



New Orleans Public Television
2024 Annual Report

WLAE-TV is a trusted multi-media resource offering quality, values-based content and outreach increasing awareness of inspirational, cultural and educational services that positively impact the lives of the people of Southeast Louisiana.



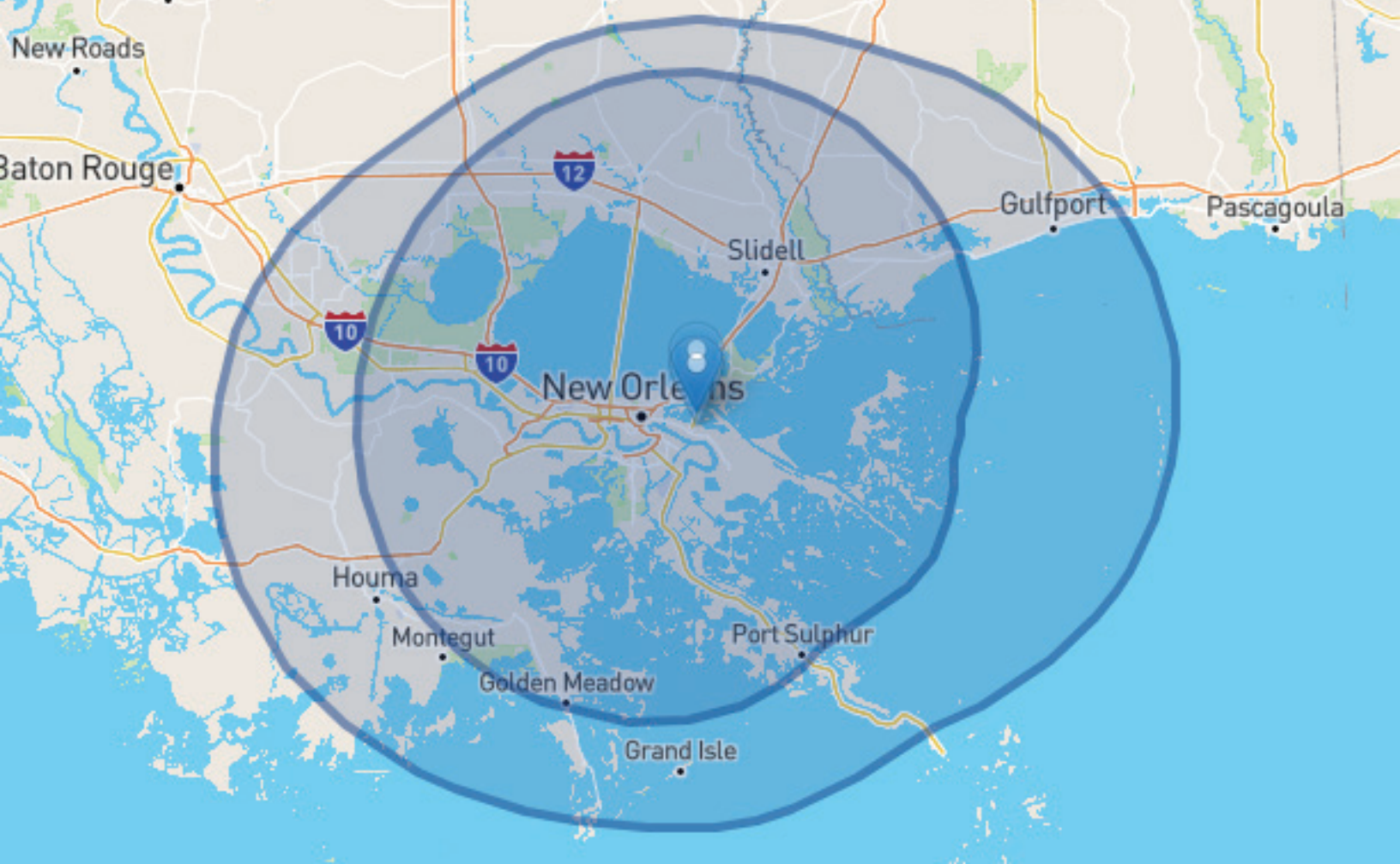
BIG MOVES

In the summer of 2024, WLAE moved its offices, studio and production facilities from downtown New Orleans to the suburbs of Metairie, LA. The station relocated, along with its parent company the Willwoods Community, to a newly renovated facility designed for the future.

Our world is changing. Media is changing. Now, WLAE is also changing. We must invest in new technology, new facilities, and programming to grow our audience viewer services. To remain an essential media organization, we must expand, to focus on more local community storytelling, productions and programming.



In conjunction with the move, WLAE launched *6th Street Studios*, a television production and post-production endeavor that will bring the station into the next generation of broadcast innovation.



Utilizing new technology, the station will have the ability to offer 4K ultra high-definition video quality, theater-like sound, mobile reception and innovative new features to enhance and expand the broadcast viewing experience. NEXTGEN TV lets local TV stations better personalize their broadcasts with “hyper-local” information and interactive features so viewers can get the content and features most relevant to their interests.

Additionally, last November, WLAE switched broadcast frequencies to channel share with WYES, the PBS affiliate in New Orleans. This transmission move gives the station a much wider broadcast pattern reaching more households with our ATSC 1.0 signal and enhanced ATSC 3.0 capabilities, providing upgraded services to viewers in the local community and region.





THE WARNER WAY: The 50 Year Legacy of Principal Wayne Warner

Wayne Warner is the longest-serving high principal in the United States, now in his 51st year as principal of Chalmette High School. With strength and patience, respect and love, Warner has guided his students through the aftermath of the Vietnam war, desegregation, the resignation of a president, the terrorist strike on 9/11, “Shock and Awe”, the phenomenon of mobile phones in the hands of every student and the rise of social media.

From blackboards to iPads, from the nightmare of Katrina to the stark reality of Covid, from the transformation of an all-boys high school to a co-ed student body, and everything in between, this high school principal has seen it all! For more than a half century, Warner has impacted the lives of thousands of students, their families and their children.

And the legacy continues.

WLAE-TV and LAE Productions pay tribute to this humble leader who has earned the respect and admiration of teachers, administrators, students and the community he calls home. This documentary will help cement Principal Warner’s legacy for future generations and for all who love and honor him.

Warner’s impact is, without question, immeasurable and far-reaching. WLAE-TV is proud to tell his story.

**“The choices you make
today shape your
world tomorrow.”**

– Wayne Warner



WLAE held a public screening of the film for over 300 attendees in May at Chalmette High School.



"It was such a fabulous tribute to a fabulous man."

Bonnie Boudreaux Buchert
WLAE Viewer

"The leadership and compassion that Principal Warner exhibited during Hurricane Katrina helped save countless lives and gave hope to the thousands of people who were rescued at Chalmette High School."

Jim Dotson
Executive Producer



THE WARNER WAY:
The 50 Year Legacy of Principal Wayne Warner



Al Scramuzza THE CRAWFISH KING

Al Scramuzza: The Crawfish King is a captivating story about a depression-era, poverty stricken youngster who gambled with marbles at five years old in the French Quarter, but later built one of the most successful seafood empires in the country. Scramuzza would eventually roll dice with former Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards on the high-roller craps tables in Las Vegas, but then go bust and later find spiritual salvation as a recovering addict and sponsor at Alcoholics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous. He would ultimately sponsor and mentor thousands of other addicts over a 35-year span and would become one of the longest and winningest Little League coaches in Louisiana history.

Louisiana's Crawfish King Al Scramuzza is the flamboyant and wildly successful Sicilian entrepreneur credited with making the spicy crustaceans an essential staple in New Orleans' world renowned cuisine. In the early 1950s, Scramuzza, who grew up a poor French Quarter orphan, began

trucking thousands of pounds of live crawfish from Louisiana's country farms and created the unique recipe of spices to boil mouthwatering mudbugs. Today, crawfish dishes are prevalent in restaurants throughout the Southern United States and beyond.

By the 1970s, Scramuzza owned and operated one of the largest seafood distributors in the country with his Seafood City taking up an entire city block in New Orleans' Mid-City neighborhood. Scramuzza became an iconic New Orleans character through his hilarious and outlandish television commercials with catchy jingles which he produced and starred in himself.

But his fame and fortune turned to heartache and misery when the dire consequences of his boozing and gambling escalated. In 1984, Scramuzza joined recovery fellowships to overcome his addictions and then dedicated his life to counseling and rescuing the lives of other alcoholics and compulsive gamblers.



Al Scramuzza THE CRAWFISH KING

He also gave back to the community by coaching and mentoring thousands of youngsters at New Orleans neighborhood parks and youth sports programs, inspiring young athletes to win countless championship trophies over more than three decades.

WLAE is proud to present **Al Scramuzza: The Crawfish King**, the fascinating story of his journey from rags to riches, to bankruptcy, and ultimate salvation as a spiritual mentor and life-saver to thousands of lost souls.

In July, WLAE held a public screening of the film at our 6th Street Studios facility for over 200 attendees.



"This is a great story about crawfish, trials, tribulations, and redemption. It's a tale seasoned to perfection about New Orleans' own, Al Scramuzza."

Rene Michel

Establishing Shot Productions

"I watched last night. It was great! Al coached my kids at Bright Playground and is quite a character. Thank you for recognizing him with this show!"

Barbara Roll Storms

WLAE Viewer



BLUE

THE LIFE AND ART OF GEORGE RODRIGUE

George Rodrigue, his story, his artistic contribution, his entire life, are a vivid part of the Louisiana landscape, and continues to be an important part of the art world in America and beyond.

A man of his surroundings and culture, a man of his times, a vigorously collected and admired figure, the “Blue Dog” painter has a legacy that endures.

From his bayou-inspired Louisiana cultural works, literally putting the Cajuns on the map, to his world-renowned Blue Dog catalogue, Rodrigue’s work is full of life, a deep ethos, color, narrative, and joyous storytelling. WLAE is on a new film journey telling this remarkable tale.

His life in the studio “down the bayou”, his study on the West Coast, his return home, the explosion of fame across the globe, and parts in between, form an art journey for the ages.

Struck with polio as a young boy, inspired to paint, the canvas took George Rodrigue from New Iberia to Los Angeles, and from to Paris to Asia. He has been sought by major worldwide brands, as well as politicians, celebrities, and collectors too vast to count. From 1984 World’s Fair artist to world renown, he remains an important figure in contemporary art, and has ever remained, “The Cajun Man”. As an astoundingly prolific artist, his connections to people, and his abiding friendships are the fabric of his storied journey.

WLAE-TV and LAE Productions were honored to present this film to the world.



“As a lifelong fan of Blue Dog, I was thrilled to attend the premiere and see how beautifully you’ve preserved George Rodrigue’s legacy.”

Lynn Augustin McMahon
WLAE Viewer

In August, the producing team from WLAE was invited to Venice, Italy for an international screening of the film as a part of the Biennale Art Exposition where the works of George Rodrigue were featured on exhibit. In October, the film premiered to an audience of over 700 guests at the Orpheum Theatre as a featured screening of the New Orleans Film Festival and in December a screening was held for audiences in Baton Rouge at the Manship Theatre.

American Public Television will distribute **Blue: Life and Art of George Rodrigue** to a national TV audience starting in June of 2025.

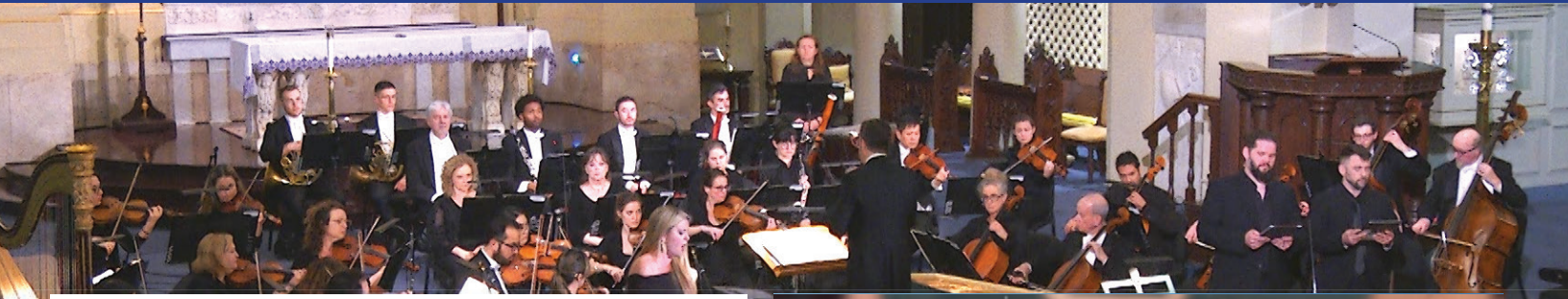
Blue: The Life and Art of George Rodrigue has received numerous awards and citations from film festivals both nationally and internationally for high-quality production and documentary programming. The list includes:

- New Orleans Film Festival
- Amsterdam New Cinema Fest
- IndieX Film Fest
- Asian Talent Film Fest
- Bangkok Movie Awards
- Cannes World Film Festival
- Oniros Film Awards New York
- Swedish International Film Fest

“Congratulations to the entire film team. It was a spectacular night spotlighting this illuminating, entertaining, and visually stunning documentary on George Rodrigue’s life. I’m proud to be a part of it.”

Wendy Rodrigue Magnus
George Rodrigue’s Widow





Musical Louisiana: America's Cultural Heritage

To honor Louisiana's classical music legacy, the Historic New Orleans Collection and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra established ***Musical Louisiana: America's Cultural Heritage***, a series of concerts and student educational experiences. These award-winning concerts reach an audience of nearly 30,000 through live broadcasts and online video streaming. In addition, the accompanying program and educational materials are made available online to teachers throughout Louisiana and beyond. Recordings of the concerts and their printed programs are also distributed to Louisiana's 68 public library systems, university libraries, music history instructors in Louisiana, and centers throughout the United States concentrating on American music.

The 16th edition of this program revives three significant bodies of work that arrived and were performed in New Orleans prior to statehood, a celebration of three firsts in the Vieux Carré. Conducted by LPO Music Director and Principal Conductor Matthew Kraemer, this program featured the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra in collaboration with two virtuosic chamber ensembles that specialize in early music repertoire: Variant 6 and Filament.

WLAE live-streamed the concert and later broadcast the concert with expanded interviews and interstitial content.



*"Our partnership with WLAE-TV goes back several years and has encompassed many projects that have been distributed around the world. Having a media partner like WLAE-TV has been a great way to showcase the LPO's **Musical Louisiana: America's Cultural Heritage** series to audiences throughout New Orleans and beyond."*

Anwar Nasir

LPO Executive Director



We're Local And Enlightening



The St. Louis Cathedral was erected in 1718 in the historic French Quarter of New Orleans and has been celebrating the Catholic Mass since that time. Every year during the holiday season, the church celebrates Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. WLAE has been a part of this tradition since 1984, televising and now live streaming the Midnight Mass to the sick, homebound and those in prison who cannot attend Mass in person. WLAE was honored to once again to be able to televise this cherished ritual for many New Orleans residents and visitors in 2024.



Academic Achievements Honored

In partnership with our parent company, The Willwoods Community, WLAE recognized the outstanding achievements of students from St. Augustine High School and Archbishop Chapelle High School with the Father Tom Chambers Scholastic Award, named in honor of our past television station president.

Students were nominated by their schools and interviewed by our awards committee. The criteria for the award focused on students who demonstrated leadership, self-confidence, positive thinking and strong Catholic values. Each of the recipients received a commemorative plaque and a cash award.

From Chapelle the winner was **Marissa Rinderle**, an honor roll student active in Campus Ministry, Track and Mu Alpha Theta. Marissa also volunteers and works with kids with special needs at Camp Able NOLA and Krewe de Camp. She is currently studying Kinesiology at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

St. Aug's winner was **LaDavion Walls**, a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council and a team leader on the Purple Knight football and baseball teams, maintaining a 4.0 GPA. LaDavion now attends LSU where he is majoring in Construction Management.



Fa La La La La...

Once again in 2024, WLAE partnered with Patio Planters of the Vieux Carré to present the beloved Caroling in Jackson Square tradition to visitors and locals alike. The free community sing-along gathers thousands of people for a festive hour of holiday merriment, with carols led by local dignitaries and clergy. Free songbooks and candles are handed out to participants in the non-denominational community celebration.

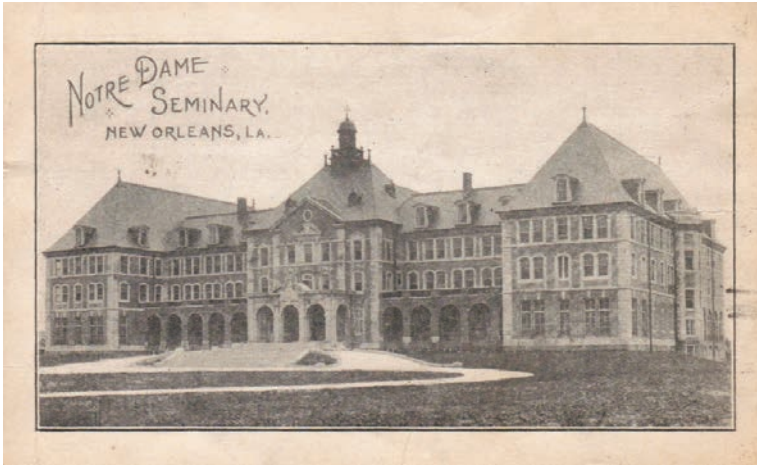
Since 1946, this annual event has been a gift to the city of New Orleans. WLAE live-streamed the festive holiday concert and later broadcast the program during Christmas week.

“There’s nothing more rewarding than looking out across Jackson Square and seeing the joy and camaraderie that this event brings to visitors and locals alike. Caroling in Jackson Square truly represents the spirit of the season.”

Joey DiFatta

President - Patio Planters

Award Winning Programming



WLAE received a national Gabriel Award in the category of Best Documentary for ***Formed: The Notre Dame Seminary and the Path to Priesthood***, a film celebrating 100 years of this New Orleans institution.

The Gabriel Awards are a prestigious program that celebrates excellence in film, broadcast, and digital media productions across the United States and Canada.

The awards were created in 1965 to "recognize outstanding artistic achievement in a television or radio program or series that entertains and enriches with a true vision of humanity and true vision of life."

A Gabriel-worthy award entry is dedicated to authenticity and excellence. It affirms and highlights values of dignity, community, tolerance, justice, or compassion. The primary goal of the Gabriel Awards is to encourage media professionals to serve, enrich, challenge, and uplift their audiences.



WINNER: OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD, DOCUMENTARY SHORT

Blue: The Life and Art of George Rodrigue has received numerous awards and citations from film festivals both nationally and internationally for high-quality production and documentary programming. The list includes:

- New Orleans Film Festival
- Amsterdam New Cinema Fest
- IndieX Film Fest
- Asian Talent Film Fest
- Bangkok Movie Awards
- Cannes World Film Festival
- Oniros Film Awards New York
- Swedish International Film Fest

Throughout each month WLAE produces several local programs with content educating viewers on topics including health, crime, housing, sports, faith and local news & events.



Inside New Orleans Sports

A weekly live sports show covering Saints, Pelicans, LSU, Tulane & Prep Sports with members of the local media.



Affordable Housing Matters

Hosted by award-winning journalist Norman Robinson, this program offers viewers discussion and resources on all aspects of Affordable Housing in the metro New Orleans area.



Coping Today

This program offers viewers weekly tips on how to cope in this ever-changing world and features interviews with various University of Holy Cross counseling experts across a wide scope of mental health issues. This program celebrated its 100th episode in August of 2023.



Conversations with Ed Marshall

Media personality Ed Marshall interviews guests from local non-profits, politics and civic organizations.



Daily Mass

Live from Historic St. Louis Cathedral on weekdays & Sundays and from the Basilica of St. Stephen on Saturdays.



NOLA Crime Crisis

Monthly program discussing the #1 issue in New Orleans and possible solutions to making the city a safe place to live, work and prosper. Guests have included New Orleans District Attorney Jason Williams, Orleans Parish Sheriff Susan Hutson and Police Chief Anne Kirkpatrick.



Faith & Marriage Today

Jason Angelette and Lisa Flood highlight the latest in local Catholic news with interviews and discussion topics.



Primetime Sports with Scott Alexander

Featuring the biggest sports and entertainment stars from Louisiana and the entire Gulf Coast region. Scott Alexander brings weekly in depth interviews with players, coaches, local celebrities, artists and more.



Let's Talk with Keith Spera

Weekly program where the NOLA.com and Times-Picayune journalist invites viewers to sit in on his conversations. His more casual approach – you'll never see him in a coat and tie – is substantive, not stuffy, which allows subjects to relax and open up about themselves, what they do and why. It's fresh talk with insights, attributes and anecdotes.

Thanks To Our Partners

The Willwoods Community	Frances Family	New Orleans Museum Of Art
Louisiana Public Broadcasting	Eric Asher	NOLA.com
The Archdiocese of New Orleans	Fidelity Bank	Odette C. Henican Foundation
Mrs. Paul A. Nalty	First Bank and Trust	Patio Planters of the Vieux Carre
Basilica of St. Stephen (Msgr. Christopher Nalty)	First Horizon Bank	Phyllis M. Taylor Foundation
Catholic Community Foundation	Fr. Cedric Pisegna	Raising Cane's Restaurants, LLC
Catholic Community Radio	George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts	Red River Bank
Clarion Herald	George Rodrigue Life and Legacy Foundation	Santa Fe Community College
Arlene & Joseph Meraux Charitable Foundation	Guy McInnis	Selley Foundation Fund of the Greater New Orleans Foundation
Gayle and Tom Benson Charitable Foundation	Haynie Family Foundation	Scott Alexander
Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra	Helis Foundation	Shaun Considine
Alden and Margaret Laborde Foundation	Henry and Pat Shane	St. Bernard Tourist Commission
Andy Peeler & Marian Moss Peeler	Historic New Orleans Collection	St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission
AWE News	Humana	Stew Serpas
Bobby Crifasi	Joseph M. Costello Endowment Fund	Times Picayune/New Orleans Advocate
Brian Felger	JME Holdings, LLC	University of Holy Cross
Callan Contemporary	Keith Picou	University of Louisiana-Lafayette
Charles McMakin Charitable Fund	Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission	Viva NOLA
Cher & Billy Nungesser Foundation	Liberty Bank	Walter Boasso
Cindy Dore	Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities	Whitney Bank
Craig Boes	Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra	YJ Bourgeois
Crusto-Jupiter Family Memorial Fund	Mrs. Nelwyn H. Lorio	
Don A. Sanders Family Foundation	New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation	
Ed Marshall		

“Ensuring that public media is able to adapt to new technology is a critical part of keeping our community informed and engaged. That’s why we are making the investment to develop and deploy NEXTGEN TV. It will allow WLAE to better serve our viewers across all digital platforms both now and into the future.”

Ron Yager

*President
WLAE-TV*