



KASU Station Activity Summary for 2017. Submitted to CPB on 2/13/18.

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.

As the only public radio station serving our largely rural, tri-state area, KASU offers a mix of the things that make public radio great. The station is currently using the slogan "Music, News, Arts, and Views" to describe this mix.

KASU's music programs offer types of music that are not being offered by other radio stations in our region. From our classical and jazz programs in the evening and overnight, to blues, bluegrass, celtic, and Americana programs on the weekends, to our noontime "Arkansas Roots" program which airs six days a week, KASU serves an audience with diverse musical tastes and interests. "Arkansas Roots" has its own Facebook page, where upcoming shows are promoted. The show page also regularly promotes the musicians playing each week at local music venues, playing some of the music from upcoming performances and tagging the artists' pages whenever possible. This cross-promotion has been very well received and appreciated by the musicians and their fans, and it has attracted new audiences as these fans share and then tune in to hear their favorite band's music. The station's in-person engagement is exemplified by our monthly Bluegrass Monday concert series, the Arkansas Roots Music Festival, KASU Music Nights at the Johnny Cash Heritage Festival, and other music events the station sponsors.

KASU has continued to provide local and regional news from our own news team, to incorporate stories shared through cooperation with other public radio stations in the state, and to share stories from Arkansas Public Media, the Regional Journalism Collaborative formed last year with help from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Many media events are presented to our audience as they happen, through Facebook Live. These videos are available on demand for later viewing, and these events are shared, along with other news stories, on our website and through social media. KASU's news team has been diligent, both on-air and online, in providing information on area flooding; on disaster response and relief efforts; on weather-related changes in trash pickup, public transportation, and other community event schedules; and on ways for members of our region to help others in need. The news staff, led by KASU News Director Johnathan Reaves, has provided stories dealing with issues such as state executions and the death penalty debate, poverty in the region, efforts to improve relations between people of color and police in Jonesboro, economic improvement and employment initiatives in the region, medical marijuana, and area protest group activities. Johnathan has also continued to provide periodic interviews with the two

U.S. Senators from Arkansas, and the U.S. Representative from the First Congressional District of Arkansas. These live interviews run 10-15 minutes in length and cover a wide variety of topics. Each interview is recorded and then put on the KASU website for on-demand listening, shared on social media, and often shared and promoted by the Congressional staffs in Washington, reaching people far outside the broadcast region.

KASU also offers regular features and interviews promoting the activities of Jonesboro's Foundation of the Arts and other arts organizations in the area, keeping listeners informed about art exhibits, performances, plays, film festivals, and concerts throughout the region. KASU's news and interviews, along with NPR programs such as "1A," "Fresh Air," and "Here and Now," provide listeners with multiple viewpoints on a wide variety of topics.

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.

As previously mentioned, KASU has continued to participate in the Regional Journalism Collaboration now operating as Arkansas Public Media. This organization, administered from the offices of KUAR in Little Rock, supports one reporter at each station in the partnership, tasked with providing long-form and multi-platform stories in key topics that are important in each station's broadcast region. APM reporter Ann Kenda continues to provide excellent coverage of regional stories, some of which have gotten national attention. When Arkansas executed four death-row inmates in one week, two of them in one night, Ann interviewed former death-row inmate Damien Echols of the so-called West Memphis Three, who provided his unique insights into life on death row and his personal experiences with the men being executed. This interview from the spring of 2017 went viral on social media, being shared by tens of thousands of people.

In addition to the radio news collaboration, KASU continued partnerships with several arts organizations in the region to present or promote various concerts and performances. KASU has partnered with the Delta Symphony Orchestra in a trade agreement in which KASU promotes the orchestra's concerts in exchange for recognition in concert programs and on the organization's website. We have a similar arrangement with the Fowler Center, Arkansas State University's performing arts center. A partnership with the Foundation of Arts of Northeast Arkansas includes interviews and promotion of their events and performances, for which KASU gets placement in their programs and in their season brochure. The station also has a banner displayed in the Foundation's Arts Center.

KASU has partnered with the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to record a weekly feature with one of the department's travel writers. Each week, KASU's Mark Smith talks with Kim Williams about upcoming festivals, events, and attractions around the state. This feature airs on Saturday and again on Monday, as part of KASU's "Arkansas Roots" program.

During the past year, KASU has continued a long tradition of offering live music performances throughout the region. We pride ourselves in helping to kick-start the downtown revitalization effort in Jonesboro in the 1990s, by starting a live, monthly blues concert in a downtown restaurant that was one of the few struggling businesses remaining on a largely shuttered Main Street. Today, thanks in large part to a change in state law regarding liquor licenses for private clubs, Jonesboro's Main Street is a thriving arts and entertainment area, with restaurants offering live music almost every night of the week. In 2017, KASU partnered with the Downtown Jonesboro Association to present live music as part of the association's "Alive After Five," an

event that is part farmer's market, part arts and crafts festival, designed to bring the community together to celebrate the vibrant downtown arts and entertainment area. In addition, the station has been in ongoing discussions with officials in the nearby town of Newport regarding participation in a concert series there. And KASU has a long-time partnership with the Collins Theater in the nearby town of Paragould, where the station sponsors its very popular Bluegrass Monday concert series each month.

For the ninth consecutive year, KASU partnered with the Delta Symposium at Arkansas State University to help fund and promote the speakers, special events, and musical performances that highlight the scholarship and research into the culture and traditions of the Mississippi River Delta region in which we are located. The Arkansas Roots Music Festival was held on the final day of the Symposium. This is a Saturday-in-the-Park outdoor event that KASU helps to sponsor in conjunction with the ASU Department of English. The April 2017 concert showcased a variety of musical styles, with performances by the Vikki McGee 3 and Natural Disaster; Sky City; Apple, Rounds, Cobb, and Hees; and Memphis blues performer Sweet Angel. The festival is well-attended, with people of all ages out in the park enjoying a full day of great music, and KASU is proud to help make it possible.

KASU has also worked with CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates for children. This non-profit organization recruits and trains volunteers to advocate for children and youth in the court system, many of whom have suffered abuse or neglect. KASU news has interviewed the CASA director about the work of the organization and its impact in the community, and the station has publicized its recruitment and training events.

KASU News Director Johnathan Reaves has been named Small Station Representative on the Board of Directors of Public Radio News Directors Incorporated (PRNDI). He has been involved in the planning of the group's annual convention and has done excellent work to cultivate awareness of KASU and other small stations within this national organization.

KASU maintains memberships in four area Chambers of Commerce - Jonesboro, Paragould, Newport, and Batesville. In 2016, we participated in each chamber's annual Business Expo event. KASU's Director of Underwriting and Corporate Relations, Doreen Selden, helped with the planning for the Jonesboro Business Expo, serving on the Chamber's business network committee. This committee also organized several Lunch & Learn events for area businesspeople. Doreen also often attends the Jonesboro Chamber's Business After Hours events and ribbon-cuttings for new businesses. In addition to these Chamber of Commerce activities, Doreen also served on a publicity committee for the Downtown Jonesboro Association, helping to get the word out about special events in the downtown area. KASU's news team has covered some of the newsworthy downtown events, such as the annual Hispanic Celebration held around Cinco de Mayo.

KASU inaugurated a new travel program by offering our listeners a trip to Cuba in October of 2016. KASU had nine travelers joining the tour for the initial travel offering, done in partnership with Premier World Discovery. A few months after the trip, the station brought the travelers together again to share photos and memories of their journey. They all enjoyed the reunion and indicated they would be interested in future travel opportunities. Our second trip, in partnership with Collette Travel, is due to take place in February, 2018, to Iceland.

Finally, KASU partnered with Arkansas Heritage Sites at Arkansas State University to present KASU Music Nights as part of the first Johnny Cash Heritage Festival, held in Cash's hometown

of Dyess, Arkansas. Although the festival was held in October, 2017, organization and planning for the event began well ahead of the end of the 2017 fiscal year in June.

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.

KASU was invited to help with the first Johnny Cash Heritage Festival, by providing live music for two nights during the event. The festival was held in Cash's hometown in October of 2017, but planning began in the 2017 fiscal year. Dr. Ruth Hawkins, who organized the festival, said, "Arkansas Heritage Sites at Arkansas State University could not be more proud of having KASU Radio as a major partner in the inaugural Johnny Cash Heritage Festival in Dyess."

KASU continues to invest in the annual Delta Symposium at Arkansas State University. The event showcases research into the music, culture, and heritage of the Mississippi Delta region and its impact on our nation and our world. Dr. Greg Hansen, a professor of folklore and English, says, "KASU is indispensable to the success of the Symposium." In April of 2017, the station worked with organizers of the event to present the Arkansas Roots Festival. This annual outdoor music event was renamed to reflect its connection with KASU's noontime music program, "Arkansas Roots."

"Arkansas Roots" does more than just play local and regional music. Throughout the year, the program offers arts features that inform the listeners about concerts, recitals, plays, and exhibits that are being presented in the community. There are about 50-60 of these features produced over the course of a year.

The Collins Theater in Paragould, Arkansas continues to host KASU's Bluegrass Monday concert. KASU's longest running concert series, Bluegrass Monday brings nationally known, award-winning bluegrass bands to the Collins each month to perform for an enthusiastic crowd. The admission is free; we suggest a 5-dollar contribution when KASU literally passes the hat for donations with all proceeds going directly to the band. Underwriting support helps us pay for rental and technical assistance. Joe Wessell, head of the non-profit board that operates the Collins, has called the concert "one of the best things we have going here."

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 2016, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2017. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

In July, 2016, KASU aired a report from Arkansas Public Media on the first Gay Pride Day to be observed by an American Legion post in Batesville, Arkansas. Despite sparse attendance, the organizer still felt the event was an important first step in recognizing the service of LGBTQ veterans. KASU news also reported on court cases involving Arkansas cities and LGBTQ protections, and on an Arkansas case in the U.S. Supreme Court which required states to list same-sex married couples on their children's birth certificates.

During the course of the year, KASU news reported on efforts to improve relations between Jonesboro police and the city's African-American population, on a special ceremony dedicating a part of campus in recognition of the first four African-American professors to teach at Arkansas State, and on a newly-formed campus organization to focus on issues of race. The news team also reported on an effort to make Arkansas State a sanctuary campus to protect members of the campus community who are undocumented immigrants. The station also reported on the possible local impact of the Trump administration's travel ban.

The KASU news team covered Martin Luther King Day events in Jonesboro, as well as Black History Month events on the Arkansas State University campus. Stories leading up to these events let listeners know what was being planned, then KASU's news director and reporter offered coverage of several of the events, including the annual MLK Day march and various speeches, lectures, and panel discussions held in conjunction with these observances. In addition to broadcast features, the news team added photos to the stories presented on the website and shared on social media.

As noted earlier, KASU news covered the Hispanic Celebration in downtown Jonesboro, held each year on the weekend closest to Cinco de Mayo. The news team also covered the opening of a new local Hispanic Center, highlighting its services, and promoting special events such as volunteer recruitment for ESL tutors and other needs for the center. In addition, KASU reported on the formation of the Northeast Arkansas Hispanic Professional Network, an organization to highlight Hispanic businesses in the area and foster business collaborations. In December, 2016, KASU aired a story on how advances in agricultural technology coincide with a decline in migrant students in the area.

In addition to news, KASU also offers weekend programs of music and information produced by local staff and volunteer personnel of ethnicity. Programs such as "Arkansas Roots," "Rhythm and Grooves," and "Tradition," feature roots music from the soul, rhythm & blues, and gospel traditions, which appeal to a diverse audience and often include obscure and vintage recordings and fascinating information on Arkansas' diverse history and culture.

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?

Small stations like KASU are the ones most greatly impacted by CPB funding. KASU is the only public radio station serving this region, and we would not be able to provide the local and regional news, the unique, locally produced music programs, the live music performances, and other programs and services without the support we get from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

KASU's staff includes five on-air personnel, one Arkansas Public Media reporter, and five volunteers who produced an estimated 838 hours of music programs, 45 hours of news and public affairs, and 38 hours of arts and culture features. Local programming is labor intensive. We could not fill an entire schedule of high quality programming seven days a week, 24 hours a day, without financial support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The Community Service Grant allows KASU to provide well-known national public radio programs of news, discussion and music. Audience research shows that some of our most popular programs are 1A, Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me, and Morning Edition. KASU is able to provide these and other national programs because of the CSG. Without the grant funding, the quality of our music offerings would go down because it is practically impossible to find competent local hosts for classical and jazz music in

this area. Performance Today and Concert Hall have listeners throughout the area and are a great service to listeners in northeast Arkansas, southeast Missouri and northwestern Tennessee.

We continue to fund one staff position from the Community Service Grant: Doreen Selden's position is paid for with CPB funds. Through her efforts, along with those of Development Director Mark Smith, KASU continues to show increasing local support for its mission and programs. In addition to recruiting new underwriters, Doreen provides the important service of maintaining relations with existing contributors by personal visits, phone calls, and general public relations. She works the phones during our fundraising drives, attends business related functions in the community, and helps with special events and projects. She also manages KASU's fledgling travel program, which has afforded KASU members wonderful opportunities to experience exotic locations such as Cuba and Iceland. She has gone above and beyond the call of duty to make sure our travelers had the most positive experience we could offer. The Community Service Grant makes her job – and our financial growth -- possible.