

2015 Significant Community Program Award honoree

“A tremendous example of the power of committed citizens using the resources of public access television to achieve their goals.”

When the City of Janesville began to reluctantly consider demolishing the beautiful but crumbling 1899 Oak Hill Chapel because estimates for its restoration were in the six figures, resident stained glass expert, Richard Snyder stepped forward, hoping to do something about it. The city ultimately agreed to a several month delay in order to give the community an opportunity to raise the necessary funds.

Residents organized the Friends of Oak Hill Chapel to focus volunteer and fundraising efforts. It immediately became apparent that a lot of publicity would be needed. Richard and community television producer Jim Crittenden turned to Janesville JATV for help. JATV produced a studio program about the project to get the word out quickly over cable and its video-on-demand site. Then it loaned Jim video production equipment so he could document the restoration, which became a series of programs carried on JATV that demonstrated to the community the beauty of the windows.

Duane Brewer, Director of JATV says the programs “also showcased Richard’s skill and understanding of the restoration process, which would be critical to the overall success of the plan.” Also critical were the hours and hours of work done by volunteers at the chapel site. JATV covered the work and helped recruit more skilled volunteers who donated time and materials. The City



estimates that the donations of labor plus the \$19,000 in cash donations has resulted in \$60,000 worth of restoration work.

More needs to be done, but the chapel’s future is assured. In the summer of 2014, all the shows that had been produced by JATV were collected into a DVD set and sold to supporters. Brewer says of the Oak Hill restoration project, “It became a tremendous example of the power of committed citizens using the resources of public access television to achieve their goals.”

WCM will be recognizing JATV and all of the producers of the Oak Hill Chapel programs with a 2015 Significant Community Program Award at our 2015 Video Fest Banquet and Show to be held in Milwaukee on Thursday April 30 at the downtown Hilton. We will feature other significant community programs in upcoming issues. 



Digital program sharing broadens audiences for locally- produced shows

Last fall, WCM gave its nearly 50 media center members and its individual Friend members access to online digital program sharing through MediaFire. Nearly 100 programs have been shared so far bringing programs from around the state to the attention of many more local audiences. Programs uploaded have included interviews with elected officials and candidates, entertainment programs featuring local artists, and high school sports. 





State Rep. Romaine Quinn (R – Rice Lake) with Dave Armstrong, Executive Director of the Barron County Economic Development Corporation. Programs can now be easily shared between media centers.



Community television producers enter 200 shows in this year's video fest

The WCM-sponsored Best of the Midwest Video Fest is growing! This year it attracted 200 entries from 34 media centers in Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Illinois.

Fourteen judging sites gave top-scoring Excellence Awards to 35 amateur and professional producers who produced their shows through community media centers.

Excellence awards were earned by producers at Fitchburg Access Community Television, City of Hartford Cable Television, Janesville JATV, Kenosha Community Media, Marshfield Community Television, Middleton WMCP-Educational Cable, Milwaukee MATA Community Media, Mount Horeb Villagecable, Oak Creek High School, Oshkosh Community Media Services, River Falls Community Television, Sun Prairie Media Center, Watertown TV, Dakota Media Access (Bismarck, ND), Northwest Community Television (Brooklyn Park, MN), St. Paul Neighborhood Network, Chicago Access Network, EGTKV (Elk Grove, IL), and the City of Ames (IA).

Please see the press release on our website that includes the winners of second place Achievement Awards and third place Merit awards.

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More community media centers expand into low-power radio

Local programming may have begun as a feature of cable TV but shows are now routinely streamed live on the Internet and viewed on-demand. Soon four media centers will also be carrying local shows on low-power radio stations, joining Oshkosh Community Media (WOCT 101.9) and Chippewa Valley Community Television (WRFP 101.9) that have been broadcasting for years.

Low-power FM radio stations can operate at a maximum power of 100 watts and reach three to five miles. In 2013, the FCC opened a rare licensing window and more than 2,800 non-profit organizations filed applications. The cities of Waupaca, Stevens Point and Monona and the Sun Prairie Media Center all received construction permits. Official operating licenses are contingent on being up and running by this summer.

“What’s going to be great about 103.5 The Sun and all of the community radio stations launching in Wisconsin is the accessibility of radio and how it will fit into people’s busy lives,” said Jeff Robbins, Executive Director of the Sun Prairie Media Center. “Right now even people without cable can access our programming on demand online. But the radio station – along with the podcast we’ve already launched – will make it easier for people to stay informed about Sun Prairie while they’re driving, working out, mowing the lawn, doing anything that requires their hands – but not necessarily their minds – to be busy.”



Josh Werner, Director of WIN-TV explains, “Waupaca Radio is being put together as an additional avenue to broadcast and expand our WIN-TV program offerings. Waupaca Radio will allow more community groups quick access to promote their mission and upcoming events. We will also be working with our school district to broadcast programming related to our schools and carry shows by students and we will provide access to area local governments and be a source for public safety information.”

Most of the new licensees are busy raising funds for the transmission equipment needed to go on the air. The first station likely to go live is the City of Stevens Point, which plans to be on the air this spring simulcasting its cable access television channel.