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news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Natalie Pillsbury Is New PBS Western Reserve Leader

Kent native has public media experience at Ideastream and WKSU

Kent, Ohio — March 1, 2024 — Following a nationwide search, PBS Western Reserve’s board of directors has announced Natalie Pillsbury as the organization’s new president and chief executive officer.

Pillsbury, who starts her new job on March 20, succeeds David Rotterman, who held the top position for just three weeks before dying unexpectedly on Aug. 9, 2023. His appointment followed the retirement of Trina Cutter, who served the organization for 21 years.

Pillsbury has worked in public media since 2015, first at WKSU in a senior leadership role managing major gifts, grant fundraising programs and strategic planning. Since 2021, she has served Ideastream Public Media as director of strategic content initiatives, where she leads the digital content team and the multiple media journalism and production team. She has been a member of the organization’s strategic operating team and a member of the senior team in Content.

Other prior appointments include associate director of donor engagement and leadership giving at the University of Chicago; and annual giving officer at Women Employed in the greater Chicago area.

“I am thrilled and honored to accept the president and CEO position at PBS Western Reserve,” Pillsbury said. “I am energized by the potential for the station to grow its service and presence in our region, and I aim to build upon its excellent reputation to realize those opportunities in partnership with the staff and board.” She added, “I believe in the power of public media to provide everyone with free access to the information and programming that they want and need — filling gaps left by shrinking commercial media outlets and countering the erosion of trust in media.”

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A native of Kent, Ohio, Pillsbury graduated from Kent State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 2007 and a master's degree in public administration in 2023.

PBS Western Reserve is the brand name for Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc. (NETO). It comprises television stations WNEO, serving the greater Youngstown area, and WEAO, serving Akron, Canton and Cleveland. Pillsbury is the eighth leader in over 50 years for the organization, which was established in 1971.

“The NETO board of directors is excited about Natalie serving as the next president and CEO,” said Board Chairwoman Romona Davis. “Her strategic planning experience and skills will be valuable in guiding the organization through the ever-changing public media landscape. We thank Jeff Good, who served as interim president and CEO during these past six months, and the rest of the PBS Western Reserve staff for their work during the transition,” she added. “We believe the future for the organization is bright.”

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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