2015 Florida's 5, WUFT-TV Local Content and Service Report



"WUFT is an excellent community resource for keeping citizens informed on important issues. WUFT's commitment to democracy and the citizens of Alachua County helps voters make informed decisions on issues that may impact their daily lives."
Pam Carpenter, Alachua County Supervisor of Elections.

The mission of WUFT-TV is to educate, enrich, enlighten and inspire diverse audiences and individuals through high quality educational television programming and related services that enhance the quality of life for people in the communities we serve.

LOCAL VALUE

WUFT-TV is an integral part of the North Florida area's advancement.

WUFT-TV is committed to providing value to the local North Florida community through educational programming for preschool, elementary, secondary and higher education students; a daily, multiplatform news operation that includes local and state news and expanded severe weather operations; hosting of community activities such as the area's Fourth of July celebration; and facilitator of community dialogues on University of Florida relations.

2015 KEY SERVICES

In 2015, WUFT provided these vital local services:
Support for "Martha Speaks" in nine Alachua County elementary schools, one Marion County school and the Duval Academy which has nine kindergarten classes and one Head Start class.
Maintained "Best Friends" program in partnership with STOP Children's Cancer, Inc. for the Pediatric Immune Compromised Unit at Shands Hospital in Gainesville.
Featured locally originated programming including the Holiday Traditions Concert that benefits STOP Children's Cancer featuring the Alachua Youth Orchestra and Chorus.

LOCAL IMPACT

In 2015, WUFT-TV worked with local partners to begin conversations on several important community and University issues.

IN THE COMMUNITY

In 1958, WUFT-TV signed on the air as the area's first television station and began providing educational programming to North Florida citizens. Today, the station reaches citizens in 21 counties via the station's over the air transmission, cable and satellite distribution, and provides educational programming, PBS programming, news, weather and public affairs 24 hours a day. Licensed to the University of Florida and operated through the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications' Division of Media Properties, WUFT-TV is a leader in promoting, sustaining and growing public broadcasting in the state.

Educational Outreach

Preschool and Elementary

"Martha Speaks" Ready Buddy Program

In addition to providing the area's children and families with a variety of educational program such as "Sesame Street,' "Curious George," "Dinosaur Train" and "Word Girl," WUFT-TV also supports the "Martha Speaks" Reading Buddy Program serving over 400 Kindergarten and fourth and fifth grade students in nine Alachua County Schools; J.J. Finley Elementary, Waldo Community School, Lawton Chiles Elementary, Shell Elementary, Meadowbrook Elementary, Lake Forest Elementary, M.K. Rawlings Elementary and Duval Elementary; Duval Academy and Eighth Street Elementary in Marion County. WUFT-TV and The Education Foundation of Alachua County became partners to sponsor three of the schools with the greatest need and WUFT-TV member Dr. Joseph Rush sponsored one of the schools. WUFT'S Education Outreach Coordinator Mary Brandenburg works with school administrators and teachers to help increase the oral vocabulary of students through this innovative program. Teachers also registered with PBS Leaning Media to bookmark television episodes that would correspond to lessons. Ms. Brandenburg stays in communication with each school and tracks progress throughout the academic year.

"Martha Speaks" Reading Buddy program is particularly beneficial at Waldo Community and Duval Elementary whose student populations are overwhelmingly economically disadvantaged. More than 89 percent of Duval Elementary students and 74 percent of Waldo Community students are considered economically disadvantaged by the No Child Left Behind School Public Accountability Reports. The program is also available to Head Start children at Duval Academy.

"***Best Friends"***

"Best Friends," a partnership between WUFT-TV and STOP Children's Cancer, Inc., enables children in the 18 bed Pediatric Immune Compromised Unit to experience the quality children's programming on WUFT-TV. The program includes books, tablets, and ancillary materials for the children.

Seriously ill children undergoing long term treatment are isolated from friends and many family members for extended periods of time. This isolation combined with their treatments, causes children to experience considerable stress and anxiety. The goal of "Best Friends" is to provide children with activities that will not only educate them, but brighten their world and help alleviate their anxiety - much like a best friend would do. Among these best friends are the characters featured in the programs on WUFT including "Martha," "Curious George," "The Cat in the Hat," "Clifford," "Arthur," and many on "Sesame Street." Tablets donated by STOP Children's Cancer were programmed by WUFT-TV staff so the children could access the TV program of their choice. Each child also receives a book corresponding to the TV show. The books are about friendship and best friends.

WUFT-TV also developed posters showcasing the “Best Friends” program for play rooms, pediatric common areas and children's hospital rooms. “Best Friends” is coordinated through the office of Amy Wegner, Child Life Specialist for the unit, and includes participation by medical students and pediatric residents. Medical teams are part of the “Best Friends” program and they receive background information on the shows the children are watching so that they will have something fun to talk about with each child.

Community Engagement and Impact

Expanded Weather and Emergency Information

WUFT-TV, in conjunction with its sister station WUFT-FM, led the effort to develop the statewide Florida Public Radio Emergency Network that provides severe weather content to public broadcasting stations across the state. The content is provided by WUFT-TV/FM’s meteorologists and weather team and includes weather reports and alerts on WUFT-TV. This innovative partnership, funded in part by the state of Florida, is the first of its kind in the U.S., where a statewide network of public media entities is partnering with the state’s Department of Emergency Management. The enhanced emergency weather notification efforts proved to be especially important for notification of severe weather events. As a result of these efforts, WUFT-TV and WUFT-FM and the UF College of Journalism and Communications received the Distinguished Service Media Award from the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association for helping to keep Florida’s residents and visitors informed of potential weather hazards from the new Florida Public Radio Emergency Network Storm Center.

FANFARES & FIREWORKS

WUFT-TV and its sister station WUFT-FM, along with the UF College of Journalism and Communications, presented FANFARES & FIREWORKS, Gainesville’s only Fourth of July community event. More than 10,000 citizens form throughout North Florida traditionally attend the event to celebrate the holiday with food, fun, music and fireworks.

University of Florida Homecoming Parade

In a Southern college town, few things are as important as football in the fall. At the University of Florida, tens of thousands of people turn out for the annual Homecoming Parade, but for those that cannot attend, WUFT-TV and its student reporters, producers and videographers provide wall-to-wall coverage of the parade.

University of Florida Presidential Inauguration

WUFT-TV provided live broadcast coverage and Internet streaming of the inauguration of the University of Florida’s 12th president Dr. Kent Fuchs. The broadcast offered viewers the opportunity to meet the new president, hear his plan to lead UF to preeminence and learn University traditions.

Holiday Traditions Concert for STOP Children’s Cancer

WUFT-TV recorded and broadcast the “Holiday Traditions: A Musical Celebration” concert in December. The event, which features the Alachua County Youth Orchestra and chorus groups from area schools, benefits STOP Children’s Cancer, a non-profit organization that raises funds for research at the UF College of Medicine. The show was broadcast several times during the holiday season.

2015 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT

STORIES OF IMPACT

Severe weather coverage

Through our UF Weather operations, a multi-platform studio that serves content on television, radio and digitally, we keep the residents of North Central Florida up-to-date on routine and significant weather changes that could affect their lives.

In times of significant weather, our operations provide up-to-the-minute information on television with crawls, live updates and through digital operations, including the Florida Storms app.



Florida Bear Hunt

In 2015, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission permitted a massive hunt on black bears. In the two days of the hunt, nearly 298 bears were killed, just under the limit of 320 that the commission had approved to be eliminated in the original week-long hunt.

This story was not without some controversy, with advocates for and against this hunt, which was the first since 1994 in the state.



Preparations for 2016 Elections

A critical focus for news is on the lead-up to the 2016 general elections.

Historically, Florida has played a large role in national politics, and WUFT-TV is taking a critical look at the issues and events shaping the political discourse in North Central Florida.



2015 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT

STORIES OF IMPACT & SUMMARY

Nightly News for North Central Florida

The Innovation News Center, which creates content for WUFT-TV, produces a half-hour nightly newscast at 5 p.m. We are one of the few public television stations in the nation that have an evening newscast.

WUFT News produces an evening newscast staffed by a team of student anchors and producers under the supervision of professional news managers.

It is designed to provide a testing ground for our Innovation News Center to experiment with what local TV news can and should be.



Reach in the Community:

Through this product, WUFT-TV provided news, weather information and state emergency management announcements to more than 1.76 million people in 21 counties.

Impact and Community Feedback:

WUFT-TV was the recipient of several news awards including 'Best TV Newscast," from the Florida Associated Press College Broadcasting Competition; "Best Breaking News" program from the SPJ Mark of Excellence Competition; and "Best Website (wuft.org)" from the RTNDA Edward R. Murrow Regional Awards competition.

The Innovation News Center's mission is three-fold: to provide a public service for the citizens of North Central Florida, to provide an educational opportunity for journalism and news students within the College, and to innovate and iterate with the future of news.

WUFT-TV is proud to provide programming and services to the citizens of North Florida. We strive to be the standard-bearer in the region and are dedicated to serving and enhancing the quality of life of our diverse audiences. By providing free, over-the-air access to the highest quality programming and community service, WUFT-TV believes its mission is being fulfilled. We will continue to strive for excellence.