Wyoming Public Media

Station Activity Survey (SAS)

2022

1. ***Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.***

Wyoming Public Media (WPM) is a statewide network, covering over 95% of Wyoming, and reaching areas of Idaho, Nebraska, and Colorado. The network has four channels and streaming services: Wyoming Public Radio, Classical Wyoming, Jazz Wyoming, Wyoming Sounds, and www.wyomingpublicmedia.org. Though the network invests increasingly in streaming and smart technology audience usage, to many residents, public radio remains the only connection to the state and to the world.

Because Wyoming lies in the crosshairs of controversial global issues such as energy, rare minerals, conservation, wildlife, tourism, and agriculture, it focuses on these economic drivers. WPM provides stories to national sources that have global resonance such as 1) extraction-related issues and their impact on the state and world energy policies/needs, 2) natural resources and wildlife issues that speak to the state's position as keeper of parks and historic areas that belong to all Americans and are also a core part of the state's second largest economy – tourism, and 3) agriculture, which is the state's 3rd economic driver and undergoing a shift in operational practices influenced by consumer demands and new technology.

On the local level, WPM invests heavily in Wyoming-centric programming such as energy extraction, education, rural health, professional retraining in energy sectors, diversification of local economies, population diversification, among others. Diverse populations are addressed with core focus on Wyoming's Indigenous population whose issues generate state, national and global interest. In 2022 the news bureau was staffed with 6 full-time reporters, 4 regional stringers, plus several interns and volunteers. The network is resourced for 9 full-time reporters/editors but has experienced national hiring cycles including shortage of candidates. Community needs drive the coverage, and 3 of the 6 reporters are based in communities covering the 4 quadrants of the state.

Issues are addressed in a variety of formats, including multi-platform spot news, features, interviews, cultural sessions, social media interaction, public forums, internships, public presentations, hosted events live and virtual, and statewide community visits, among others. Community input is solicited through interactive feedback on the WPM Topic of the Week online feedback tool, as well as through Twitter, Facebook, and other interactive tools.

Audiences reached include listeners and online viewers in Wyoming, nationally, and globally. In Wyoming, this includes radio listeners who reside in the state as well as tourists traveling to the national parks that are accessible mainly by highway. In 2022 online metrics for WPM sites were: 780,632 users, 1,684,685 pageviews.

2. ***Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you're connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.***

WPM's reports on its outreach activities are on www.wyomingpublicmedia.org site under a variety of tabs. A select list of partnerships includes:

1) Mountain West News Bureau, which creates news relevant to common issues of the American West,

2) Colorado Rivers project focusing on water issues that affect primarily Colorado, Arizona, and Wyoming,

3) The Storer Foundation, which partially funds WPM's natural resources, energy, wildlife, sustainability reporting, and the future of Wyoming's economy,

4) The Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, which funded reporting for and by women journalists,

5) The University of Wyoming, which populates the Internship program for broadcast experience,

6) Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction for information about Wyoming schools and trends in education in a rural state,

7) The Buffalo Bill Center of the West Museum in tandem with the Hal and Naoma Tate Family Foundation, which funds a full-time reporter covering the northwest part of Wyoming including Yellowstone Park and issues such as use of guns in the American West, among others,

8) Wyoming Humanities Council, which supports several outreach programs throughout the state,

9) Wyoming PBS through resource sharing particularly in site development and maintenance on towers throughout the state, and in programming via shared programming particularly legislative and election coverage,

10) Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund, which supported cultural reporting on the Wind River Reservation,

11) PRX Catapult project, which trains producers in podcasting techniques and contributed to WPM's podcasts HumaNature and The Modern West,

12) Giving Tuesday project, which partners with over 200 public service organizations and builds public awareness for their missions,

13) The Northeast Wyoming Reporter, which created a full-time donor-funded position covering the northeast quadrant of Wyoming,

14) Expansion of The Modern West podcast production of "The Individualist," an eight-part series focusing on Wyoming's agricultural history and present implications,

15) Wyoming Community Minute focusing on the work of independent public service entities in Wyoming and building awareness for their work.

3. *What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.*

A key initiative was the CPB Public Health Emergency Grant spanning from 2021 and continuing into 2022. This project involved direct interaction with the Wyoming population on topics connected to COVID, and the human costs of the disease. Below are several topics.

5/6/2022. Jeff Victor. As COVID-19 maintenance grows more individualistic, the uninsured find themselves in a familiar situation.

> The entirety of COVID-related healthcare – from testing to treatment to vaccines – has been offered free of charge to most Americans since the beginning of the pandemic. But now, the way we handle COVID could start to look more like the way we handle the flu – with less government support for testing and treatment, and a focus on "personal responsibility."

10/24/22. Hugh Cook. A foundation is focusing on alleviating the effects of COVID-19 in Natrona County with funding.

> The Natrona Collective Health Trust in collaboration with the Wyoming Community Foundation has allocated over $2 million to improve the health and well-being of the county. $350,000 is being allocated over several years to organizations and nonprofits to help alleviate effects of COVID-19, such as suicide prevention and vaccine education and distribution efforts.

11/16/ 2022. Will Walkey. Mountain West hospitals grapple with spikes in respiratory infections.

> Health officials across the Mountain West are facing a triple threat of increased infections of COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV. Many hospitals, especially pediatric facilities, report being short on staff and beds as they grapple with a surge in patients.

These are archived on the Wyoming Public Media "Neighbor to Neighbor" COVID-19 page. (https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/neighbor-to-neighbor-covid-19-in-wyoming)

WPM reporters also produced podcasts about the pandemic:

1/7/22. Bob Beck. **The making of a podcast about the history of pandemics in Native America**

> As soon as the pandemic hit, Native American tribes rolled out tough policies to combat it. The reason for the urgency goes back to a devastating history of disease that once wiped out upwards of half of tribal populations after the arrival of Europeans to the Americas. A new podcast series produced at Wyoming Public Media connects the dots of the current COVID-19 pandemic with those historical ones. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck sat down with The Modern West podcast's host Melodie Edwards and Shoshone and Arapaho descendant Taylar Stagner - one of the reporters on the series - to get behind the scenes on the making of "Shall Furnish Medicine."

Community Forums include the Virtual Forums and the Walking Tour with Will Walkey:

9/15/2022. The Modern West - Live Panel

> Ranchers across the West have been busy adapting to a changing world. Join The Modern West podcast live on Facebook as we bring together voices from our latest season The Great Individualist to share ideas and hear your questions. We'll visit with animal welfare expert Temple Grandin, Wyoming regenerative rancher Bridger Rardin, Leo Barthelmess with the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, and Judith Schwartz, author of Cows Can Save The Planet. It's happening on Thursday, September 15 at 12:00 p.m. To join in, just come to the Wyoming Public Media Facebook page at the appointed time.

11/4/2022. Will Walkey. Many Wyomingites worry about community change and a lack of economic diversity

> Wyoming Public Radio's Will Walkey recently went on a "listening tour," where he visited Casper, Sheridan, Gillette and Douglas. He brings us this report from the road.

4. *Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2022, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2023. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.*

In 2022 WPM produced 253 stories and features addressing minority and diverse audiences. Included are examples.

Addressing specific populations of Hispanic, Black, Indigenous, and Other groups, WPM content produced from January 1, 2022to December 31, 2022 includes:

Total number of diversity stories and features: 108 (does not include daily news headlines)

Sample content per Wyoming's major diverse populations:

Black Populations (9)

6/29/2022. Hugh Cook. The Rockpile Museum recognizes 125th anniversary of Buffalo Soldiers crossing the Powder River Basin.

9/29/2022. Taylar Stagner. A UW series centers a more complex discussion of Dr. Martin Luther King.

10/28/2022. Jeff Victor. Albany County Sherriff candidates' debate diversity and transparency.

Hispanic Populations (6)

6/13/2022. Caitlin Tan. Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office responds to claims of racist acts.

7/8/2022. Hugh Cook. Wyoming's population is continuing to age and diversify.

8/18/2022. Taylar Stagner. Latinx outdoor organization looks at establishing a Wyoming chapter.

Indigenous Populations (89)

2/4/2022. Taylar Stagnar. Opioid settlement “historic for tribes,” says Eastern Shoshone chairman.

3/7/2022. Taylar Stagnar. National statistics say Indigenous unemployment is still high but lacks local data.

12/12/2022. Taylar Stagnar. Repatriation efforts are underway to return Arapaho and Shoshone hair samples from Harvard University.

Asian Population (4)

2/18/2022. Kamila Kudelska. Heart Mountain and other Japanese-American organizations hold day of remembrance virtual events.

5/11/2022. Kamila Kudelska. Heart Mountain to hold its first Children's Day Festival.

9/12/2022. Hugh Cook. A talk focuses on Wyoming National Guard’s involvement in the Philippine-American War.

LGBT Population (27)

2/23/2022. Bob Beck. Bill to ban transgender women from sports passes a legislative committee.

6/24/2022. Taylar Stagnar. Wind River Pride organizer gives advice on being LGBTQ in Wyoming.

7/27/2022. Jeff Victor. Wyoming Senators undecided on same-sex marriage protections

In 2023, WPM will continue producing at this level but will add a new module dealing with legislative issues and how they affect minority and diverse audiences. WPM will follow bills as they are introduced, debate their value to diverse communities, and follow up on their efficacy.

5. ***Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?***

Wyoming is a statewide operation that does not have a population base that can sustain a viable broadcast service at today’s terrestrial technology level without assistance. Comparatively, the 575,000 statewide population easily equals the population of one county in a more populous state. Yet, it needs to be provided with a public media service that focuses on local information and news and connects the communities.

Wyoming’s geographic size and rugged terrain are challenging. Operating media that serves the public requires deep resources to reach all Wyomingites.

Wyoming is one of the most polarized states in the U.S. The 2022 election bore this out, and the state legislature is more divided and less balanced than ever. A Republican supermajority could mean that the needs of some communities are not being heard or addressed. Media oversight is critical to ensure elected officials respond to constituents and are held accountable. CPB funding is critical in this area.

Wyoming has the smallest population of any state in the U.S. Yet it is one of the largest geographic areas. A population this small yet spread over a large geographic area is not able to sustain public broadcasting. Without CPB grants WPM is not able to deliver service to these widespread and low populated areas. Loss of CPB funding would impact 1) towers and transmitters that serve rural areas, 2) ability to purchase NPR and PRI programming that provides national news to listeners living in remote areas, 3) ability to sustain full-time reporters and stringers who report from statewide locations, 4) ability to continue expansion efforts to reach further rural populations in the state, 5) ability to produce local programming such as the national award-winning Wyoming news magazine Open Spaces that covers major issues in Wyoming as well as joint production WPM programs with Wyoming PBS.

In 2022, the impact of CPB funding again increased. Wyoming's economy, relying highly on the extraction industries, is just now experiencing fossil fuel reductions. The fledgling status of alternative energy does not portend for a stable economy achieved quickly. WPM's licensee, the University of Wyoming, continues to experience heavy budget shortfalls, and can't be depended on as a solid financial supporting partner whose annual allocation will match inflation and cost increases. A loss of over $300K in direct funds, and an equal amount in indirect support, would be critical. The state population does not support rapid donor growth. Removing CPB funding from the budget operating equation would have a crippling effect.