of Central Pennsylvania. We often connect with and amplify national efforts from our content partners, PBS and NPR,

including shows like ***Finding Your Roots*** and ***All Creatures Great and Small***. Every year is an adventure which uncovers new surprises. We're grateful for your on-going support to make it all possible.

STORY OF IMPACT

A PENNSYLVANIA MAN SAW THE TRUE POWER OF ATOMIC ANNIE

STORY BY TIM LAMBERT WINS NATIONAL EDWARD R. MURROW AWARD

WITF News special project editor Tim Lambert took on a story that had an extra personal touch — he documented his father's experience in the military as a participant in Operation Grable, an atomic cannon test in 1953. It was the first and only test of a tactical nuclear device fired from a cannon.

In May 2024, the piece was honored with regional Edward R. Murrow Awards in three categories: feature reporting, digital and excellence in sound. In August 2024, it won a national Edward R. Murrow Award in the best use of sound category.

WITF digital producer Jeremy Long, head videographer Doug Watson and senior motion/interactive designer Tom Downing all worked with Tim to develop the digital presentation of the story.

To produce the piece, Tim interviewed his father, Tom, and used sound from historical footage to bring the story to life.



WITF has been recognized by the Radio Television Digital News Association with three Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards. Since 2006, WITF has received 90 RTDNA regional Murrows — the most of any organization in Pennsylvania.

Tim Lambert



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TIA FLORA

Pennon Education received a grant to develop an original animated character, Tiara “Tia” Flora — a bilingual 9.5-year-old girl with ADHD who just moved from Puerto Rico to Harrisburg. She tackles homesickness, self-esteem, multilingualism and friendship. The animated series will launch in 2024-25, but you can meet her at community events now.



ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL: SEASON FOUR PREVIEW SCREENING

We celebrated *MASTERPIECE*'s popular drama, *All Creatures Great and Small*, with a sold-out preview screening at the WITF Public Media Center. World War II was featured heavily in the series, so WITF provided a WWII canteen-themed experience with storytelling from historians and live music from Lancaster's Corsair Blue Jazz Orchestra.



LESSONS FROM CENTRALIA, WASHINGTON

What can Pennsylvania learn from a coal town in Washington state? *StateImpact PA* reporter Rachel McDevitt and WITF digital producer Jeremy Long visited Centralia, Washington, to learn how the town's coal power plant was easing the community's transition away from coal through Coal Transition Fund grants.



CLIMATE SOLUTIONS: HEVAN & EARTHA

This fall, *Climate Solutions | StateImpact PA* collaborated with Sankofa African American Theater Company to produce *Between Hevan & Eartha: A Not-So-Tall Tale About Climate Change*. The play aimed to engage new audiences in climate solutions journalism and was later adapted to an audio performance for WITF 89.5 & 93.3.



MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

Pennon Education serves as the Multilingual Education Professional Learning consultant to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, providing workshops and conferences that help schools meet the needs of multilingual learners. The U.S. Library of Congress has recognized our work, and had research published by Teachers College Press this spring.

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FINANCIALS



FY24 REVENUE

| | | |
|------|-----------------------------|------------|
| 0.4% | State Grants | \$62,500 |
| 4% | Other Income (Loss) | 652,263 |
| 8% | Federal Grants | 1,342,989 |
| 15% | Ancillary Media Service | 2,598,128 |
| 74% | Community Support | 13,091,935 |
| 9% | Corporate Sponsorships | 1,110,001 |
| 31% | Memberships & Contributions | 4,017,562 |
| 61% | Program & Other Support | 7,964,372 |

FY24 EXPENSES

| | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------|
| 3% | Promotion & Outreach | \$384,913 |
| 7% | Educational & Media Services | 912,311 |
| 20% | Fundraising | 2,595,127 |
| 22% | General & Administrative | 2,778,806 |
| 48% | Television & Radio Services | 6,216,393 |

AUDIENCE STATISTICS



PBS KIDS Video via WITF
1,760,000 Streams Monthly



PBS Video via WITF
100,500 Streams Monthly



WITF 89.5 & 93.3
552,684 Listeners Monthly



WITF Podcasts
27,528 Downloads Monthly



@WITFMosaic on YouTube
15,193 Views Monthly



WITF Newsletters
66,855 Deliveries Monthly



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212,727 Pageviews Monthly
118,753 Unique Users Monthly



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EXPLORE IN THE CLASSROOM

Pennon Education's *Explore in the Classroom* program engaged nearly 1,600 K-3 learners in 237 classrooms and distributed approximately 5,000 children's books. We received state approval to expand to grades K-12, providing STEM and information literacy and out-of-school time programs, such as youth voice digital creators programs and summer camps.



READY, SET, EXPLORE

Ready, Set, Explore community engagement events are designed by Pennon Education to bring together families, educators and community organizations to spark curiosity and lifelong learning. In the past year, we explored urban gardening and aquaponics, digital creation, robotics, engineering and multilingual literacy.



NEWS & BREWS: COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

WITF hosted several *News & Brews* this year alongside journalists from LNP|LancasterOnline. These events connect community members directly with our journalists to share the issues that are most important to them, allowing WITF to better serve our community with the news they need.



ASIA TABB JOINS THE SPARK

Asia Tabb was announced as *The Spark's* new host following the retirement of Scott LaMar. She joined a team built from the ground up with David Payne, Emma Halsey and John Kinzer.



GOSPEL

WITF previewed the much-anticipated documentary from Henry Louis Gates, Jr. at Shippensburg University. WITF screened clips from the documentary and hosted a panel discussion to dig deeper into local connections with the topics raised in the film. Panelists included Elder Jamar Johnson, Pastor Joshua Robertson and Rev. Dr. SimmieRay L. Niang-Dinkins.



A CANDIDATE'S NIGHT TO LISTEN

WITF worked with partner newsrooms to host *A Candidate's Night to Listen* at Harrisburg Area Community College. Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District candidates met with small groups of potential voters to hear about the topics important to them. Topics from those discussions later guided a conversation with candidates on stage.



FINDING YOUR ROOTS: A GENEALOGY FAIR

Finding Your Roots has investigated celebrities' personal history and stories since 2012. For the first time, the series also investigated the history of "viewers like you," including local resident Megan Robertson. WITF celebrated with a screening and genealogy fair where local organizations shared genealogy resources and Megan discussed her journey.



WITF CREATOR ACADEMY

WITF piloted a new initiative called *WITF Creator Academy*, which connects WITF professionals with college or university students for production-focused coaching. Three talented students produced videos about the election, a day in the life of a college radio station and exploring east coast tourist locations. Find samples of their work on WITF's YouTube channel, *Mosaic*.



SCOTT LAMAR RETIRES

This has been a year of significant transition for WITF's daily conversation, *The Spark*.

A major milestone was the retirement of *The Spark's* longtime host, Scott LaMar, whose decades of experience helped shape *The Spark* into the vibrant and engaging program it is today. From interviewing emerging local leaders to former First Lady Michelle Obama, Scott led thousands of interviews over the years as host of *SmartTalk* and *The Spark*.

In May, we celebrated Scott's incredible career with a heartfelt sendoff featuring former colleagues, noteworthy guests and regular contributors who reflected on his lasting impact.

As we bid farewell to Scott, we also looked to the future, welcoming Asia Tabb as the show's new host. Asia joins a dynamic team, including David Payne, Emma Halsey and John Kinzer. The evolution hasn't stopped there. The team is exploring new guests and fresh segments to bring more focus to the show.