



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Letter to the Editor: Our Community, Our Media, Our Future

Sunderland, VT — As I reflect on Community Media Day and Free Speech Week, I feel proud, hopeful, and, truthfully, a little uneasy. Proud of what GNAT-TV has built since a handful of volunteers founded it in 1995. Hopeful that our community continues to see just how vital community media is to local and civic life. And uneasy about what happens if we ever take it for granted.

Our media diets are flooded with national headlines, ads, and social media noise. So who's telling the story of our towns, our schools, our neighbors? For thirty years, GNAT-TV has made sure those stories are told.

When we think of free speech, we often imagine rallies, protests, and national debates. But free speech doesn't start there. It starts in small towns, in local studios, in places where everyone has access to share their voice. That's what GNAT-TV provides.

GNAT-TV offers transparent coverage of town and school board meetings, amplifies the work of local nonprofits and artists, documents community events, shares essential local information, and provides media education to students of all ages. Most importantly, we give every person in our region — no matter their background — the tools and platform to tell their own stories and take part in public conversation, free from gatekeeping or commercial influence.

These services aren't extra. They're essential to a vibrant, informed, and connected community. And for three decades, GNAT-TV has delivered.

But the future of community media is uncertain. Our funding model, built on support from cable television subscribers, is being rapidly eroded as more people turn to streaming. While you can

still find GNAT-TV on cable channels 1074, 1084, and 1094, you can also watch on gnat-tv.org, YouTube, Apple TV, Roku, and Fire TV. We're adapting to new platforms, but the funding hasn't kept up.

Our future depends on the community we serve. We need more people involved to remain sustainable — more volunteers, more board members, more financial supporters. If just a few hundred people in our 16,000-person region gave \$5 a month, we could offset this year's funding gap. If more local businesses stepped in as underwriters, it would help cover rising costs and stabilize our future. And if more people utilized our services, our entire community would benefit.

GNAT-TV exists because a small group of volunteers saw an opportunity in 1995. Let's come together in 2025 to reignite that same vision and secure another 30 years of local information, storytelling, and media literacy for everyone in our region.

Community media belongs to all of us. Its future, and the future of local free speech, is in your hands.

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About GNAT-TV:

GNAT-TV is a nonprofit community media organization dedicated to serving the towns of Southern Vermont. We provide residents with the tools and resources to create and share media content that reflects the diverse voices and stories of our local communities. As a leading voice for community media, GNAT-TV helps foster a stronger sense of connection, engagement, and civic responsibility across the region.

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