The mission of Blue Ridge PBS is to enrich people's lives by providing educational, informational and cultural programming that fills a unique role as a positive and lifelong resource for the communities we serve.

**Local Value**

Blue Ridge PBS is a valuable part of southwestern Virginia's advancement, providing a variety of quality programming across multiple channels and platforms.

Blue Ridge PBS is comprised of WBRA-TV in Roanoke, VA 15.1, Southwest Virginia Public Television on sub-channel 15.2, Blue Ridge PBS Kids on sub-channel 15.3, Blue Ridge Create on sub-channel 15.4, and Blue Ridge Streaming found online and on Amazon Fire TV.

**2019 Key Services**

In 2019, Blue Ridge PBS provided the vital local service of being the region's storyteller. Blue Ridge PBS offered outstanding informational, educational and cultural programming, along with an award-winning local production team devoted to regional issues and interests. Our team continued to work on long form documentaries and local human-interest stories. We also launched a new studio series that initiates conversation and crosses generations.

**Local Impact**

Blue Ridge PBS' local services added more local programming to the WBRA-TV viewing area on 15.2 with Southwest Virginia Public Television. The Blue Ridge PBS Kid's channel located on 15.3 continued to fill the need for children's programming in the Roanoke and New River valley areas. Local and PBS programming on our main channel, 15.1, was continued throughout the southwest Virginia region with support made possible by a partnership from local cable providers.

I discovered PBS really early on. My first opera was on PBS. I remember watching Mozart and thinking this is the coolest thing ever. And so it was an exposure to culture I wouldn't have gotten any other way.

- Deanna Raybourn, NY Times Bestselling Author & guest on Write Around the Corner
Blue Ridge PBS joined up with the Williamson Road Library to host *Ride and Read*. Children of all ages had the opportunity to get up close to a variety of vehicles including a firetruck, rescue squad, Volvo Truck, recycling truck, and, of course, our very own Big Bird Thunderbird. The event kicked off the summer reading program. To celebrate, Blue Ridge PBS provided hundreds of books for children to take home. We also had a visit from Clifford the Big Red Dog.

Blue Ridge PBS was a part of the Fall Festival at Melrose Branch Library sharing, PBS Kids educational materials with children and their caregivers.
Connecting with the Community Locally and Nationally

Women, War & Peace II

The Voices Beyond Borders Community Forum and Panel Discussion was a companion event for the PBS series, Women, War and Peace II, which put a spotlight on women whose stories are too often written out of history. The panelists represented a diverse, multi-generational, cross-section of women. Included were two college students from Egypt, a Protestant, and a Catholic. Local flavor was added to the discussion with an Appalachian elder and an Appalachian scholar. The conversation underscored women’s expertise and experiences in building lasting, peaceful and vibrant communities. Held at the Berglund Performing Arts Theatre, the event was free and open to the public. In addition to the panel discussion, a one-on-one interview with each panelist was recorded and portions shared with our viewers as interstitials.

Molly of Denali

As a part of the outreach around the new PBS Kids program, Molly of Denali, Blue Ridge PBS was one of four stations chosen to be a part of the Molly of Denali Rural Education Initiative. Working with WGBH, Alaska Public Media, and Alaska Native advisors, the four stations began the process of developing new educational resources. The human-centered design process was used to ensure that the new resources would reflect and amplify rural and cultural perspectives. On a local level, Blue Ridge PBS partnered with libraries and families in Radford, Galax and Carroll County to test iterations of the new resources. Final testing will wrap up in 2020.

Country Music

Blue Ridge PBS held the Songs from the Heart song writing competition, in conjunction with Ken Burns documentary series, Country Music. Winner, Matt Browning, was chosen from the more than 3 dozen songs that were entered. The contest was a partnership with WVTF, 94.9 Star Country and Fainting Goat Studio.

In addition, we produced stories about local instrument makers and musicians as well as hosting several special events including an afternoon of music and storytelling with Ricky Cox at the Southwest Virginia Cultural Center and Marketplace in Abingdon.

I am elated to be selected as the winner of the Blue Ridge PBS Songs from the Heart contest. My song, “Heaven,” is near and dear to my heart.
Now & Then

Blue Ridge PBS began production of a new kind of talk show in 2019. The series attempts to bridge generations by taking an entertaining look at our past with collaborative hope for our future. The Greatest Generation joins “twenty-something” Millennials to find common ground as they chat about subjects sent in by viewers.

Write Around the Corner

Season three of this popular series launched in 2019. The program features a wide variety of writers who have connections to Virginia. Recorded on location, each half hour interview delves into the stories behind the stories. We also record bonus interviews made available online.

Hotel Roanoke: The Grand Old Lady on the Hill

This documentary tells the story of one of Roanoke’s oldest and most beloved icons. Before she became the Grand Old Lady on the Hill, she was a bleak structure on a barren hill on the wrong side of the tracks. She endured fires and demolitions, worker strikes and closures, yet today, she stands tall in all her glory, welcoming everyone who passes through her doors.

Mill Mountain: Beacon of the Valley

Roanoke is one of a few cities with an entire mountain within the city limits. Over the years numerous attractions have called Mill Mountain home - an incline, observation towers, a children’s zoo, an inn that later became a theatre, and more. It is also home to the world’s largest, free-standing, man-made neon star which celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2019. This documentary takes a nostalgic look the mountain’s history and its influence on the region today.
Sights, Sounds and Stories of Southwest Virginia

In 2019, we began laying the groundwork for “Project Southwest.” From the tops of mountains and into the valleys, down twisting rivers and winding roads, across sprawling farmlands and into the deepest coal mines, southwest Virginia is rich with culture and history. It has a diverse ecosystem, provides endless outdoor adventures and is ripe with economic opportunity. “Project Southwest” aims to not only share these features with outside viewers, but also to the people already living in the region.

Reach in the Community:
Stories produced for “Project Southwest” will be aired digitally through its very own 24-hour streaming channel on YouTube. This channel will be an outlet for anyone wanting to learn about southwest Virginia.

Segments produced for the channel will also be available for use by local businesses and organizations to promote themselves and the region.

Partnerships:
Birthplace of Country Music Museum
Mountain Heritage Museum & Gallery
Southwest VA Cultural Center & Marketplace
VA Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

Impact and Community Feedback:
The goal of the channel is to attract outside viewers to the area and to retain current valuable members of the community by featuring the diverse benefits of living in southwest Virginia.
“We live in Nelson County--although we are limited to Roanoke’s TV channels, we are so happy to get WBRA and YOU!.... Thank you for having your program!” – Jane & Chuck Strauss, viewers of Write Around the Corner

Blue Ridge PBS strives to create local content that provides meaningful experiences for our viewers across platforms. Reaching beyond the broadcast experience, many of our productions are made available digital first.

We serve 42 percent of Virginia and beyond:

- Roanoke and New River Valleys through over the air transmission
- Cable coverage in far southwest to include Bristol, Virginia
- Unlimited on-line access to through Blue Ridge Streaming
- YouTubeTV - dedicated live channels for Blue Ridge PBS and PBS Kids - launched in November 2019

Tradition and innovation live together at Blue Ridge PBS. This is not your grandfather’s PBS, but we’re still your grandfather’s PBS.

– Will Anderson, President & CEO
Blue Ridge PBS

School children and their teachers still benefit from the station's educational and historical programming that provide a safe, trusted environment for innovative on-air and online learning.