



NEWS RELEASE

Contacts:

Laura Juncadella, WLRN, 305-321-9853, laura@schwartz-media.com

Aaron Gordon, WLRN, 305-858-3935, aaron@schwarz-media.com

Anusha Alikhan, Director of Communications, Knight Foundation, 305-908-2677, media@knightfoundation.org

WLRN Public Radio and Television to bring more media innovation into its newsroom and improve news services with \$200,000 from Knight Foundation

Design and innovation companies LUMA Institute and MAYA Design will help WLRN develop long-term plan for success

MIAMI—Sept. 26, 2014—WLRN Public Radio will develop a plan to better connect with its audience and create a culture of media innovation in its newsroom, with \$200,000 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. With the funding, WLRN staff will work with LUMA Institute and MAYA Design to conduct extensive market research into audience needs, and learn how to design new services and programs that address those needs.

“The media industry is evolving at warp speed, and only the savviest companies will be able to keep up,” said John Labonia, general manager of WLRN. “With this support, we will make sure we are on the edge of using technology, research and innovation to effectively communicate and engage the South Florida community.”

Through the project, WLRN staff will be trained in human-centered design, an approach that incorporates feedback from users when developing new ideas, so audience needs are built into the innovation process. Staff will learn to use these techniques in their work and apply them to content creation and delivery. At the same time, MAYA Design, a design consultancy and research lab, will use market research and analysis gathered from WLRN audiences to recommend new ideas for the newsroom.

“Using design thinking will allow WLRN to develop strategies and programming that reflect the goals and behaviors of the community they serve,” said John Bracken, Knight Foundation director of journalism and media innovation. “We’re excited to help bring human-centered design into a newsroom with the support of its leadership, and we hope the lessons that come out of this project will be valuable for local newsrooms around the country.”

Today, WLRN remains the nation’s only public radio news enterprise embedded in a major metropolitan daily newspaper newsroom. The support will allow WLRN to become

fully digital, and deliver content on multiple digital platforms, including radio, Web, mobile and social media.

Project leads will include: John Labonia; Tom Hudson, vice president of news at WLRN; Terence Shepherd, news director at WLRN; Michael Kreitzer, partner and litigation co-chair of Bilzin Sumberg and chair of Friends of WLRN; Bill Lucas, director of curriculum for LUMA Institute; and Paul Gould, senior designer at MAYA Design.

Funding for WLRN forms one part of Knight Foundation's efforts to advance excellence in journalism and help news organizations establish long-term sustainability. Knight has made several other investments in this area, including the \$5 million [Knight Local Media Initiative](#), which has supported more than 30 organizations in developing innovations in media.

###

About WLRN

WLRN Public Radio and Television is committed to being the most trusted source of information and entertainment in South Florida's diverse community. Licensed to the school board of Miami-Dade County, WLRN is best known for its award-winning public radio and television programs, but its services go well beyond the airwaves. It's a complex media enterprise consisting of radio and television stations and educational channels offering a variety of high-quality programming and advanced learning services, making WLRN a valuable public media source.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more, visit www.KnightFoundation.org.