

New England Public Radio and WGBY Television Join Together to Create New England Public Media

**New England Public Media will enhance services, strengthen local journalism for audiences across
western New England**



Anthony Hayes, general manager of WGBY Public Television, and Martin Miller, CEO and general manager of New England Public Radio

Photo Credit: Joyce Skowrya / NEPR

Springfield, Mass., (April 11, 2019) – New England Public Radio and WGBY Public Television today announced they are joining to create a robust new multi-media organization, New England Public Media (NEPM), with one of the largest newsrooms in Western Massachusetts. With a goal of expanding public media offerings for the people of western New England, NEPM will build on the strength of each organization to deliver the trusted educational content, cultural and news programs, and community engagement that characterizes public media.

Martin Miller, CEO and general manager of New England Public Radio, will become President of NEPM. Anthony Hayes, general manager of WGBY Public Television, will become COO and general manager of the new organization. NEPM will be an independently run organization with its own governing board.

“Both New England Public Radio and WGBY have served the people of western New England for decades, sharing a common mission of creating valued programs and services for our communities,” said Miller. “The role of public media to deliver accurate, trustworthy news and information is more important than ever, and we are excited by the opportunity to play a larger role in sharing the stories of our region.”

Combined, New England Public Radio and WGBY Public Television have 78 employees, and all current employees will be part of the new organization. NEPM’s enhanced newsroom will total about 21 and is expected to grow over the coming years.

“The media environment is constantly evolving, with advances in technology changing the way audiences use media, from mobile viewing to smart speakers,” said Hayes. “This partnership will allow us to develop new digital content to better serve and engage with all of our audiences in new ways. The creation of NEPM means that we can better map our mission to what audiences value and appreciate.”

The WGBH Educational Foundation, which holds the broadcast license for WGBY, will invest \$6 million over six years in the new venture. When combined with critical community support for NEPM, this investment will allow for new programming while ensuring in-depth local journalism remains the centerpiece of the combined organization. WGBH will have a seat on the NEPM board.

“Public media plays a vital role in strengthening communities, especially through local journalism and educational media for children and teachers, and we are committed to supporting this critical work by investing in this partnership,” said Jon Abbott, president and CEO of WGBH. “We look forward to the exciting work NEPM will undertake and to the opportunities this will create to bring wider attention to the stories of western Massachusetts, sharing them across the Commonwealth.”

The University of Massachusetts Amherst will continue to hold the broadcast license for WFCR 88.5FM, and along with the NEPR Foundation Board, it has been actively involved in the negotiations that led to the creation of NEPM. The university remains deeply committed to supporting the growth of public media in western Massachusetts and will have a seat on the NEPM Board.

UMass Amherst Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy said, “The creation of New England Public Media reflects the university’s enduring commitment to the independent news coverage and cultural programming provided by public media. UMass Amherst was a founding partner of WFCR nearly 60 years ago, and we are enthusiastic about how this new, 21st century collaboration will serve our communities with distinction.”

The support of the Five College Consortium has been a vital part of the history and long-standing excellence of WFCR (Five College Radio) and New England Public Radio since its inception. The executive director of the consortium, which includes Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke and Smith colleges as well as UMass Amherst, will also serve on the NEPM board.

Along with an expanded news service, NEPM will focus on new content creation including digital music streams, multi-platform and digital programming, and community engagement and education, in addition to the programs audiences now enjoy. A new daily radio program with a local focus will be among the first initiatives the new organization will undertake.

Details will be finalized over the coming months with plans and final approval to be completed this summer.

About New England Public Radio

Listener-supported New England Public Radio has been serving the people of western New England since 1961, providing an essential and trusted voice through local reporting and locally produced music programming, and by connecting the region to the world through its partnership with NPR and other national and international public media organizations.

Its flagship signal, 88.5FM WFCR, presents news, jazz and classical music, while the six stations of the NEPR News Network provide the region with a news, talk and cultural programming. NEPR's website, nepr.net, offers three streaming channels, NEPR-produced podcasts and other digital offerings. Off-air, NEPR strives to connect with the community through vibrant public events that bring people together to tell the story of who we are, where we live, and what's next for our region.

About WGBY

WGBY is a community-supported public broadcasting organization and PBS station connecting the people of western New England to important stories, ideas and each other through national PBS programming and locally produced series and specials. Its four digital channels offer specialized services: the non-fiction WORLD Channel features PBS and original documentaries focused on communities of difference; Create highlights popular how-to, food and travel programs; WGBY Kids provides a 24/7 service of PBS children's programs. WGBY's original productions include a nightly regional news and information program *Connecting Point*, the weekly bilingual information and culture series *Presencia*, and the high school academic competition series *As Schools Match Wits*. WGBY is a partner in PBS LearningMedia, providing thousands of educators locally with free, curriculum-based digital content. With video on demand and streaming video, WGBY is one of the region's most far reaching and accessible community institutions.

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