



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Western Reserve Public Media Channels WNEO and WEO to Move to New Channels Following Spectrum Auction

KENT, OHIO — Feb. 22, 2017 — Western Reserve Public Media announced today that its channels WNEO and WEO will continue broadcasting in the UHF spectrum following the conclusion of the Federal Communications Commission’s Broadcast Spectrum Incentive Auction. The purpose of the auction was to free up broadcast television spectrum for wireless broadband use.

As a result of the auction, nearly all stations—whether they participated in the auction or not—located on Channels 37 to 50 must move to a lower channel position assigned by the FCC, which is called “repacking.” The FCC has not publicly issued the final channel assignment notification, but it is estimated that approximately 1,100 stations throughout the United States will have to move within a three- to 36-month window.

The FCC informed Western Reserve Public Media that WNEO-TV Youngstown will be moving from channel 45 to channel 29 and WEO-TV Cleveland-Akron-Canton will be moving from channel 49 to channel 24. Both stations have approximately 24 months to make the change.

“This is not like changing a channel on your remote at home, where with the push of a button you go from one channel to another,” Chief Operations Officer Anthony Dennis said. “From a broadcaster’s perspective, moving a television channel is a complicated physical and logistical undertaking. We’ll be lucky if we can figure out a way to do this without the aid of a helicopter,” he added. “We are committed to minimizing disruption to our viewers as much as we are able; however, there is a possibility that sometime in the next two years, service will be interrupted.”

“The one saving grace,” President and CEO Trina Cutter added, “is that we get to keep our channels in the Ultra

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High Frequency (UHF) band. This will be very important as we upgrade to a new transmission standard, called ATSC 3.0, that utilizes Internet Protocol to offer a broader range of content delivery and applications including mobile television, datacasting and public safety,” she said. “The television landscape is definitely changing but if we do this right, broadcasting will be stronger and better than ever.”

Together WNEO and WEAO will continue to reach 5.13 million northeast Ohioans, making it the largest public television service in the state. In addition, Western Reserve Public Media is committed to offering its high-definition channel, Western Reserve PBS, plus as many standard-definition channels as economically and technically feasible.

About Western Reserve Public Media

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

A trusted community resource, Western Reserve Public Media 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.

Western Reserve PBS (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 5.13 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 three standard definition channels: Fusion (WNEO 45.2/WEAO 49.2), MHz Worldview (WNEO 45.3/WEAO 49.3) and V-me (WNEO 45.4/WEAO 49.4).

Our Educational Services Department provides technology training and educational content to over 24,000 educators and over 300,000 K-12 students, plus Ready To Learn Services to over 100,000 preschool children’s parents and child-care providers.

For more information about the organization, visit www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org or call 1-800-554-4549.

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