

The Louisiana Educational Television Authority (LETA) provides a vital communications network for the people of Louisiana. It provides information during times of emergencies such as hurricanes and most recently, floods. In addition, LETA distributes public television programming and educational content across the state. To do this, LETA maintains a complex infrastructure of fiber optics, satellite, broadcast and internet.

LETA holds broadcast licenses from the federal government to operate stations in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe and Shreveport and broadcasts programs in New Orleans. LPB touches the lives of Louisianians millions of times each year through television programming, internet content, class room instruction and community events. LETA produced over 250 hours of local programming last year including the governor's inauguration, Public Square, the weekly news and public affairs show The State We're In and the opening of the legislative session. In addition, LETA creates films which showcase the best of Louisiana such as Louisiana: A History, Louisiana Bicentennial, Alive! In America's Delta, Sunshine By The Stars and several John Folse cooking shows all of which have been shown across the nation and which serve to support the state's tourism industry.

During the past 8 years, LETA has managed to continue to operate despite a general fund budget that has been cut every year and a steadily shrinking staff. LETA's general fund has been reduced by 34%, from \$8,683,634 in FY08 to \$5,747,301 in FY17. LETA's staff has gone from 91 employees in FY06 to 70 in FY17, a reduction of 23%. LETA's self-generated and IAT revenue budget has increased 324% since 2008, from \$680,000 to nearly \$3 million per year. This self-generated and IAT revenue is not passive revenue collected from fees but must be generated through entrepreneurial activities such as production services, uplinks, and other income generating activities.

Continued reductions in funding and in LETA's most important resource, the talented and dedicated staff, hinder the agency's ability to produce quality local programming, to offer professional development events for educators, to facilitate outreach activities and to offer on-line resources utilized by teachers, parents and children of the state. Additional staff reductions would also negatively impact LETA's ability to produce self-generated revenue.

Although LETA is a state agency, LETA's budget is not sufficient to pay for the most basic operating expenses common to other state agencies, such as: printing; copier rental; postage meter rental and maintenance; professional dues and subscriptions; office supplies; and legal fees. LETA does not pay any of the programming costs which total over \$2 million annually.

For the past 8 years, LETA has succeeded in staying on the air through the hard work of the dedicated staff which has shouldered increasing responsibilities. LETA has delayed equipment repairs and the replacement of obsolete equipment by utilizing stopgap measures and "making-

do” whenever possible. The majority of LETA’s budget pays for the cost of personnel and fixed costs such as leases, utilities and IAT expenses over which we have no control. LETA is continually looking for ways to cut costs and has made several changes in the past few years which has done just that, such as implementing new technology which allows for unmanned overnight functioning of its 24/7 operation, eliminating security at its main facility, and cross training employees.

LETA continues to explore new and innovative ways to generate revenue while continuing to fulfill the mission of the agency: to provide intelligent, informative, educational and entertaining programming and to create content that showcases Louisiana’s unique history, people, places and events. We ask that you to strongly encourage state agencies to utilize LETA’s production facilities.

LETA is committed to staying on the air in the six markets of Shreveport/Bossier, Monroe/West Monroe, Alexandria, Lafayette, Lake Charles and Baton Rouge and to continue to be the Louisiana focused and mission driven network that the citizens of Louisiana have come to love and rely on.