



What are *you* doing?

The NETA Production Council
Summer 2011

Ask any executive producer or director of production, "What have you been doing these days?" and the answers are as fascinating and as varied as public media itself. Here are reports from **Chris Holmes**, APT/Alabama, **Mike Brower**, KET/Kentucky, **Franz Joachim**, KNME/Albuquerque, **Deb Lawton**, KUAC/Fairbanks, and **Colin Powers**, Mountain Lake PBS/Plattsburgh, some of the NETA Production Council's executive committee members.

This report is also online. ([Link](#)) We invite you to [send us what's happening](#) in your shop for future newsletters.



Alabama Public Television

Chris Holmes, APTV Executive Producer (cholmes@aptv.org)

APT has traditionally had two production divisions: One in Montgomery (with studios, etc.) that covered public affairs and politics, and one in Birmingham (no studio) which focuses on field work for documentaries, and our music series. Birmingham also handles promos and underwriter

On August 1, our Montgomery studio was forced to close and about 14 production staff members were laid off. The remaining five of us in Birmingham production will be expected to resume the public affairs programs and maintain our current pace on documentaries, etc. The challenge with this is that none of the remaining five of us has ever punched a show before. We will be learning as we go, which is a little scary.

CURRENT PRODUCTION:

Sucarnochee: A Revue of Alabama Music (60 min documentary) Focusing on a traditional live radio show (*The Sucarnochee Revue*) in Livingston, this project is meant to coincide with Alabama Tourism's "Year of Alabama Music" and spotlights three musical acts who represent examples of traditional Alabama music (blues, bluegrass, gospel). This project is currently in post-production and scheduled to air in late October.

Untitled Wernher von Braun documentary (60 min) Huntsville is an important asset to our state, having been the major hub of the US space industry since the 1950s when the government placed Wernher von Braun there to begin the US military's rocketry program and subsequently NASA. This project is in pre-production, to be completed by March for the 100th anniversary of Von Braun's birth.

Untitled Durr documentary (60 min) Clifford and Virginia Durr were instrumental behind the scenes of the civil rights struggle. Clifford Durr was one of the original FCC commissioners and was a major proponent of preserving broadcast spectrum for "Public Information and Education" which paved the way for public broadcasting.

We Have Signal (30 min series) **WHS** is our music show that is shot live-to-tape at a local music venue and then edited down for length. We do 16 shows per season, and while it hasn't brought in truckloads of money, it is our cheapest production, and has garnered a lot of support from the under-50 crowd, recently gained sponsorship, and has done extremely well online- where all episodes are available. <http://vimeo.com/channels/wehavesignal>

WHAT WE HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO DO:

Capitol Journal:

An hour-long weekly news/public affairs program: studio segments with panel chats and taped packages.

Spotlight on Education: A quarterly hour-long education special which follows the same format as *Capitol Journal* but focuses on education issues.

Stars in Education: Every year Alabama Public Television honors five students who have overcome adversity and excel in school and community service. *Stars in Education* is a 90-minute live event that recognizes these students and the finalists for the DOE's *Teacher of the Year* award. Generally this involves all APT staff from both locations as well as the University of Alabama's Center for Public Television and a hired director. I'm not sure how this will be affected by the recent lay-offs.

Chris @ APT asks:

If anybody has any advice on how to switch gears from post-production heavy field work to live or live-to-tape shows, I'd love to hear it. cholmes@aptv.org

We'd like to hear from you too.

Tell us "What are you doing?"
Email: gayle@netaonline.org

**KET: The Kentucky Network**

Mike Brower, senior director for production operations mbrower@ket.org

As senior director for production operations, I have five producer/directors, two producer/writers, eight producers, three associate producers, an administrative assistant who also works as a writer/AP, and the production manager who supervises the technical crews reporting to me. The crews include eight videographers, four audio techs, two fulltime and one contract graphic artists, five editors, a production coordinator who schedules crew and facilities, and seven contract camera operators who work our legislative coverage.

DAILY: (during legislative sessions)

Kentucky General Assembly Coverage 450 hours annually

Gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Senate and House chambers, select committee meetings, aired live on the Kentucky Channel, and streamed live on www.ket.org.

Legislative Update 60 episodes x 30 min. Produced nightly during legislative sessions

WEEKLY:

Kentucky Tonight Live weekly, 42 episodes x 60 min.

Moderated debate with four guests, two each on either side of an issue. Viewers participate via phone, email, and other social media vehicles.

Comment on Kentucky Live weekly, 50 episodes x 30 min.

Our longest-running (since 1974) public affairs series features journalists who cover the Frankfort (state capitol) beat. The program is hosted by a contract journalist who does not represent KET's opinions.

News Quiz Live during school year, 30 episodes x 15 min.

News Quiz features age-appropriate state, national and international news in a current-events quiz format for upper elementary and middle school kids. Starting in the 2011-2012 school year, *News Quiz* learning objects are being created and posted on KET's *Teachers' Domain* depository for Kentucky educators.

Connections with Renee Shaw, 48 episodes x 30 min. A minority affairs, interview/discussion series

One to One with Bill Goodman 48 episodes x 30 min. Interviews with a variety of celebrities, sports figures, politicians, business people, and authors.

Kentucky Life 20 episodes x 30 min. Travelogue series, in its 16th season, exploring Kentucky's history, culture, food, business and uniqueness. This series has also spun off a number of successful pledge specials, such as *Wide and Scenic Kentucky*, which pledged over \$300,000.

Louisville Life 26 episodes x 30 min. Now in its sixth season, this is a magazine focused on Louisville culture, business, arts, and recreation.

NETA asks: *Do you produce weekly series, broadcast and online? With budget cuts, are you able to continue?* How are you adapting? Email: gayle@netaonline.org

REGULAR SERIES:

Kentucky Tonight: Candidate Specials 6-10 episodes x 60 min. Following the 2008 elections, KET was advised by attorneys familiar with FCC rulings to conduct candidate forums *within an ongoing, regular series*, which is exempt from equal time requirements. *Kentucky Tonight* is the vehicle for primary and general election candidate specials, providing greater depth of information and a more civil discussion between candidates. Everyone whose name is legally listed on a ballot for a statewide race is invited to participate. If a candidate chooses not to participate, the program will proceed with those who accepted KET's invitation.

Kentucky Muse 6 episodes x 30 min. <http://www.ket.org/muse/> This is series of 6 mini-documentaries (30 minutes) on artists, arts events. The series is aired in a block.

Great Conversations 5 episodes x 60 min. <http://www.ket.org/arts/authorforum.htm>
Taped at Kentucky Center for the Arts, the series showcases nationally-known authors and interviewers.

Education Matters 5 episodes x 60 min. <http://www.ket.org/educationmatters/>
Kentucky education community leaders discuss the issues that confront educators, teachers, students, and parents. Illustrative video, shot in classrooms, is included in each program.

Jubilee 16 episodes x 60 min. http://www.ket.org/jubilee_national/ American roots music series distributed nationally by NETA and aired in more than 140 cities. KET shoots all of the acts at 1 or 2 selected regional music festivals and cuts this into a series. Most episodes feature one band and interviews with band members.

Kentucky Collectibles (wt.): 13 episodes x 30 min. Now in development, this is a local, antiques appraisal series based upon the success of *Chesapeake Collectibles* from Maryland Public Television. KET has high expectations for the pledge, underwriting potential of this series.



KNME/Albuquerque

Franz Joachim, director of content (fjoachim@knme.org)

KNME production staff consists of an executive producer for local production, **NMiF** producer, administrative assistant, a producer, production manager, director/studio supervisor, graphics artist/videographer and twelve student production techs. Much of the producing, shooting and editing is outsourced to a freelance pool of local professionals. Original promotions content is handled by an in-house promotions producer working with the production staff and tagging of PBS promotional content is handled by the student crew.

New Mexico in Focus: <http://www.newmexicoinfocus.org/inFocus/>

A weekly one-hour public affairs program, **NMiF** is a combination of interview, field production and roundtable discussion. The program is assembled in segments throughout the week with primary studio

production scheduled for Thursday afternoons, posted Thursday evening, captioned Friday afternoon and airing at 7pm Friday evening. We assemble the various segments and show elements on an XD disk and use Sony's PDZ-1 free software to play out in the appropriate order. The show has the one staff producer and part of an admin with a lot of freelance journalists contributing.

Moments In Time: <http://www.knme.org/momentsintime/>

A series of fifteen shorts (each ~7 minutes long) produced on contract with the New Mexico History Museum are uploaded to the *Moments In Time* website that we created and administer for the museum. The segments have been packaged as ~50-minute pledge programs and DVD pledge premiums. The first seven aired during our June pledge drive; the next eight will air in December. The productions are field and archive photo-based, with independent producers and freelance editors working with our executive producer.

Public Square: <http://www.youtube.com/user/nminfocus#p/c/0/Lz3RfR5pZjU>

One-hour monthly studio based program uses our community engagement team -- our engagement manager, executive producer and an independent journalist contracted for the purpose --to convene a group of interested citizens and community leaders around a central issue. Studio production consists of a roundtable discussion of 8 – 12 community members. The program is posted and assembled in much the same fashion as *NMiF*. A seed grant paid for the production of the first six and now we have a larger grant to produce 20 programs over the next two years.

Artisodes: <http://www.knme.org/artisodes/>

Various web-based shorts contracted to local artists and filmmakers, *Artisodes* look at cutting edge New Mexican artists and the vibrant arts community. Grant funded.

Various network news hits: KNME has leveraged excess production capacity to become **the only Vyvx broadcast fiber point of presence in New Mexico.** Using our statewide fiber and microwave network KNME can pull in locations from most of the NM population centers. Using relationships at other public TV stations in New Mexico and freelance production support elsewhere, we provide quick turnaround on-demand access. We average 2-3 hits a week, with clients like CNN, Fox, BBC and Al Jazeera English. 90%+ of the news hits coming out of New Mexico come through our facility, either as live events or tape ploy. This is a significant revenue stream for the station and requires a lot of agility in our production department to accommodate the last-minute demands of network news.

Closed Captioning Services: **We are the only HD and SD captioning service in New Mexico.** Many of our clients come from our Westlink uplink operation, but also include the other public television stations and many local production outfits. We generally require a transcript, but will transcribe if turn-around time permits. This is our fastest-growing revenue stream and allows us to leverage both underutilized captioning systems and student support.



KUAC/Fairbanks

Deb Lawton, producer (Email: dalawton@alaska.edu)

The production staff at KUAC-TV consists of Aaron Elterman and me. We are responsible for all the station's interstitials and spend a fair amount of time on promotional elements/pieces in lieu of a live pledge format including a graphics package, testimonials from the community, and the AlaskaOne poster and artist profile which is a longstanding tradition here.

This year's profile and the promo for our annual **Red Green Regatta** can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-RUvNlriVw> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad4clOYRfj4&NR=1>.

We began producing a series called **AK Shorts** this past year which is a showcase for the work of Alaskan filmmakers. The fourth episode is nearing completion. The call for entries can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kox-kEHyWJ0>, and a promo for the series can be found at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpJtdeAlCu8&feature=related>.

Lastly, we have begun taping some of the live performances from our FM studio, and excerpts/trailers from each of the episodes can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/user/AlaskaLiveTelevision>



Mountain Lake PBS/Plattsburgh

Colin Powers, director of programming and production
(cpowers@mlpbs.org)

Mountain Lake Journal and Mountain Lake Journal EXTRA –

Two half hours (<http://video.mountainlake.org>) per week – 50 weeks a year. *Journal* is news, *EXTRA* is a magazine format. The latter provides a “big tent” for stories on station initiatives, arts, culture, education, interviews with authors/artists/notables, folk arts & traditions of the region. I really like how flexible this has allowed us to be in choosing and repurposing content.

Need to Know mini-grant – I’m producing a 10-12 minute segment that will air on EXTRA in September, with some funding from WNET. This segment will focus on a student teacher/race car driver who uses his race car in lesson plans that engage kids in the classroom.

Production Services Projects:

Champlain Bridge Commemorative Documentary and Oral History Project – This production is a work-for-hire that we may broadcast this fall, a half-hour documentary on an historic landmark bridge connecting New York and Vermont. It and the oral histories will be archived by both states and be used in interpretive centers.

Mountain Lake PBS recently completed one hour doc’ that will be distributed later this fall called “**Small Farm Rising**” about first-generation farmers in the Adirondacks. Beautifully shot and spare in narration, it is evocative of old-school films by Wiseman and the Maysles.

We have a couple more docs and some history “Minutes” in the pipeline for next calendar year.

And now it’s your turn. What are you producing? What new services and initiatives are you working on? What’s happening in the studio and in the field? Send your report to Gayle Loeber (gayle@netaonline.org) and look for a new Production Council summary later this fall.

The NETA Production Council is comprised of production professionals at each NETA member station.

Meet your colleagues at the 2011 NETA Conference, October 18-20, in Kansas City. Production-related content dominates the conference lineup. ([Website](#))