
**WTTW
FY2019**

Local Content and Service Report To The Community



CHICAGO TONIGHT: Mikva Challenge students, many of them first-time voters, question future Illinois Governor J. B. Pritzker



WHO WE ARE

WTTW is the PBS member station in Chicago. Our purpose is to enrich lives, engage communities, and inspire exploration. Recognized for award-winning local and national productions, WTTW presents the very best in public affairs, arts and culture, nature and science, history and documentary, and children's public media content. Our original content falls into several key genres: local news, local history, lifestyle and food, society and culture, science, nature, and natural history.

LOCAL VALUE

WTTW serves a vital role in the four-state area it serves – almost 1.5 million monthly households in Chicago and its suburbs, southern Wisconsin, northwest Indiana, and southwest Michigan. We provide relevant quality content and trusted news coverage to our diverse community across four distinct television channels – our primary channel, WTTW; our secondary channel, WTTW Prime; WTTW PBS Kids 24/7; WTTW Create/World; on our website at wttw.com; and via the PBS/WTTW video app.

WTTW is essential to Chicagoans, valued for its high quality programming. 86% of people in Chicago are aware of WTTW, and in a competitive survey conducted in November 2018, WTTW was the most trusted media brand of local television affiliates in Chicago.

WTTW is committed to presenting and producing trusted, best-in-class content and engaging with our community by entertaining, inspiring, educating, and reflecting a diversity of perspectives.

KEY SERVICES

WTTW provided local, audience-driven content and community engagement initiatives across Chicago's diverse regions and neighborhoods.

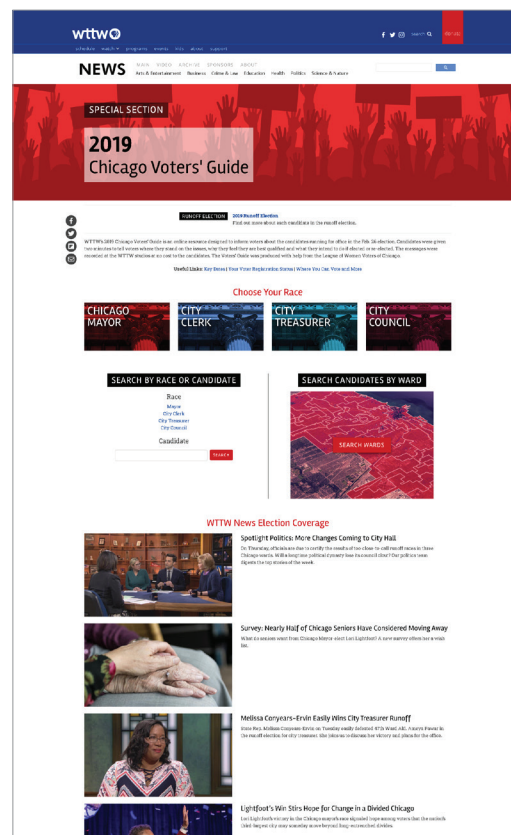
Audience-Driven Content

WTTW is dedicated to telling local stories, amplifying local voices, and broadening the horizons of our curious audience across traditional and digital platforms, making it available anywhere and any way they want it.

WTTW NEWS

WTTW is an essential news voice in our community, telling stories with a unique Chicago voice through news documentaries, profiles, and local features. We tell the stories behind the stories – focusing our reporting in key areas: local news, analysis, and enterprise reporting on our city and state; our education and criminal justice systems; the environment; science and technology; business; and the arts.

WTTW News/*Chicago Tonight* – WTTW's digital news platform, tied to its award-winning nightly news and public affairs television program *Chicago Tonight*, provided continual reporting of news stories relevant to local communities. *Chicago Tonight* is available live on WTTW, wttw.com/news, Facebook, YouTube, and on demand. WTTW News is committed to presenting trusted, independent, unbiased, commercial- and interest-free local and national news to our diverse audience. We shine a



WTTW NEWS: 2019 Chicago Voters' Guide

light on important issues that matter to our community, and help Chicago-area citizens to make the most of the cultural life of our city across all its neighborhoods and communities.

In advance of the 2018 gubernatorial and 2019 municipal elections, WTTW produced an extensive digital Voter Guide that provided video profiles of most of the candidates (provided at no cost to the campaigns), biographical information for each, images, and searchable ward map with population and other demographic information. WTTW also presented several live candidate forums in advance of each election, including one with then-gubernatorial candidate J. B. Pritzker, who was questioned by high school students from the Mikva Challenge, a local nonprofit organization that encourages young people to use their voices and discover a passion for serving their communities.



ART & DESIGN IN CHICAGO: Chicago muralist Hector Duarte

News stories covered in FY2019 included a focus on gang and gun violence and measures being taken to combat them; public schools, curriculum, and funding; healthcare and prescription drug costs; pension plan investment strategies; police and prison reform; public transportation; opioid abuse;

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In FY2019, *Chicago Tonight* reached almost 320,000 monthly households across the region, and viewers watched almost one million streams.

local and national elections; childhood development, literacy, and technology; climate change, clean water, and the city's use of fossil fuels; LGBTQ issues; and many other topics of vital interest to our diverse community.

In FY2019, WTTW News journalists mentored young student filmmakers from Senn High School, vetting their pitches and assisting them in producing stories. The students also participated in an open mic event with Grammy-winning artist Chance the Rapper.

WTTW News continued to provide numerous fellowships and internships for aspiring young journalists.

WTTW ENTERTAINMENT

WTTW's local signature franchises reflect our audience's ongoing interests across key genres – local history; lifestyle and food; society and culture; and science, nature, and natural history. We celebrate the vibrant life of Chicago to tell the stories of our city's fascinating history and cultural scene, its industry, and its ingenuity.

- *10 that Changed America: Streets, Monuments, and Modern Marvels* – This national series produced by WTTW celebrates America's built environment and how landmark streets, monuments, and modern marvels changed the way we live and work. Host Geoffrey Baer traveled across America, meeting with histori-

- ans, curators, and guides who shared the fascinating backstories behind the iconic streets that connect our nation, the monuments that commemorate our history, and the engineering marvels that transformed our environment and shaped the way we live. The website, wttw.com/10, extended the experience with 30 original stories and 14 original videos including “A Modern Ride on the Transcontinental Railroad,” “Honoring Crazy Horse,” “The Story Behind One AIDS Quilt Panel,” and “The Fight to Remember Black Wall Street.”
- *Art & Design in Chicago* – This Emmy Award-winning four-part series, later picked up for national distribution, examined aspects of the city’s creative past through stories narrated by prominent local hosts, centering on the themes of Chicago’s creative institutions; works by 20th century African American artists; the city’s graphic designers, applied artists, industrial designers; and Chicago’s non-mainstream artists. The series website is wttw.com/artdesignchicago.
 - *Check, Please!* – Chicago is a world-renowned food city with a seemingly infinite number of diverse and ever-changing neighborhood options. WTTW’s weekly *Check, Please!* series, featuring a host and “regular person” reviewers, and the show’s comprehensive website, at wttw.com/checkplease, served as a vital resource for foodies looking for new and culturally diverse places to explore.
 - *Chefs Off the Clock* – The restaurant business, especially in a city as brutally competitive as Chicago, is a high-pressure enterprise. WTTW, in partnership with Story Buzz Media and *Edible Chicago*, followed some of the city’s notable chefs to provide a glimpse of the quirky and sometimes surprising ways they unwind after they clock out of the kitchen. This digital series can be found at wttw.com/chefs.
 - *Chicago on Vacation* – In this 90-minute documentary and deep website (wttw.com/vacation), host Geoffrey Baer took a road trip across the Midwest, uncovering the hidden history and back stories of favorite tourist destinations. One digital story recalled the “Black Eden” of Idlewild, Michigan and the once-booming Jewish resorts in South Haven, both of which thrived in the days when now-illegal restrictions limited vacation options for Jews and African Americans.

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

WTTW celebrates the vibrant life of Chicago to tell the stories of our city’s fascinating history and cultural scene, its industry, and its ingenuity.

- *Stage Players* – Chicago’s powerful, diverse, and ever-expanding theatre scene is justly famous, and an integral part of the city’s cultural life. In a series of digital video featurettes, WTTW shone a spotlight on many of the contributors to its power, engagement, humor, pathos, joy, and fun – some of the city’s essential and unknown behind-the-scenes players. The segments can be viewed at wttw.com/stageplayers.
- *Urban Nature* – WTTW produced a new batch of videos for this popular digital series hosted by University of Chicago evolutionary biologist Marcus Kronforst. *Urban Nature* is a journey of overlooked ecosystems in Chicago, Miami, New York, San Francisco, and Austin to discover how nature and animals crash into the urban jungle. This series can be explored at wttw.com/urbannature.



NATURE CAT: Return of Bad Dog Bart

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

Through our children's television and digital content and services, WTTW reaches Chicago-area communities with educational, inspirational, and commercial-free media content every day.

- **Themed Digital Content** – WTTW created immersive, original, and local digital content for *The Great American Read*, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Native American Heritage Month.

WTTW also acquired and presented the most compelling programming across all public media genres – arts and music, drama and mystery, U.S. news, world events, history, science and nature, cooking, home/how-to, travel, and health.

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

More than 2,100 people attended our community events in FY2019.

WTTW KIDS AND FAMILIES

Research has shown that parents and caregivers trust WTTW and PBS Kids content. This trust is at the center of everything we do and share with the very youngest members of our communities and their families who depend upon us. Our content encourages and engages the explorer in all of us. We will continue to build a reputation as a leader in children's content and services.

- *Nature Cat* – WTTW is proud to serve as co-producer of this popular national STEM-based PBS Kids series that encourages children ages 3-8 to go outside and explore the outdoors,



Girl Scouts taking part in an activity at Camp Greene Wood, 2019



STAGE PLAYERS: Chicago theatre director Lili-Anne Brown

while learning about a variety of scientific topics along the way. Nature Cat and friends have been out and about in the community, inspiring a local museum exhibit and a Girl Scout merit badge (see below).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a fundamental part of WTTW's purpose. As a trusted organization with purpose at the heart of all we do, we have a unique opportunity to reach beyond our television and digital platforms to build personal connections with people across Chicago's many neighborhoods and communities. We do this by meeting people where they are and working in direct partnership with local organizations and residents to enrich lives, engage communities, and inspire exploration.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Our children's programming serves as a learning resource for partner organizations whose mission is to serve the educational needs of young children. Through our children's television and digital con-

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In FY2019, WTTW's Nature Cat Community Engagement Events attracted almost 2,500 attendees.

tent and services, WTTW reaches Chicago-area communities with educational, inspirational, and commercial-free media content every day. We extend this relationship by providing educational tools, materials, and support to positively impact children, families, and teachers.

NATURE CAT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Children and families interacted with the walk-around Nature Cat at numerous engaging and active public events throughout the fiscal year, including STEMpalooza, Kids to Parks Day, and the United



BOSS: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS panel discussion

Run for the Lincoln Park Zoo. Characters from *Nature Cat* also made several appearances at a new traveling exhibit, *Nature Cat: Backyard and Beyond*, at Kohl Children's Museum, and took part in several events as part of an innovative new "Explorer Patch" merit badge partnership with the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana, for which WTTW is being honored with the Girl Scouts' Community Partner Award.



Photo: WTTW and Santos Ramos

10 MONUMENTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA: Geoffrey Baer at the Lincoln Memorial

ACCESS TO THE ARTS

WTTW encourages everyone in our community to explore Chicago's rich, extensive, and diverse arts scene. This year, we presented screening and discussion events in connection with the digital series *Stage Players* and the four-part series *Art & Design in Chicago*.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Where conversations around civic and societal issues often dissolve into stereotypes and shorthand,

WTTW works to surface and spotlight the people, ideas, and stories behind the headlines. With our community engagement events, we strive to create a forum for discussion and encouragement of diverse opinions, authentic communication, and mutual understanding.

In FY2019, WTTW hosted public screenings and panel discussions in connection with local and national content and programming. These included monthly screenings at the Chicago Cultural Center and other venues across Chicago's highlighting WTTW-produced series, films by local filmmakers and aspiring student producers, and PBS documentaries.

These screenings have developed into an important forum for community members in the Chicago area to gather and discuss important topical/social issues, ask questions, engage with leaders, discover resources, hear voices that are not often heard, and connect with other members of the community. Many of the films focused on Black, Latinx, Asian, Jewish, LGBTQ, or Native American people and their stories, including *BOSS: The Black Experience in Business*, *The Lavender Scare*, *Leaps of Faiths*, '63 *Boycott*, *NOVA: Addiction*, *Minding the Gap*, *POV: Tribal Justice*, *Native America*, *Exit Zero*, and *Whose Streets?*. WTTW also produced a number of "Grandparent Connection" engagement events that brought local young people together with senior citizens to enrich the lives of both, and celebrated the value of education with the *Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching*, an annual celebration of local educators, who were honored at a televised award ceremony.

Summary

For almost 65 years, WTTW has occupied a special place in the hearts and minds of Chicagoans. Our mission is to educate, entertain, and inspire and to be a "Window To The World" for people of all ages. We have aspired to be a trusted and respected voice,

giving our audience front row seats to the arts; and opportunities to explore all of the neighborhoods of Chicago.

WTTW will continue to evolve and innovate – producing and presenting unique, quality content that stands out in the media marketplace. The trust and equity WTTW has built over the years – and earnestly maintained – is critical to our success. We are a respected voice in the community, and a media organization that tells the real Chicago stories with depth, clarity, and insight that the people in our region want.

As a nonprofit organization with deep, meaningful connections to the community and the broad reach of a media company, WTTW has the opportunity to make a meaningful, ongoing, and lasting impact on Chicago and on society at large.