Vermont Public Radio

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Quarterly Issues / Program List 1st Quarter - January 1, 2015 to March 31, 2015

The Community Issues listed in this section of the report aired during local VPR newscasts. This listing is illustrative of the programs aired on VPR and is not meant to be an exhaustive listing of programs responsive to issues of importance to the community. A daily programming and local newscast schedule is provided at the end of this report.

Issue	VPR News Story Narrative	Air Date(s) & Length
Agriculture	Governor Peter Shumlin says he'll provide money to help farmers change their manure spreading practices. But if some farmers don't respond to that approach - Shumlin says they should NOT be allowed to participate in the state's so-called "Current Use Program."	01/09/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/10/15 at 9:04 am (2 min)
Agriculture	Raw milk producers are trying to expand their reach into Vermont's dairy market. But as VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, some House lawmakers worry that state regulations are impeding their growth.	02/22/15 at 8:04 am (3 min)
Agriculture	Lawmakers are now considering a bill designed to expand the market for RAW MILK in Vermont. But health experts and dairy industry stalwarts say the proposal could deal serious damage to the state's farming sector.	03/19/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/20/15 at 6:04 & 6:44 (3 min)
Agriculture	This week's warm weather has set the sap running in Vermont's maple trees. But it's too soon to tell whether the syrup season will be good or bad. That's why - in Quebec - there's a strategic reserve of syrup stockpiled in case the harvest falls short.	03/26/15 at 7:04 am (3 min)
Agriculture	Farmers enjoyed a good year of milk prices in 20-14. But 20-15 is shaping up to be a bit tougher. Last year farmers got 23-dollars per 100 pounds of milk - now they're getting 17-dollars per hundred pounds.	03/30/15 at 4:04 pm (2 min)
Arts & Culture	Three different art galleries in Rutland and Castleton will simultaneously showcase the work of local artist Richard Weis [WHYsss). As VPR's Nina Keck reports, the exhibits pay tribute to Weis' 50-year career.	01/14/15 at 8:44 am (5 min)
Arts & Culture	Interview with author Salman Rushdie, who was in Burlington yesterday talking about his book Haroun and the Sea of Stories, which is the Vermont Humanities Council's pick for Vermont Reads. Tomorrow on Morning Edition, we'll hear more from Salman Rushdie, including his thoughts on satire and the recent events in Paris.	01/15/15 at 8:44 am (7 min)
Arts & Culture		02/28/15 at 12:04 pm (3 min); 03/01/15 at 10:04 am (3 min)
Arts & Culture	As news breaks about the possible destruction of cultural artifacts by the Islamic State also known as ISIS—a Dartmouth scholar is outraged. The College owns six monumental stone relief panels from Nimrud, Iraq, where ISIS vandals claim to have been bulldozing sacred sites. While the videos released by the militant group cannot be verified, it's clear that rare antiquities are ISIS targets. VPR's Charlotte Albright recently got a tour of a few that have been sheltered for 160 years at Dartmouth's Hood Museum of Art.	03/11/15 at 7:44 am (3 min)
Arts & Culture	The Peace and Justice Center in Burlington held a series of workshops designed to teach parents how to talk to kids about racism.	03/29/15 at 8:04 am (3 min)
Business / Economics	The lowest paid workers in four New England states will get a raise in 2015. New England Public Radio's Sam Hudzik reports.	01/03/15 at 9:04 am (1 min)
Business / Economics	For twenty four years a pair of Vermont economists has held an annual gathering in Burlington and offered their assessment of Vermont's economy. As VPR's Steve Zind explains, this year's conference was the last.	01/11/15 at 8:04 am (3 min)
Business / Economics	Vermont will continue to see better job numbers in the coming year. That was the message delivered to the annual "Vermont Economic Outlook Conference" in Burlington yesterday.	01/10/15 at 8:04 am (2 min)

Business / Economics	Some of the state's largest ski areas owe their success to lease agreements that allow them to use land owned by the state of Vermont. But as VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, State Auditor Doug Hoffer says the state ought to be charging higher rates for its pristine mountain land.	01/20/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/21/15 at 7:44 am (3 min)
Business / Economics	A Northfield sock manufacturer will more than double in size in the next 18 months to keep up with demand.	01/21/15 at 5:04 & 5:50 pm (2 min); 01/22/15 at 6:04am & 12:04 pm (2 min)
Business / Economics	Vermont manufacturer Darn Tough Socks is planning a 100,000-square-foot expansion at its mill in Northfield. VPR's Annie Russell has more.	01/25/15 at 10:04 am (3 min)
Business / Economics	Vermont ended 20-14 year with a jobless rate that was un-changed from the same timein 20-13. But as VPR Steve Zind reports, there's more to last year's employment picture than just the number of people without work.	
Business / Economics	Vermonters do a pretty good job of filling their local food shelves during the holidays. But donations can take a sharp drop in January. VPR's Amy Noyes has discovered one food shelf that's found a way to keep up the volume and variety throughout the year.	02/01/15 at 8:04 am (2 min)
Business / Economics	The rent-to-own businesses has mushroomed into an \$8-point-5 billion dollar industry nationwide. But advocates for low-income Vermonters say stores like "Rent-A-Center" are profiting too much off the desperate circumstances of poor people.	02/04/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/05/15 at 6:44 & 8:44 a, (2 min)
Business / Economics	Today Vermont Gas Systems says it's CANCELING plans to run a natural gas pipeline under Lake Champlain to a paper mill in Ticonderoga, New York.	02/10/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/11/15 at 6:04, 7:04 & 8:04 am (2 min)
Business / Economics	Plasan (pluh-SAHN) North America says it will close its manufacturing plant in Bennington. The move will eliminate 62 jobs.	02/19/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/20/15 at 6:04 & 8:04 am (3 min)
Business / Economics	Woodstock representative Alison Clarkson wants to put affordable housing on a faster track for permitting. She's introduced a bill that would give scheduling priority to publicly funded permanent affordable housing applications.	02/21/15 at 8:04 am (3 min)
Business / Economics	FairPoint Communications says a four month strike and a succession of winter storms pushed it deeper into the red in the fourth quarter of 2014.	03/04/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/05/15 at 6:04 & 7:20 am (2 min)
Business / Economics	Can a cooperatively owned brewery inspire the same sort of customer loyalty as a food co-op? As VPR's Steve Zind reports, a group of beer lovers thinks so.	03/07/15 at 12:04 pm (3 min)
Business / Economics	Vermont's sports car enthusiasts have a long winter to endure between racing seasons. But as VPR's Annie Russell reports, some drivers who can't wait to quench their need for speed have found a different course. Lake Champlain.	03/15/15 at 9:04 am (2 min); 03/16/15 at 6:44 & 8:44 am (3 min)
Education and Schools	More than two-thirds of Vermont's high school graduates aren't financially literate. That's according to the Financial Literacy Task Force at Champlain College.	01/04/15 at 10:04 AM (2 min)
Education and Schools	About a quarter of Vermont's school-aged children are enrolled in learning programs offered after school or in the summer. But 22,000 more would attend, if they had access to that extended learning. VPR's Charlotte Albright reports on those and other findings from a recent report to lawmakers.	01/24/15 at 12:04 pm (3 min); 01/25/15 at 09:04 am (2 min)
Education and Schools	The debate over school consolidation is now officially back in the mix in Montpelier. A bill that would encourage school districts to join together with those in neighboring towns has been unveiled at the Statehouse.	02/05/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
Education and Schools	The Chairman of the Mill River Union school board is under fire for comments he made about special education students at a recent meeting. Those have shocked and angered a number of parents and teachers.	02/11/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)

Education and Schools	Next month, Bethel University returns. Dozens of classes are being offered around town in March, on topics from rope making to the history of beer. As VPR's Amy Noyes reports, it's a unique community learning model that Bethel calls a "pop-up university."	02/15/15 at 10:04 am (3 min); 02/16/15 at 6:44 am (3 min)
Education and Schools	Lots of Vermont college students graduate from the four-year public college where they started. That's according to a new report from a national research group. But as VPR's Charlotte Albright reports, the study also shows that students who do transfer out of Vermont colleges tend to leave the state altogether.	02/26/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
Education and Schools	A major battle has erupted at the Statehouse over legislation that would cap local school spending for the next three years. Backers of the plan say it's needed to provide property tax relief but opponents argue it undermines budget decisions made by local voters.	03/21/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
	Next week, Vermont's 180 lawmakers will cast a ballot to determine who will be Vermont's next governor. That's because the Vermont Constitution calls for a Legislative vote when no candidate receives 50 percent of the vote on Election Day.	01/01/15 at 5:50 pm; 01/02/15 at 6:44 (3 min)
Election 2015-2016	Long-time Washington County senator Bill Doyle says he'll propose a Constitutional amendment to make it less likely that lawmakers will be asked to elect a governor in the future. VPR's Bob Kinzel reports.	01/06/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/07/15 at 6:44 am (3 min)
Flection 2015-2016	Shumlin's election today marks the end of one of the strangest, most drawn-out races in Vermont history. VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports on how the vote went down today.	01/08/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
Election 2015-2016	Senator Patrick Leahy has definitely decided to seek an eighth term in office. His campaign staff says he's already raising money for the 20-16 election.	02/02/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min);
Election 2015-2016	Senator Bernie Sanders is speaking in Iowa this week gauging support for a presidential run in 2016. Speaking at Drake University in Des Moines, Sanders says he is hesitant to run because he'll need an unprecedented grassroots movement.	02/20/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/21/15 at 9:04 am (3 min)
	Senator Bernie Sanders continues to explore whether to run for president in 20-16. Today he laid out his progressive vision for the nation in an address at the National Press Club and then fielded questions about whether he'll make a White House bid.	03/09/15 at 5:04 pm (2 min); 03/10/15 at 7:20 am (2 min)
	House Democrats have put the finishing touches on their fiscal year 2016 budget proposal. But as VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, members of the Republican minority say the spending plan is more than taxpayers can afford.	03/20/15 at 6:44 & 7:44 am & 5:50 pm (3 min)
	Attorney General Bill Sorrell says a candidate who used public money to run for lieutenant governor last year violated campaign financing laws. As VPR's John Dillon reports, Sorrell says Progressive Democrat Dean Corren illegally sought help from the Democratic party.	03/25/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
Energy / Fuel Costs	State officials and pipeline opponents are calling on Vermont regulators to examine the latest cost overruns in the Vermont Gas pipeline. As VPR's Taylor Dobbs reports, the state's ratepayer advocate is not sure whether the project is still worth building.	01/13/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/14/15 at 8:04 am (3 min)
Energy / Fuel Costs	The high price of gas in northwestern Vermont will be the topic of a public hearing next week at the State House.	01/17/15 at 12:04 pm (1 min) 01/18/15 at 8:04 am (1 min)
Energy / Fuel Costs	An energy proposal from the Shumlin administration could become one of the biggest pocketbook issues of the 2015 legislative session. As VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, lawmakers need to find a new renewable energy policy if they hope to stave off a significant increase in electricity costs.	01/23/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/24/15 at 9:04 am (2 min)
Energy / Fuel Costs	While Rutland City is working hand-in-hand with Green Mountain Power to become the solar capital of New England, Rutland Town is attempting to make the siting of renewable energy projects more inclusive and deliberate. VPR's Annie Russell has more.	02/08/15 at 9:04 am (3 min)
Environment	Two weeks into the new year, one Vermont wastewater system has already dumped thousands of gallons of untreated sewage into state waterways. VPR's Annie Russell has more.	01/18/15 at 10:04 am (3 min)
Environment	After two years without safe drinking water, the Caledonia County town of Sutton has finally decided on how to treat and filter water from its contaminated well. As VPR's Charlotte Albright reports, the unacceptable levels of nitrates in the water can be highly dangerous to young children.	02/03/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/04/15 at 7:04 & 8:04 am (2 min)

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Environment	The Vermont Health Department says for the first time it has found the radioactive isotope Strontium-90 [STRON- tee-um-90] in ground water at the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant in Vernon.	02/09/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/10/15 at 6:04, 7:04 & 8:20 am (3 min)
Environment	Jay Peak resort has signed a settlement agreement that environmentalists say will improve water quality in streams damaged by development.	03/05/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/16/15 at 6:04, 6:44, 7:20 & 8:04 am (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	Attorney General Bill Sorrell is heading a national investigation to determine if the skyrocketing cost of many generic drugs is the result of illegal price fixing by the drug companies. VPRs Bob Kinzel reports.	01/02/5:50 pm (3 min); 01/03/15 at 8:04 am (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	A staff member at Charlotte [shar-LOT] Central School is sick with tuberculosis, health officials say.	01/22/15 at 4:04, 5:04 & 5:50 pm (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	Starting next year, Vermont's small businesses will have to start buying their workers' health insurance from the state's online insurance exchange. We're talking about businesses with between 51 and 1-hundred employees. But now, House Speaker Shap Smith says lawmakers will get rid of that mandate that is, unless Governor Peter Shumlin's administration can show big improvements at Vermont Health Connect.	01/29/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/30/15 at 7:44 am (3 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	State health officials say seven children and one adult at Charlotte Central School have tested positive for Tuberculosis. The news comes after a staff member was discovered to have an active case of the disease earlier in the month.	01/30/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/31/15 at 8:04 am (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	The head of the Green Mountain Care Board says Governor Peter Shumlin is on the right track in trying to reduce the cost shift in health insurance payments. VPR's Jane Lindholm has more.	01/31/15 at 12:04 pm (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	The national outbreak of measles is causing some lawmakers to reconsider current exemptions to Vermont's child immunization laws. Supporters and opponents of the exemptions are gearing up for an intense debate at the Statehouse.	02/03/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/04/15 at 6:04, 6:44 & 7:04 am (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	Last year, Vermont's 11 Recovery Centers got almost 180,000 visits from people fighting various kinds of substance abuse. That's according to a new report from the Vermont Recovery Network. VPR's Charlotte Albright reports.	02/07/15 at 12:04 pm (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	Backers of a tax on sugar sweetened beverages say their plan is needed to help curb the rising epidemic of obesity in Vermont. But VPR's Bob Kinzel reports, opponents argue that it's wrong to use the taxing power of the state to try to influence personal behavior.	02/13/15 at 5:04 & 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/15/15 at 8:04 am (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	A bill that would make it more difficult for parents to avoid mandatory vaccinations for their children is unlikely to be debated this year. As VPR's Bob Kinzel reports, legislative leaders say they have other, more pressing, priorities.	02/24/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/25/15 at 6:20, 7:04 & 8:20 am (2 min)
Health Care / Public Health / Medicine	Dozens of veterans and their families spent the day at Lyndon State College yesterday swapping stories and learning about services that are available to them.	03/15/15 at 10:04 am (3 min); 3/16/15 at 6:04 & 8:04 am & 5:50 pm (2 min)
Law Enforcement	It's been more than two years since the mass shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. But gun-control efforts that began after that tragedy - are still very much underway here in Vermont. Leaders in the Vermont say they're about to introduce what could become one of the most controversial bills of the 20-15 legislative session.	01/12/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
Law Enforcement	Gun control advocates hit Montpelier today to push for mandatory background checks on firearms sales. VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports.	01/14/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/15/15 at 6:04 am
Law Enforcement	A group of gun rights advocates is launching a campaign today to oppose a bill that would require background checks for all gun sales in Vermont. The Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs represents a broad coalition of hunters, trappers and other outdoor enthusiasts. President Chris Bradley says Vermont doesn't need new gun legislation to keep people safe.	01/16/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/17/15 at 8:04 am (3 min)
Law Enforcement	A push to expand background checks on sales of firearms in Vermont is already dead. But gun-control advocates are trying salvage other provisions in their bill. And as VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, they're getting major support from Vermont police.	02/25/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/26/15 at 7:20 am (2 min)

Law Enforcement	A new report says - more and more - Vermont police are relying on a controversial surveillance tool. The use of data from Automated License Plate Recognition systems - also known as license plate scanners - almost doubled last year. And as VPR's Taylor Dobbs reports, privacy advocates worry the technology is too invasive.	03/06/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/07/15 at 8:04 am (3 min); 03/07/15 at 9:04 am (2 min)
Law Enforcement	After a year of controversy and reform at the Department for Children and Families, the agency and the court system are still overwhelmed by the number of child abuse and neglect cases in the state. VPR's Taylor Dobbs has more.	am (2 min)
Law Enforcement	A bill in the Senate has triggered a debate between law enforcement officials and privacy advocates. Vermont police and prosecutors want to retain millions of records of license plate scans collected statewide.	03/12/15 at 5:04 & 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/13/15 at 7:44 am (3 min)
Law Enforcement	Law enforcement instructors from all over Vermont attended a training this week on how to avoid discriminatory policing. Milwaukee Police Inspector Mary Hoerig [HARE-ig] was one of the trainers. She says RESEARCH is important in teaching officers about bias.	03/27/15 at 4:04 pm (3 min); 03/28/15 at 8:04 am & 12:04 pm (3 min)
Politics & Gov't	Governor Peter Shumlin is requesting an extension to ask for federal assistance for damage caused by last month's winter storm. VPR's Taylor Dobbs has more.	01/04/15 at 8:04 & 9:04 am (2 min)
Politics & Gov't	Lawmakers returned to the Statehouse today to kick off the 2015 legislative session. The coming months will be filled with divisive debates over issues like property taxes, and health care reform. And as VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, the opening day was full of ceremony, but also some hard-edged politicking.	01/07/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/08/15 at 6:04 am (2 min)
Politics & Gov't	Congressman Peter Welch is sponsoring legislation to lift the travel ban with Cuba. Welch says he's convinced that normalizing diplomatic relations with Cuba will help create opportunities for democracy in that country. VPR's Bob Kinzel reports.	02/16/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 02/17/15 at 6:04 & 7:44 am (3 min)
Politics & Gov't	A central part of Governor Peter Shumlin's plan to boost Medicaid reimbursement rates is his guarantee that the plan will reduce private health insurance premiums by 5 percent. But as VPR's Bob Kinzel reports, a top state health care official says that guarantee is anything but certain.	02/23/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min);
Politics & Gov't	Senator Bernie Sanders says he'll make a decision about running for President in about a month. And as VPR's Bob Kinzel reports, one of Sanders' major motivations to run is to bring a national debate over economic issues that he's championed throughout his political career.	03/13/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/14/15 at 8:04 am (3 min); 03/15/15 at 8:04 am (3 min)
Politics & Gov't	Congressman Peter Welch is sponsoring legislation to protect the personal information of consumers - against electronic data breaches. Welch says he's concerned because cyber criminals are stealing this data at an alarming rate.	03/18/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/19/15 at 6:44, 7:20 & 8:04 am (3 min)
State Finances	Governor Shumlin is asking the Legislature to approve a \$90-million dollar payroll tax on Vermont businesses. But lawmakers are reluctant - to say the least.	01/28/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/29/15 at 6:44 am (3 min)
State Finances	In his budget address last month, Governor Peter Shumlin insisted that lawmakers abandon any bills that might put pressure on property taxes. But as VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, some legislators say the Democratic governor isn't following his own advice.	02/06/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
State Finances	Elsewhere in Montpelier - lawmakers are trying to call more attention to a very important policy issue that - yeah, may also be just a bit dry. We're talking about tax expenditures. These are Vermont's longstanding policies that have the state giving up about \$1 billion-dollars in revenue every year - through tax breaks for various groups and activities. As VPR's Taylor Dobbs reports, key lawmakers want to bring more accountability to this shadowy part of state government.	02/12/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
State Finances	State employees packed the Statehouse today/on Tuesday to fight back against plans to balance the budget by reducing labor costs. But the state workers' union faces an uphill battle. As VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, key legislative leaders have signed on to Gov. Peter Shumlin's push to cut \$10 million from payroll expenses.	02/17/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min);
State Finances	A list of potential budget cuts totaling about \$29 million dollars was revealed this week that the Shumlin administration and key lawmakers say may be used to help close a budget gap that has grown larger during this legislative session. Neal Goswami from the Vermont Press Bureau has the story.	02/27/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/01/15 at 9:04 am (3 min)

State Finances	While there may be some agreement at the Statehouse on the health care policies that need to be addressed this year, there is a lot disagreement on how to pay for these programs.	02/28/15 at 9:04 am (3 min)
State Finances	Last month, the company that owns Vermont Yankee presented the Nuclear Regulatory Commission with its plan for decommissioning the nuclear power plant. But Commissioner of Public Service Chris Recchia [WRECK-ia] says the proposal has flaws that could delay the decommissioning process, and leave Vermont taxpayers holding the bill.	03/08/15 at 8:04, 9:04 & 10:04 am (2 min); 03/09/15 at 4:04 & 5:50 pm (2 min); 03/10/15 at 8:04 am (2 min)
State Finances	Just a few years after raising the state gas tax - Vermont lawmakers are considering another increase. House Transportation Chairman Pat Brennan says the state transportation fund needs more revenue - or else	03/16/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min)
State Finances	Vermont House lawmakers have spent the first two and a half months of the legislative session working on a \$14-million dollar water quality bill. But as VPR's Peter Hirschfeld reports, they still haven't figured out a way to pay for it.	03/17/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/18/15 at 6:44 am (2 min)
Town Issues / Town Meeting Day	Last week we told you about the struggles some Congregational churches are having trying to keep their pews full and their doors open. But one church in Lyndonville is getting reborn as a community center with a lot of help, including labor by inmates from a nearby correctional facility. Charlotte Albright has this report on the Upright Steeple Society.	01/05/15 at 7:44 am (3 min)
Town Issues / Town Meeting Day	Another annual Town Meeting Day is upon us. But despite efforts to boost participation by holding meetings in the evening or on Saturday, attendance continues to decline. VPR's Steve Zind reports on some new efforts to boost participation.	03/02/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/03/15 at 6:44 8:04 am (3 min)
Town Issues / Town Meeting Day	Voters in Monkton shot down proposals today [Tues] to conduct more of their business by Australian ballot.	03/03/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 03/04/15 at 6:20 & 7:20 am (1 min)
Wildlife / Fish / Forests	Environmentalists are giving Governor Peter Shumlin props for his proposal to reduce the amount of phosphorus flowing into Lake Champlain. But a prominent agriculture group says the plan to clean up the lake might end up hurting the farms that operate near it. VPR's Peter Hirschfeld has our story.	01/19/15 at 5:50 pm (3 min); 01/20/15 at 6:44 am (3 min)