



2024 Local Content and Service Report

"I believe in local content, and I consider WKU Public Radio a local station because it knows more about the needs and feelings of the community. That's what it's about. You all know the pulse of this community better than any other station."



Dr. Bharat Mody of Glasgow, KY, with a HeroRAT



WKU Public Media, joint radio and television licensee

WKU Public Television has been broadcasting for over 36 years on Channel 24 to a population of over 370,000 citizens of Kentucky and is carried on over 20 cable systems and online.

WKU Public Radio started as a single signal in 1980 and has now grown to include four transmitters serving a population of over 1.3 million across Kentucky, Southern Indiana, and Northern Tennessee.

WKU Public Television produced several local shows in 2024 including: Ten episodes of *Lost River Sessions*, Fourteen episodes of *ROMP*, a new documentary-*Living the American Dream*, an episode of *Mainstreet*, and 15 local highschool and university graduation ceremonies. All of this content accounted for over 40 hours of new, local content.

WKU Public Radio aired around 245 hours of local news and public affairs content and contributed 420 original news stories to the Kentucky Public Radio Network that were aired on partner stations across the Commonwealth.

WKU Public Media plays a crucial role in protecting our community by ensuring uninterrupted distribution of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs), including severe weather warnings and AMBER alerts. This service is part of our commitment to strengthen safety across the region.

WKU Public Media students logged over 20,000 paid workforce development hours, receiving guidance from professional staff to strengthen their resumes and prepare for their careers beyond college.

WKU PBS aired 2,080 hours of non-commercial educational programming designed for preschool-aged children, helping to ensure they are prepared for kindergarten.

Year in and year out, the talented team at WKU Public Media receives regional and national recognition. These accolades reinforce our commitment to quality journalism, arts programming, and community impact.

60th Annual Ohio Valley Emmy Awards

WKU PBS received three nominations at the Awards held in July of 2024, for bodies of work created in 2023, and secured a win in the “Audio, Post-Produced” category.

Jeff Petrocelli, Audio Engineer and Producer, won an Emmy for his Compilation of *ROMP* 2023, which included acts by Del McCoury, Tommy Emmanuel, and We Banjo 3. This was Petrocelli’s Sixth Emmy win.

Other nominations included:

- Directing: Elijah Smith, Producer/Director, for his work on a *ROMP* episode featuring We Banjo 3.
- Sports Story: Cameron Witte, Director of Creative Video, for "Cash Money Marcus," celebrating a key figure in WKU Women’s Basketball.

Additionally, the WKU Public Media student production crew contributed behind the scenes, helping produce the backstage live portion of the awards ceremony, earning high praise from industry professionals.

WKU PBS has maintained an impressive streak, earning nominations for 22 consecutive years and securing 33 awards to date.



WKU PBS Student Production Crew producing the 2024 Ohio Valley Emmy’s



Petrocelli and his Sixth Emmy



Part of the WKU PBS Student Production Crew along with staff and presenters

2024 Public Media Awards

WKU Public Media's Alana Watson and student news producer Kennedy Gayheart won the station's first ever Public Media Award, given out by the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA). Their story focused on the legacy of Black cave guides at Mammoth Cave National Park, highlighting a family's five generation history, and won the category of Society & Culture at the 2024 NETA Conference.

Other nominations include:

- *Lost River Sessions*, featuring Larry & Joe, a fusion group blending Appalachian Bluegrass and Venezuelan Folk music. The nomination recognized Producer/Director Elijah Smith, Audio Producer Jeff Petrocelli, and WKU Public Media students for their outstanding camera work.
- Lisa Autry was nominated in Local Storytelling for her coverage of the massive EV battery manufacturing project in Glendale, KY.
- Jacob Martin was also named a finalist in Society & Culture for his story on a Bowling Green-based support group for LGBTQ+ semi-truck drivers.

KBA Excellence in Broadcasting Awards

WKU Public Radio was also named the 2024 Station of the Year by the Kentucky Broadcasters Association. The award is given to one radio news team in the commonwealth that the KBA determines has showcased the best local journalism and storytelling.



Alana Watson and Jerry Bransford, who was featured in her award winning story, discussing his families involvement as cave guides in Mammoth Cave National Park.



2024 Local Content and Service Stories of Impact

Alana Watson promoted to Collaboration and Content Manager

WKU Public Media named Alana Watson as its new Collaboration & Content Manager in 2024, a role designed to enhance digital content and student-driven initiatives for both WKU PBS and WKU Public Radio. Watson, a longtime team member, works on content distribution, membership efforts, and programming. Previously a student reporting specialist and radio host, she brings experience as a journalist, instructor, and leader in public media. Watson recently earned a national award from the National Education Television Association and has completed multiple leadership programs. With degrees from WKU and Austin Peay, she aims to improve services for audiences, students, and staff while strengthening WKU Public Media’s operational cohesion.



WKU Public Media joins newly created Appalachia + Mid-South Newsroom



In 2024, WKU Public Media joined NPR and 6 fellow public radio stations in Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia to form a new regional collaboration called the Appalachia + Mid-South Newsroom. This innovative journalism collaboration ensures that audiences hear the stories they want and need. These stories are told by people who live in the region, for the people who live there. There are thousands of people in rural areas of the region, and they do not have access to timely reporting on public health announcements, state government updates, or federal resources at their disposal. The collective power of the Appalachia + Mid-South Newsroom connects our communities through high-quality, in-depth, and authentic storytelling.

WKU Public Radio collaborates on 2024 Voter Guide

Kentucky Public Radio created a 2024 interactive voter guide, a free resource designed to inform the public ahead of Election Day. Reporters from Kentucky Public Radio stations, including WKU Public Radio, collaborated to profile every major race in the state. The guide allowed voters to enter their address and receive personalized information on state races relevant to their district, helping them make informed decisions before heading to the polls.



International Festival Film Viewing

WKU PBS played a role in the 35th Annual International Festival in Bowling Green, held in late September 2024, by hosting a screening of two documentaries that highlight the city's thriving international community.

This collaboration began when Ball State PBS, recognizing Bowling Green's diverse and growing international population, reached out to WKU PBS for assistance in capturing footage of the area. Inspired by this initiative, WKU PBS went on to produce its own documentary, showcasing the positive impact of refugees on the Bowling Green community.

The screenings took place at The Capitol, a historic theater operated by the Warren County Public Library. The event was promoted through social media, direct email outreach, The Capitol's website, printed flyers, and the International Festival's official website, ensuring broad community engagement.



Living the American Dream, produced by WKU PBS, shared the story of Vedad Hadzikadunic, a Bosnian refugee who fled the Bosnian War (1992-1995) and rebuilt his life in Bowling Green. His journey highlights the challenges refugees face and their crucial contributions to their new communities.

Following the screenings, a question and answer session took place with the films' producers allowing attendees to engage in discussion. The event was open to the public and well attended, fostering a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity within the community.



Fleeing to Flyover Country, produced by Ball State PBS, with assistance from many of the WKU PBS team, explored how Bowling Green thrived thanks to its welcoming atmosphere.



Carl The Collector Community Preview

WKU PBS was thrilled to introduce South Central Kentucky to a new PBS KIDS animated series featuring Carl, a lovable raccoon with a passion for collecting. The event took place on Saturday, November 2nd, at Western Kentucky University.

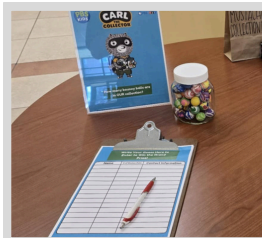
To ensure an inclusive experience, the team created a sensory-friendly environment with dimmed lights and various seating options.

Promotion efforts included social media posts, direct emails, and flyers distributed to community partners, helping to drive strong engagement.



WKU Public Media collaborated with the Warren County Public Library, Bowling Green and Warren County Schools, the Kelly Autism Center, and WKU's Gifted and Talented Program to enhance and promote the event.

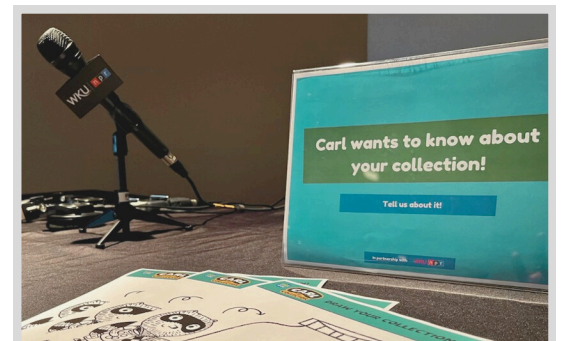
The Warren County Public Library contributed by providing free comic books and hosting interactive activities like building with blocks and magnetic tiles.



Attendees were invited to color a Carl-themed sheet, which was later displayed in the WKU Public Media station lobby. A bouncy ball guessing game added to the fun, with a prize awarded to the person who came closest to the correct number of balls in the jar.

WKU Public Radio set up a mobile recording booth, allowing children to share stories about their favorite collections, adding an interactive and personal touch to the event. Additionally, attendees received goodie bags filled with stimulation toys to ensure an inclusive experience.

The event was a resounding success, providing an engaging, interactive, and enjoyable experience for all who attended.



WKU Public Media brings Arthur to Kiwanis Mardi Gras Madness

On Saturday, March 8th, the Kiwanis Club of Bowling Green brought the party to the National Corvette Museum Racetrack with their 2nd annual Mardi Gras Madness—and what a celebration it was!

This high-energy, family-friendly event had it all: an exciting car show, live music, delicious food trucks, and a festive parade that kept the crowd buzzing with excitement! Our team was beyond thrilled to be part of the fun, especially with our special guest, Arthur making a surprise appearance!

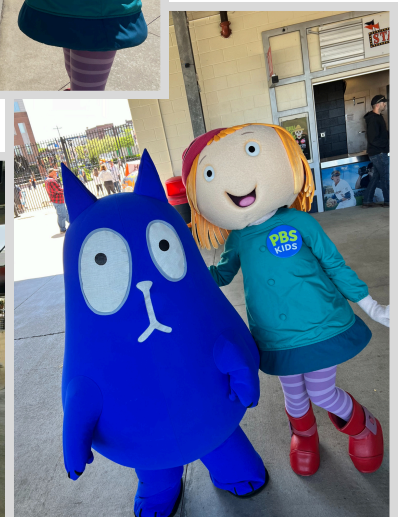
We joined in the celebration by handing out traditional Mardi Gras beads and candy, plus fun and educational goodies like books, bookmarks, pencils, and more! It was an incredible day of community, creativity, and, of course, Mardi Gras magic!



PBS KIDS Days at the Ballpark

The tradition was kept alive in 2024 with not one, but two exciting PBS KIDS Day events at the Bowling Green Ballpark! Families came out to enjoy a day filled with laughter, learning, and unforgettable moments.

On April 13th, beloved PBS characters Peg & Cat made a special appearance, followed by Donkey Hodie on July 28th—bringing big smiles and even bigger hugs on both occasions! Kids had a blast with hands-on puppet activities, interactive games, and exciting giveaways—making memories that will last a lifetime.



Core Memories Made at *Sesame Street Live*

WKU PBS had the joy of surprising a local family with tickets to *Sesame Street Live*, including backstage passes, at the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center! Michaela Boisseau, a mom from Logan County, was thrilled for the opportunity to take her family to this magical experience. Seeing the excitement on her kids' faces made it even more special! She shared that the day was a “core memory” for them. Boisseau said that her “kiddos had the best time!!! We have a love for Elmo and watch it every day!”



Leadership Bowling Green Visits Behind the Scenes at WKU Public Media

On March 13th, WKU Public Media had a blast welcoming local business leaders as part of Media Day! These participants were part of Leadership Bowling Green, an exclusive program designed to immerse established and emerging leaders in learning about the Bowling Green community.

During their visit, guests got a hands-on media experience, stepping into the radio studio to record an underwriting spot and having fun "accepting an Emmy" in front of the green screen. It was an exciting day filled with laughter, learning, and a deeper connection to the world of public media!



WKU Public Media Workforce Development

WKU Public Media student professionals gained hands-on experience across various production roles, including camera operation, directing, producing, audio, and editing in diverse settings. They worked on sporting events, studio productions, live event coverage, and field shoots, including contributions to our Emmy Award-winning national series, *Lost River Sessions*, on WKU PBS.

For WKU Public Radio, student professionals researched, wrote, and reported on stories, honing their journalistic skills.

WKU Public Media provides students with experiences on the interview, hiring, and training process through these real-world employment positions. Students gain valuable knowledge and expertise to carry into their future careers.



Inspiring Future Journalists

WKU Public Media was thrilled to welcome aspiring journalists from Bowling Green High School on February 23rd! These students, all interested in pursuing journalism, had the unique opportunity to explore the field firsthand.

In collaboration with the WKU School of Media and Communication, the WKU Public Media team guided the students on a tour of the journalism facilities and gave them a behind-the-scenes look at a live news broadcast. They shadowed professionals working behind the camera and in the control room, gaining valuable hands-on experience.

This visit was part of the SCK Launch program through the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce, an initiative designed to create a strong talent pipeline and support the growth of our local community.

