

Regional Collaborations to Counter Decline of Local Journalism**Date:** Monday, March 29, 2010**Category:** Press Release

March 29, 2010 (Des Moines, IA) -- Iowa Public Radio today announced their participation in a major Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) initiative to increase local journalism in Iowa. The nationwide initiative will support local reporting capacities in seven regions across the country and develop a system by which local reporters can tap into the shared resources of other public media networks.

CPB is funding the creation of seven Local Journalism Centers (LJCs), combining CPB and participating stations' resources for a ground-breaking new approach to news gathering and its distribution. The Centers will form teams of multimedia journalists, who will focus on issues of particular relevance to each region; their in-depth reports will be presented regionally and nationally via digital platforms, community engagement programs and radio and television broadcasts.

"Iowa Public Radio has long been an essential part of connecting Iowans to their communities," Mary Grace Herrington, the CEO Iowa Public Radio said. "This partnership with CPB will help us continue to provide the in-depth coverage of local issues and public policies on a local level, ensuring Iowans have the information they need to make informed decisions about their lives."

The Local Journalism Centers (LJCs) will each focus on a particular issue relevant to communities throughout their regions. As part of the Plains Center, Iowa Public Radio will provide stories that focus on agribusiness, including farming practices, food and fuel production, looking both at local and national issues. News and information will be fed throughout the public media network, via radio, television production and online. The total CPB and station investment over two years is approximately \$10.5 million, with an expectation that each Center will become self-sustaining by the end of the two-year funding period.

Jonathan Ahl, Iowa Public Radio's News Director, says, "We are eager to be part of this initiative. It means Iowan's stories will be told across the heartland, and Iowans will hear stories from other communities in Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. In addition, Iowa Public Radio will benefit from the resources of journalists across our region to bring news that matters to our listeners."

Iowa Public Radio will hire one full-time reporter to produce and file the reports from Iowa's farming communities. The reporter, who will begin work on July 1, 2010, will gather stories from every corner of the state to tell Iowa's unique stories and highlight the stories that affect America's heartland.

Iowa Public Radio informs, enriches and engages Iowans through radio programming and other media. IPR enhances civic and cultural connections across the state, strengthening communities and reflecting Iowa's sense of place. For more information about this event or any of Iowa Public Radio's programming, contact us at 515-725-1700.