

# **2022 Local Content and Service Report**

## **WKU PBS and WKU Public Radio**

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## **MISSION**

To enrich our communities by providing distinctive programming and services of the highest quality that enhance lives, expand perspectives, and connect us to one another.

## **LOCAL VALUE**

WKU Public Media serves critical roles in Kentucky. As the only university joint licensee (WKU PBS and WKU Public Radio) in the Commonwealth, we proudly serve through our television broadcast signal, radio broadcast signals, satellite transmissions and digital content. Our base of operations is in the heart of WKU's campus in Bowling Green.

WKU Public Media provides public service broadcasting content to the community, professional training for students and creates and distributes media content that serves WKU and the citizens of Kentucky.

We are responsible for the operation of WKU Public Radio, WKU PBS, The Hilltopper Sports Satellite Network, WWHR-FM student radio and providing content for the Kentucky Public Radio Network.

Additionally, we provide video production services for the campus constituency and outside organizations. In addition to our professional staff, we employ many WKU students part-time, allowing them to gain valuable real-world experience.

## **Message from the Executive Director**

Investing in the shared mission of public media is a choice. Thank you for choosing us as a partner in service to our region. We are proud to report that, because of your support, we are serving more people in more ways than before. You have validated regional interest in carefully sourced news and useful information. We have been recognized by our peers for overall excellence in Kentucky two years in a row for radio news. Our news content is also shared throughout the region to highlight important stories of statewide interest. Thank you for making this possible.

We have seen the interest in music and the arts grow in our area and, likewise, we have invested in comprehensive music programming curated by and for our region. This has been shared locally, regionally and nationally largely because of the quality work provided by our staff and students. Your interest and support makes this happen. Our music programming is now available to over 145,000,000 people and that audience grows every single day.

Over the past two decades we have placed additional emphasis on specific relevant documentary content. Our documentaries are known nationally for the time capsule effect they have in electronically preserving the historical significance of our region. Our latest offering, *By Parties Unknown*, airs to an available national audience of approximately 245,000,000 people. These stories, while sometimes difficult to tell, are incredibly important for society. We are able to continue these efforts because of you.

So, from all of us, thank you! We appreciate you being an important part of public media.

David S. Brinkley  
Executive Director, WKU Public Media  
Staff Regent, WKU

**Broadcast Media Offerings: PBS**

**WKU PBS 24.2**

**WKYU CREATE 24.2**

**WKYU-WX 24.3**

20 Hours of originally broadcast original programs (excluding events on Hilltopper Sports Satellite Network)

131.50 Hours of locally broadcast music, arts, and cultural original programming

135.50 Hours of locally broadcast public affairs, news, and informational original programming

## **Broadcast Media Offerings: WKU Public Radio & Classical FM**

WKYU-FM 88.9 BOWLING GREEN

WKU CLASSICAL (88.9 HD-2, 97.5 BOWLING GREEN)

WKU-E 90.9 ELIZABETHTOWN

WKPB-FM 89.5 HENDERSON/OWENSBORO

WDCL-FM 89.7 & 103.3 SOMERSET

3,300 people are listening to our stations at any given time

44,000 people listen per week

446 Stories filed by WKU reporters to Kentucky Public Radio Network

204 hours of original news & public affairs programs

70 feature stories filed by WKU reporters to enhance local programming.

219 hours of local news content, including local newscasts, Kentucky Public Radio Network newscasts, local feature stories, and live special coverage such as election night results, breaking news, etc.

## **BY PARTIES UNKNOWN**

- Documentary viewed in 48 states.
- Reached over 248 million people in the United States.

### **About the film**

So many stories of people who met their end at the hands of a mob have gone untold. By Parties Unknown is a documentary film that explores one particular story of the violent lynching of four Black men in Russellville, Kentucky in 1908 after they were singled out for supporting their friend, Rufus Browder who shot and killed his foreman in self-defense. This lynching occurred during a time when there existed a heightened awareness of unchecked mob violence in the South and against the backdrop of a black community that was committed to being treated as equals.

Seeking to understand the cultural and social context of the time period, By Parties Unknown highlights the events and the cultural climate surrounding the lynching through the perspective of Michael Morrow, community scholar and Executive Director of the SEEK Museum (Struggles for Emancipation and Equality in Kentucky), who has spent the better part of his life researching and tracking down as many details of the case as he can in order to chronicle and share the story for present and future generations.

By Parties Unknown presents Michael's story along with the story of Rufus Browder, John Jones, Virgil Jones, John Boyer and Joe Riley in hopes to achieve Michael's goal; to foster and nurture open and honest conversations about mob violence and racism in communities around the country.

### **Personal Statement from the Director, Joshua Niedwick**

When I first met with Michael Morrow in the summer of 2018 and when he shared with me the Rufus Browder story, I knew we had a responsibility to help him tell it. The harrowing tale of Rufus Browder and the lynching of John Jones, Virgil Jones, Joe Riley, and John Boyer is at the heart of the PBS mission, to educate, to serve underserved communities, and to express a diversity of perspectives. For the next four years we undertook one of the most reverent of opportunities to work with Michael to carefully construct a documentary film that shared this story and place it within its crucial historical and cultural context. Furthermore, the chance to include our student crew in all levels of the production of this work was both inspiring and encouraging as we cultivated within them the skills and sensibilities to continue this type of work in their future career aspirations. Personally, this project and working with Michael has had a profound effect on me and my future work, clarifying my understanding on the need for this story, and others like it from other communities to be told and for PBS stations across the country to assist in telling them.



## **HILLTOPPER SPORTS SATELLITE NETWORK**

- 100+ live streamed sports
- 25 live Hilltopper basketball telecasts
- Nine Hilltopper football telecasts
- Coach's Corner became Talkin' Tops
- 18 Talkin' Tops broadcasts
- Produced 8 volleyball telecasts, 4 of which featured WKU volleyball – a new record!
- Produced the first televised WKU soccer home match.
- Packaged local high school & university commencements on live stream and broadcasts.



## **Lost River Sessions**

- 105 hours of Lost River Sessions telecasts locally
- Available in 36 states
- Available to 163 million viewers weekly

Lost River Sessions is the 11-time Emmy award-winning television, concert and radio series produced by WKU PBS and WKU NPR. Replicating the recording style of older folk records, Lost River Sessions features live music recorded in intimate, iconic settings across the South-Central Kentucky region. Lost River Sessions has a reputation for giving a platform for local Bluegrass, Folk and Americana artist to perform.

Lost River Sessions allows supporters to join together over the soundwaves, the airways, and at regional, iconic venues. For its fourth season, Lost River Sessions welcomed Lily Hiatt, Leah Blevins, Hogslop String Band, Amythyst Kiah, Joan Shelley, Fort Defiance, Carson McHone, Liz Brasher, Kyshona, Girl Tones, Kristina Murray, Brennen Leigh and welcomed back J.D. Wilkes and The Po' Ramblin' Boys.

For the first time ever, Lost River Sessions benefited the community by hosting a free performance featuring the Insubordinate Hillbillies at the SoKY Marketplace in Bowling Green, Kentucky. We are honored to provide live music content to community members that may not normally have these opportunities at such a low cost.

## **2022 Ohio Valley Regional Emmy® Award Nominees**

Nominees for Entertainment (Short Form or Long Form Content) – *Lost River Sessions*, Composite, WKU PBS: Darius Barati, Julie Bowles, Jeff Petrocelli and Neil Purcell

Nominee for Writer (Long Form Content) – *The Nature of History*, Cheryl Shrader Beckley

Nominees for Informational/Instructional or Interview/Discussion (Short Form or Long Form) – *The Nature of History*: Cheryl Shrader Beckley, Joshua Niedwick, Neil Purcell and Zeb Weese

WKU PBS has been nominated in each of the past 20 years, receiving 30 awards.

## 2022 KBA Impact Broadcast Awards

The local news team at WKU Public Radio won 10 awards in this year's Kentucky Broadcasters Association Impact Awards. We are proud to share that for the second straight year we received the Overall Excellence award, given to the top newsroom in the state. Lisa Autry was named Best Radio Reporter in Kentucky. Rhonda Miller won 1<sup>st</sup> place for Long Public Affairs story, with Lisa Autry winning 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Lisa and Rhonda won 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the continuing coverage category. Alana Watson and Colin Jackson won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Long Light News Feature. Your support makes this award-winning journalism possible --- thanks!

1<sup>st</sup> place Overall Excellence WKYU-FM

1<sup>st</sup> place Radio Reporter: Lisa Autry

2<sup>nd</sup> place Short Newscast WKYU-FM

1<sup>st</sup> place for Long Public Affairs: Rhonda Miller for *Henderson Support Group for Those Who Lost Loved Ones to Suicide Holding Remembrance Ceremony*

2<sup>nd</sup> place for Long Public Affairs: Lisa Autry for *In a Race Against Coronavirus Variants, Winning the Undecided is Key*

1<sup>st</sup> place for Continuing Coverage: Lisa Autry for *Communities Rally After Deadly Tornadoes Rip Through Southern and Western Kentucky*

2<sup>nd</sup> place for Continuing Coverage: Rhonda Miller for *Bowling Green Residents Restart Their Lives Following Deadly Tornado*

2<sup>nd</sup> place for Long Light News Feature: Alana Watson and Colin Jackson for *A Community Coming Together: The Importance of Juneteenth*

2<sup>nd</sup> place for Enterprise Reporting: Rhonda Miller for *Kentucky Manufacturers Helping U.S. Reach Zero-Emission Vehicle "Vision of the Future"*

3<sup>rd</sup> place for Enterprise Reporting: Lisa Autry for *Allen County Centenarian Survives the Second Pandemic of Her Lifetime*

## **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiatives**

Jordan Basham, Director of Content at WKU Public Media joined other distinguished public media leaders from across the country to participate in the Public Media Diversity Leaders Initiative (PMDLI), a program of the Riley Institute at Furman University offered in partnership with South Carolina ETV and modeled after the Institute's award-winning South Carolina Diversity Leaders Initiative.

Basham was one of 30 individuals to be a part of the initiative's fourth cohort. Participants took part in a highly interactive curriculum comprising scenario analyses and other experiential learning tools that support public media leaders in their efforts to apply diversity, equity, and inclusion principles to behaviors, systems, and cultures within their organizations.

Collectively, PMDLI fellows reflect a vast public media ecosystem, representing both television and radio as well as a variety of geographic regions, audiences, affiliate organizations, and diversity dimensions.

"The Riley Institute is proud to play a role in connecting a network of public media professionals who are committed to managing, leading, and meeting the needs of increasingly diverse workers, clients, and audiences," said Don Gordon, executive director of the Riley Institute. "We look forward to seeing the positive impact this program will have in communities across the country."

For more information about PMDLI, visit [furman.edu/public-media-dli](http://furman.edu/public-media-dli).

Rachel Cato, Coordinator for Development Services & Outreach, attended the 2022 Higher EDquity Symposium at Northern Kentucky University on November 14-15. The conference's initiatives were to recruit and retain more diverse faculty and students, foster thriving workplace and learning environments for all members of the campus community and equip students for career success in an increasingly diverse society.

Autism at Work – Creating an Inclusive Work Environment was presented by WKU Public Media and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, in partnership with the WKU Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex, WKU College of Education & Behavioral Sciences, and Lifeworks at WKU, on March 28, 2022.

Dr. Jane Thierfield Brown, Assistant Clinical Professor at Yale Child Study, Yale, Medical School, and Director of College Autism Spectrum was a keynote speaker via Zoom. Dr. Christina Noel, Associate Professor, School of Teacher Education in the College of Education & Behavioral

Sciences at WKU, presented the Autism at Work Toolkit: A Guide to Creating a More Inclusive Work Environment.

After a tour of WKU Public Media and meeting with University President Timothy Caboni, the Public Media Advisory Group discussed WKU Public Media's newest podcast *Youth Voice and Audience*, seeking to understand the dynamics of persons with autism in the workplace, particularly at WKU Public Media.

## **Brinkley Student Fellowship**

Established in 2018, the Brinkley Student Employment Fellowship exists to provide a pathway to employment training for WKU students with autism spectrum disorder. Students apply and are interviewed and hired to work in an area of interest within a specific discipline. While employed by WKU Public Media, students will experience the full breadth of operations and learn a skillset that will make them more employable upon graduation.

Each year, two students are hired to be in the program. Once that year is completed, WKU Public Media can hire individuals into student worker positions within the organization. To date, WKU Public Media has retained 100% student employment of the Brinkley Student Employment Fellowship program. This is a testament to the hard work and dedicated effort of the students along with the partnership of WKU Public Media and the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex (CEC) / Kelly Autism Program (KAP) at WKU.

Students can be found working in the areas of Television Production, Business and Philanthropy or Radio and Engineering. Some of the specific job duties include but are not limited to camera operation, audio operation, community events, data entry, newsroom assistance, website/social media, photography, equipment repair, control room management and more. WKU Public Media has become a more inclusive and diversified workforce because of this program. We have had the opportunity to train our professional staff with the staff of the CEC & KAP. This training provides our professional staff with a more inclusive mindset and helps broaden the scope of our existing workforce going forward.

To contribute to the Brinkley Student Employment Fellowship to support students with autism in the workforce please go to <https://www.wkyufm.org/brinkley-student-employment-fellowship-program> and click "DONATE" in the top right-hand corner.

## **ROMP Fest**

ROMP Fest is more than just a festival or music show, it is also a fantastic opportunity for our student employees to develop some game-changing skills. For some students this was their first time working in a truly remote environment on highly specific technical equipment; and they all knocked it out of the park. The show speaks for itself when it comes to their efforts. I'm so proud of the final product, but I'm much prouder of the work the students put in to make this happen. – Elijah Smith, Associate Producer/Director

## **Dana Divine's Retirement**

I began my professional career in public broadcasting after graduating from WKU with a business degree. It was an exciting time since I was part of the team who signed on WKYU-TV in January 1989. It took a great deal of commitment to fully execute the vision of Dr. Charles Anderson and create a public broadcasting station on WKU's campus. Through a lot of hard work and many late nights, we were able to accomplish the ambitious goal.

My first job at WKYU was as a Traffic Assistant. I worked closely with Linda Oldham, the Program Manager, to develop the broadcast schedule. Throughout the years, I have worked in Programming, Traffic/Operations, Outreach, Pledge and even appeared in front of the camera on occasion.

In my role as a programmer, I was acutely aware of the enormous responsibility to honor the audience by curating the best local and national public broadcasting programs in order to create a schedule with relevance and meaning. My job was made easier by having so many great programs to choose from including Mammoth Cave: A Place Called Home, The Nature of History, Lost River Sessions, By Parties Unknown, Masterpiece, Nova, Nature, American Experience, and many others. It was very important to me to carefully review each program and consider the impact the content would have on the lives of our audience. I believe in the mission of public broadcasting "to serve the underserved and to create a more informed public, one challenged and invigorated by a deeper understanding and appreciation of events, ideas, and culture" in our local community and beyond. My commitment to fulfill that mission was the driving force behind my 34-year career.

Throughout my career, I watched our station grow and thrive even when faced with challenges. We understood the importance of supporting each other in our efforts and building relationships with the community. There were many outreach opportunities including the annual Pool Party where we celebrated children and their families with an event at the local water park, the PBS Kids Writers and Illustrators contest, the Lost River Sessions Capital Arts events featuring some of the most talented musicians in the region, the Tree-rific events where we partnered with a local organization to hand out trees in celebration of Arbor Day, and the initiative to work with the Warren Regional Juvenile Detention Center to give residents the opportunity to learn production skills. There is a great sense of purpose when you meaningfully connect with others, and it is at the heart of what a public service organization should be.

During my tenure at WKU-PBS, I worked with some amazing individuals who are now an important part of my extended family. I am extremely grateful to have had such a long career with WKU-PBS and to be connected to the WKU community which has been such a significant part of my life.



## **New Employee: Jacob Martin**

Jacob is our newest reporter at WKU Public Radio. He joins the newsroom from Kansas City where he covered the city's underserved communities and general assignments reporting at KCUR, the NPR member station in the city. A Louisville, Kentucky native, he spent time living in Brooklyn, New York before moving back to Kentucky. He is a graduate of the University of Louisville.

As a reporter at WKU Public Radio, he is looking forward to providing coverage of diversity across southern Kentucky and engaging with the international community in the region. As the growing population becomes more diverse across the US, Kentucky is no different. He is a passionate lifelong learner and is eager to learn more about the new Americans that make up our community in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and is ecstatic to tell stories about those diverse backgrounds and individuals.

Here is a recent article that Jacob Martin wrote on December 16, 2022, titled, 'Slow progress, but it's progress': African-American Museum in Bowling Green moving closer to reopening.

One year after being nearly destroyed by two disasters, The African American Museum of Bowling Green is one step closer to opening to the public.

The museum, dedicated to telling the history of African Americans in Bowling Green, was nearly lost due to an electrical fire only weeks after a deadly tornado devastated the area.

"We've made slow progress, but it's progress," said Wathetta Buford, project manager of the African American Museum.

Nearly one year to the day of the anniversary of the tornado, ongoing repairs to the building the museum occupies were completed and plans to reassemble the museum can now begin.

In the wake of the fire, museum staff members were left scrambling to preserve the artifacts and find a proper storage facility for the relics, many of which are nearly 100 years old.

"Right after the fire, some of our community partners and board members worked together to save whatever artifacts they could save," Buford said. "We all worked at WKU Supply Services to make sure those things that we saved were packed up right and then some of the things were stored at the Kentucky Museum, and I still have boxes out at the Corvette Museum."

The African American Museum in Bowling Green is still rebuilding after a fire destroyed much of the building near the end of 2021.

Many documents are being held in a freezer at the Corvette Museum to help keep them preserved after sustaining water damage in the fire. The museum's goal is to reorganize, curate, and bring back the surviving artifacts to the renovated space.

According to Buford, the museum would not be in the place it is now without the show of support from many local organizations and community members.

"We've had a lot of help from Western and a lot of people...we appreciate them," Buford said.

Western Kentucky University, which owns the building the museum occupies, allowed temporary storage and working space for museum staff while more arrangements were taking place following the disasters. The university made repairs to the building at no cost to the museum and recently renewed the museum's lease on the building through 2030.

According to Buford, the organization also received a \$10,000 grant from the Rotary Club of Bowling Green which will be put toward alleviating the cost of restorations to the artifacts.

"People may say, 'oh that's not much,'" but it's a whole lot," Buford said. "It takes a lot of time to get everything like it should be and I'm still making sure the specifics of the grant are being met."

Shortly after the fire, a GoFundMe page was set up on the museum's behalf and nearly \$6,000 was raised to help with ongoing repairs to the building.

While no official date for the museum to reopen has been set, Buford said she is tentatively planning for spring as a goal for a partial opening.

"I've set a tentative date of April that we'll at least have part of the exhibits ready, and we can maybe have a ribbon cutting," Buford said. "So, I'd like to have some kind of celebration— that's big for me."

<https://www.wkyufm.org/news/2022-12-16/slow-progress-but-its-progress-african-american-museum-in-bowling-green-moving-closer-to-reopening>

## **Student Workers**

"Through working at WKU Public Media, I've been able to gain firsthand experience in several aspects of production for both music and sporting events. From learning cable wrapping to editing music festival footage, WKU Public Media has given me the opportunity to gain experience in the broadcasting industry while also allowing me to build connections with others." - Matthew Clark

"Working at WKU Public Media has given me a lot of opportunities that I wouldn't have gotten otherwise. You get the chance to work with live sports, which is what I am comfortable with, but you can also work on editing projects like music and documentaries, and that has really shown me that there is more to do. You can sort of find your niche here and I think that's the best thing as a student." - Ashlyn Hernandez

"WKU Public Media has given me a lot of opportunities to learn and grow my skills. I can honestly say that I've learned more working than I have in a lot of my classes. Ever since I started working here, I've become a lot more skilled at operating cameras, editing, audio, and to a small degree technical directing. WKU Public Media has definitely given me a safe environment to learn and grow." - Nick Teller

## **Kentucky Governor's Scholars Visit**

Kentucky Governor's Scholars studying Journalism & Mass Media on the GSP-Bellarmino campus visited WKU Public Media for a field trip during their summer program. The scholars toured radio and television facilities and participated in a roundtable discussion with WKU Public Media employees on careers in the media.

## **Leadership Bowling Green Visit**

The 2022 Leadership Bowling Green Class visited the WKU Public Media studios in the spring of 2022. Leadership Bowling Green is “an exclusive opportunity for established and emerging leaders to become immersed in learning about our community”. This opportunity is provided through the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce. The Leadership Class of 32 Bowling Green business leaders learned about the extent of our services at WKU Public Media and how we connect to the fabric of our community. Their visit included a detailed tour of our studios and conversations with staff from WKU PBS and WKU Public Radio as well as leadership. We welcome opportunities to involve people in our everyday operations and to educate those with interest in WKU Public Media.