

Trina J. Cutter
President & Chief Executive Officer
PBS Western Reserve

Stephen Colecchi
Chief Executive Officer
Hattie Larlham

Romona J. Davis
Vice President—Senior SBA
Business Development Officer
The Huntington National Bank

Todd Diacon
President, Kent State University

David Dix
Community Volunteer

Wayne R. Hill
Vice President and Chief of Staff
The University of Akron

Gary L. Miller
President
The University of Akron

Joyce L. Mistovich
Director of Education
The Butler Institute
of American Art

Nicole Mullet
Executive Director
ArtsNow

Bruce E. Sherman
Sherman Creative Promotions, Inc.

Shannon Tirone
Associate Vice President for
University Relations
Youngstown State University

James P. Tressel
President
Youngstown State University

Stephanie Werren
Director
Leadership Stark County

*Contact: Diane Steinert, Communications Manager
330-677-4549*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PBS Western Reserve's Board of Directors to Restructure

Board membership to convert from university consortium to community-based governance

KENT, OHIO – Dec. 3, 2021 – The board of directors of Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc. (NETO), doing business as PBS Western Reserve (WNEO / WEAO), will convert its governance from a university consortium to community membership, effective June 30, 2023. Since its formation in 1971, NETO has been owned and operated by a consortium of The University of Akron, Kent State University and Youngstown State University. NETO itself, however, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and receives neither financial nor in-kind support from the universities.

In a letter to Romona Davis, chair of the NETO board, the three university presidents expressed pride in being part of the organization's history and legacy. They affirmed that a community board structure will help NETO represent the interests of the region and communities that it serves.

"We are grateful to the members of our university consortium who over the years have guided this organization through many changes and developments," said Romona Davis, chairwoman of the NETO board. "This is a pivotal moment in NETO's history that is important to its long-term viability, as the formation of the new board will enable us to guide NETO's operations with a board of directors that believes in the cause of public broadcasting and is eager to support its mission."

As a result of the change in governance, over the next 18 months PBS Western Reserve will be working to transition from an instrumentality of the State of Ohio to an independent community licensee, which requires formal applications to the FCC.

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“The business of public television—and broadcasting in general—has changed dramatically since our stations WNEO and WEAO went on the air in 1973,” said Trina Cutter, president and CEO of PBS Western Reserve. “The consortium concept served a purpose and no doubt made sense back then. Today’s new media world requires a more entrepreneurial approach and I applaud the leadership at the three consortium universities for recognizing that and setting the stage for PBS Western Reserve to be responsive to the new media world.”

About PBS Western Reserve

PBS Western Reserve is the brand name of Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

A trusted community resource, PBS Western Reserve uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire. It serves the largest population of Ohio’s eight PBS member stations.

PBS Western Reserve (WNEO 45.1 / WEAO 49.1), a service of the organization, is the only broadcast television service that reaches all of Northeast Ohio. It is available to 4.9 million people in the Cleveland and Youngstown designated market areas. In an average month, more than 1 million people tune in. The organization also operates two standard definition channels: Fusion (WNEO 45.2 / WEAO 49.2) and FNX (WNEO 45.3 / WEAO 49.3).

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