



NORTHERN COMMUNITY RADIO

Annual Report

May 6, 2017

Fiscal Year 2016
and
May 2016 through April 2017

Annual Report to the Membership

May 6, 2017

Board President's Report

Since we last met at an Annual Meeting, you elected 2 new board members to fill 2 empty seats: Eric Ramlo of Park Rapids and Dave Lathrop from Squaw Lake. This year you again have the opportunity to elect 2: Eric Ramlo, Christina Brown from Bovey, Kent Montgomery from Brainerd, Chris Bergquist from Grand Rapids, or Jack Shelton from Bemidji. As I write this, there may be more nominations from the floor. If you are a member in good standing please vote one time, if you are a family member, you and another family member can vote.

KAXE/KBXE had 2 very well attended CAB meetings. There are Community Advisory Board meetings where we come to your community to see how we're doing. Our goals are to inform, educate, and entertain our audience. These CAB meetings help us discover how we're doing our job. The first one this fiscal year was held in Bemidji in September at KBXE studios. We had 22 listeners attend (plus staff and board). In March we went to Hibbing at Sammy's pizza. We learned a lot about the Iron Range cities, and brought some of those stories to the air on the Morning Show. There were 17 listeners there for a lively conversation.

The Board of Directors had a successful silent auction at our Mississippi River Music Fest. All of those proceeds went to our (eventual) new tower. We also helped out at several festivals in our listening area such as Ethnic Fest, Muskie Days in Nevis, and NCR-sponsored Turtle River Days.

All in all, it was a great year. Next year we may have to look at possible defunding from the Feds. Call your representatives and let them know that Northern Community Radio is important to you. Thanks so much for your ongoing support.
-Julie Crabb, Board President

Staff Reports

I.

"May you live in interesting times" is a popular ironic curse (and toast!) of unknown origin. The year spanning 2016-2017 has certainly not been as tumultuous as some, but most people would agree that it has been interesting. 2016 was an election year. We saw changes in party affiliation among the electorate in our area—longtime Democratic districts swung Republican. Statewide, the MN Senate joined the House in having a Republican majority. Individuals are more polarized, but communities have become more politically homogenous. In 2016, eight out of ten US counties gave either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton a landslide victory. Progressives have organized movements like Resistance and Indivisible. Conservatives added the Alt-Right and Trumpism.

According to Gallup polls taken over the past 40 years, there has been growing distrust for our institutions—from the medical system to congress; from public schools to churches. News is relentless, 24/7, but media and journalism have been "delegitimized." Today only 20% of the population say they trust news organizations (newspapers, TV, internet). This societal shift away from institutions and toward individualism has been

happening for decades, but the presidential election last fall brought it into sharper focus. As Bill Bishop pointed out in a widely read *Washington Post* article published in March of this year, “Everything about modern life works against community and trust.”

This has had an effect on Northern Community Radio. At an advisory meeting last fall in Bemidji, 22 listeners said they want to trust what they hear on the radio and strongly prefer that KAXE and KBXE practice traditional journalism when delivering news and information. They didn’t want their radio station to take advocacy stances on issues. They wanted to hear the legitimate perspectives of people in the community. In other words, they want KAXE and KBXE to bring them information and opinions, and they want to make their own informed decisions about issues.

This sentiment is being echoed around our country. In response to the political and cultural climate, many mainstream journalism organizations are focusing on ethics in an effort to regain some of the trust that has been lost. Like other media organizations (including the public broadcasting system), Northern Community Radio’s staff and volunteer news hosts are making a special effort to conduct themselves in a trustworthy, credible manner.

Is it possible to eliminate biases completely? No, but we try to work around them. A few years ago Northern Community Radio adopted a code of journalistic ethics that, among other things, does not allow staff members to participate in partisan events and discourages staff from sharing opinions about controversial issues. We also don’t turn down underwriting from businesses just because individual staff members or listeners find them unpalatable or controversial.

This isn’t easy. Ethical expectations have been hot topics in some of our staff meetings because, like everyone else, Northern Community Radio’s staff and news volunteers care about their world and have strong individual beliefs. But they also believe that upholding the integrity of Northern Community Radio as a source for news and information is important.

To be clear, in saying that we try to minimize bias we are *not* saying that Northern Community Radio is “radio that comes from nowhere.” This organization stands for building community in northern MN, and all the things that people of good will hold in common that support that mission: We support and model treating people with respect. We encourage civic participation. We support public education. We help nonprofit organizations. We try to remove barriers and connect people to one another. We recognize that our community is not monolithic in its beliefs or makeup. We air controversial perspectives and opinions from people who live here. We do our best to provide information that is based on the best evidence we have. While we can’t say that communication across the issues that divide us “has never been more important,” we *can* say that “communication across the issues that divide us is still extremely important.”

II.

Some big and potentially divisive stories are brewing in northern Minnesota, like the Line 3 pipeline, two proposed copper-nickel mines, several water quality issues, the need to balance jobs with the environmental impacts of development, and more. As we contemplate covering these complicated stories in ways that would be useful to listeners, our aspirations quickly butt up against the available resources.

Northern Community Radio is a small shop, completely independent and unaffiliated with any larger organization. There are 10 full-time and 3 part-time employees who work in two locations (Grand Rapids and Bemidji). Most of the staff have work duties that are not directly related to radio programming—like membership, billing, engineering, operations, volunteer coordination, underwriting, and administration. For on-the-air work there is a music director, some part-time producers, a one-person news and public affairs department—and not enough volunteers to fill all the available airshifts. People expect a lot from this organization, and many think it's bigger than it really is.

News and Public Affairs Director Heidi Holtan produces the *Morning Show* every weekday. She gets some help from other staff members who cohost or produce segments in addition to their primary work duties. There are some regular volunteers who act as community journalists to cover specific topic areas. The “news department” does the best she can, often putting forth more-effort-than-is-reasonable-to-expect in the quest to cover a critical story. She has been inventive—bringing Chuck Marohn and Aaron Brown together to discuss big topics from different perspectives on *Dig Deep*, for example. But as a practical matter she is tethered day-to-day to the important task of producing and hosting the *Morning Show*.

Heidi and Northern Community Radio want to cover the major stories that affect our area. An additional news staffer would be immensely helpful—someone who could take the time to dig into complicated stories, and who could keep eyes and ears open for news happening in the towns and townships around the region. Also of great help would be a web producer to write and post news stories, and edit audio from those stories for Northern Community Radio's website. More and more people are accessing news and public affairs stories online, and there is high potential to serve the community with expanded news and public affairs in that arena. However, with funding in flux for public broadcasting, it would be difficult to add those positions now...unless we can significantly increase member support.

III.

2017 has been a year with threats to funding for public broadcasting. Threats have come before, and they cannot be minimized. In the mid-1990s Newt Gingrich proposed a “glidepath to zero” for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). In 2010-11 the flames were fanned again when NPR terminated the contract of guest analyst Juan Williams for remarks he made on Fox news about Muslims. As a result of that incident the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility proposed a cut of \$200 million (about half) from the CPB budget. (This was ill-considered because the CPB does not provide major funding to National Public Radio itself. Federal money is appropriated directly to the CPB and from there to individual public radio and TV stations. Decisions are made at the station level about what national programming to buy, and how the rest of the CPB money will be used at the local level.) Fortunately these proposals were never enacted.

This year President Trump's budget would have zeroed the CPB without so much as a “glidepath.” That breathless period while we waited for action at the federal level ended this week (on May 1st) when we learned that a budget deal to keep the government running through September was reached that includes CPB funding at the

current level. In September there will be another round of budget negotiations and the “not knowing” begins again.

Between state and federal funding, 42% of Northern Community Radio’s revenue in the current fiscal year (2017) is government dependent. That’s a lot! CPB support is about 16%. State Arts and Cultural Heritage funding is another 19.3%. State of MN community service and equipment grants make up the rest (6.7%). Our state funding has doubled now that both KAXE and KBXE qualify to receive it (KBXE does not qualify for federal/CPB funding. KBXE would have to generate \$300,000 in revenue annually to qualify independently of KAXE).

Just about any accountant would tell you that government funding is notoriously unstable. Disaster can come with the stroke of a pen. One incident like terminating Juan Williams’ contract can affect funding. The president’s political agenda could lead to profound changes for stations across the country. As far as Minnesota state funding goes, we aren’t sure yet what the next two years’ state appropriation for community radio will be. Final budget decisions usually come toward the end of the legislative session, sometime in May.

Our safety net is member support. If one individual member’s political beliefs cause him or her to withdraw that support, or if someone moves away, there are many other members to hold us up.

IV.

Some things haven’t changed much since last year. These days Northern Community Radio’s staff (especially Engineer Dan Houg) still sweat every ice storm or wind event because a stress analysis last year told us that KAXE’s tower is in danger of failing. The station also needs a new transmitter. The current transmitter is obsolete and well beyond its life expectancy. Parts are no longer made for it--we find parts on eBay. The first time we can’t find a spare part KAXE will be off the air until we do. A new transmitter will need a clean new shed to house it, with air conditioning. The cost to build a new tower and transmitter and the things that go with them at the current site is between \$770,000 and \$850,000.

The KAXE broadcast plant project was put on hold at election time. The local legislators who stood behind the project and had agreed to champion an “ask” for state bonding money were unseated in last November’s election. We will be picking up the project again this summer, because our new legislators—Senator Eichorn and Representative Layman—have agreed to meet with us to look at funding possibilities.

Membership

As is obvious from all of the above, the revenue source that is the very best—and safest, and most directly linked to the community—is membership. Northern Community Radio wants and needs more members. We have aspirations for greater service to the community and it is through increased membership that we could realize those goals. A huge thank you to all our members!

| Sustaining Members | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| FY10 | 154 |
| FY11 | 204 |
| FY12 | 241 |
| FY13 | 316 |
| FY14 | 424 |
| FY15 | 511 |
| FY16 | 563 |
| FY17 (through April) | 580 |

While we definitely can't force listeners to become members, we have some plans to nudge them in that direction. Among the things we plan to try: returning to a fantasy-themed membership drive this summer; a John Latimer video pitching for members on the Season Watch page of Facebook; offering a special thank you gift to Season Watchers; a bigger role for sustaining members; creating a pool of match money for on-air drives; continuing to invite lapsed members to return.

Our work is cut out for us. Some public stations have recently reported big upticks in listener support, but that has not been the case here (yet!). Northern Community Radio's membership numbers vary month to month but hover close to 1,800 on average. Membership at the end of April 2016 was 1,765. Same time a year later it was 1,723.

| Membership Drives | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------------|
| <u>FY</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>New</u> | <u>Renew</u> | <u>Avg.</u> | <u>Theme/Dates</u> |
| <u>2017 Spring</u> | 24,784 | 72 | 126 | 125.17 | Connecting You 3/10-17/17 |
| <u>2017 Winter</u> | 3,680 | 10 | 30 | 92.00 | Flash Drive 12/16/16 (one day) |
| <u>2017 Fall</u> | 32,640 | 77 | 163 | 136.00 | What's for Breakfast? 10/18-25 |
| <u>2016 Summer</u> | 20,360 | 78 | 82 | 127.25 | 40 for 40 Music Countdown 7/12-15 |

Member Services Manager Report

The quest for more members never ends, nor should it!

We have a goal over the next four years to increase our membership by 20 percent. We also want to have 50% of our members be sustaining. Right now, 34% are sustaining.

That means we need to raise our membership by roughly 260 households, and attain about 72 more sustaining members in just the next year.

Plans include reaching out to our lapsed members and, as always, working on getting new members. In order to attract new members, we have to let them know about what we do. You can help with that!

As Kari is about to embark on a second round of Motherhood, I'm about to start a gig as temporary Music Director. This is both exciting and a little bit nerve-wracking. We get so many CDs in the mail! However, I look forward to digging into the new music and hosting "New Music" three days a week.

I'll still be handling some membership duties, so we have Carolyn King to help with both membership and music clerical stuff. She has helped out during fundraisers for years, and it will be fun to see her more often!

-Jennifer Poenix, Member Services Manager (and Music Director Pro Tempore)

Programming

Programming is the heart and soul of what a radio station is and does. We have many people to thank for their help in creating the quality programs that air each day on KAXE and KBXE. Volunteers and staff alike do a highly professional job. Northern Community Radio's volunteers give generously of their time and talent, and bring a depth of knowledge and good humor to our airwaves that is valuable to the organization and strikes a strong chord with listeners.

That feeling of connection, when you turn on the radio and instantly feel that you're among friends, is rare in media, and a big part of what makes Northern Community Radio exceptional. On-air announcers on KAXE/KBXE treat listeners like neighbors (because we *are* neighbors). There is very little hype and lots of good company on

our airwaves. There is also plenty of rich content—national news, local stories, vibrant music, and entertaining programs and segments that just can't be pigeonholed.

Volunteer Calendar

- 10/3/16 Training session for new volunteers at KBXE
- 11/7/16 Volunteer training Composer II at KBXE
- 11/9/16 Volunteer training Composer II at KAXE
- 1/6/17 Annual Volunteer Appreciation Day
- 5/15/17 Upcoming training session for new volunteers at KAXE

Some of the new programs and program changes this past year:

- *Dig Deep* with Chuck Marohn and Aaron Brown. A new hour-long monthly conversation between a liberal and a conservative presented in three 20-minute parts. Topics were: What is Rural? Labor Unions, Jobs and Work, Health Care.
- *Stay Human*, a new one-hour program that is a mix of interviews, commentary, humor, and music hosted by Michael Goldberg and airing Sunday nights at 9.
- *Mixtape*, a new 2-hour music program to trigger memories alongside discovery of new music to recreate a mixtape. It airs Monday afternoons 2-4, repeated Saturdays 5-7, with rotating staff hosts.
- Sarah Bignall and Heidi Holtan have successfully integrated some local content into the evening broadcast of *All Things Considered: MN 90*, *Daily Phenology*, excerpts from *Border News Roundup*, and miscellaneous other segments.
- Podcasts are now available for *Dig Deep* and *Phenology/Phenology Talkbacks*, with *Great Northern Radio Show* podcasts upcoming

Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF) programs have a strong presence on our air, online and in the community. KBXE completed its first year producing its own ACHF programming and is well into year two.

KBXE's ACHF programs:

- Katie Carter's *Area Voices*, capturing arts, culture and history stories as part of the Morning Show
- Milt and Jamie Lee produce *Call of the Wild*, mini-documentaries about people who are part of the creative economy of northern Minnesota
- *Paddle MN* with Jim Gallagher is a show about the art and culture of canoeing
- *What We're Reading* with Tammy Bobrowsky features book reviews, author interviews, reader participation, and a strong social media component
- Live Event Series: Free concerts! In the past year this included Turtle River Day, Hot Club of Cowtown, and The Jimmys

KAXE's ACHF programs:

- Steve Downing's monthly *Arts Reviews*—essay-based reviews about the art in our area and beyond

- *Centerstage MN*, supporting the local music scene with two hours of Minnesota music, interviews, and info about live music in our area every Friday afternoon with Brett Carter
- Grant Frashier's *Close to Home* airs twice monthly and focuses on regional events, sites, places and people
- The *Great Northern Radio Show* produced and hosted by Aaron Brown is our traveling radio variety show, with guests, musicians, and a full cast of characters
- *KAXE Mississippi River Festival*: The ACHF helps us pay for musical acts to keep ticket costs low so the festival breaks even!
- *RealGoodWords* with Heidi Holtan, a monthly segment with Minnesota authors and writers that airs on the *Morning Show*.

News and Public Affairs Director Report

It's been a great year for the *Morning Show* – in looking back at the calendar of interviews in 2016 here's some of the topics we covered:

Charter schools, the night sky, evening grosbeaks, energy issues with water protectors & Enbridge Energy as well as alternative energy sources, electoral college, pollinators, soup swaps, STEM, maple syrup, bears, community gardens, mental health, invasive buckthorn, adoption, wellness court, copper nickel mining, homelessness and so many other topics and features!

That's only the tip of the iceberg that doesn't include the great segments *Call of the Wild* from Milt Lee, *Close to Home* from Grant Frashier, *Paddle MN* with Jim Gallagher, *Area Voices* with Katie Carter, *What We're Reading* from Tammy Bobrowsky, *Wordish* from Robert Jevne, *The Border News Roundup* with Marshall Helmberger, *Sports* with Fred & Kyle & Jack, *Making Sausage* with Colleen Nardone and political reporters, and *RealGoodWords*.

One of the newest things having to do with the *Morning Show* is that selected interviews are available as podcasts thru iTunes! You can also listen on the NPR News app.

Dig Deep has its own podcast – our newest feature with Aaron Brown and Chuck Marohn. Their topics so far have included labor unions, jobs, healthcare, and infrastructure. We have plans to talk about the importance of broadband as *Dig Deep* hits the road to be keynote speakers at the Blandin Foundation Broadband conference in Brainerd in October.

As always, don't be shy and let us know what's going on in your community – and let us know your thoughts on programming. Email heidi@kaxe.org.

Thanks for supporting Northern Community Radio. I'm proud to work here AND be a member.

-Heidi Holtan, News and Public Affairs Director

KAXE dot org

Thanks to extra work by Sarah Bignall and Jennifer Poenix, Northern Community Radio's new Core Publisher website launched on November 7, 2016. The new website is a huge improvement over the old one. It is easier to post information, so more content is being shared. The site is "responsive," so it changes the layout of the page to optimize it for the screen size a visitor is using.

Core Publisher also offers better analytics. For instance, we know that in the past full week the most engaging content was: the 13th Annual KAXE Mississippi River Festival Lineup; the Phenology Report for April 25th; *Call of the Wild* featuring Matt Breuer, Mushroom Guide; Joel Rosen's Northern MN Planting Guide; and Phenology Talkbacks from April 18. There were 1,239 unique visitors to KAXE dot org, and the average visitor looked at 4.55 pages. In the week of April 23rd 61% of visitors were

using desktop computers, 30% were on phones, and 9% used tablets. The most-played audio file was Wendy Greenburg on *Wordish*.

In general, stories and events are placed on our website first, and

then shared on social media for further distribution. They are also available on the NPR One audio app.

In conjunction with Core Publisher, music hosts have had to adopt a new playlist interface, called Composer II. Composer II creates a playlist that allows listeners to look up what music they heard. It allows program hosts to plan shows in advance, from home. It scrolls song titles and artists across the top of the new website and, with the help of another program, sends the same information to RDS-enabled cars. It also compiles information about how many web listeners hear each song so we can report to the Recording Industry Association of America.

Director of Operations Report

The past year has been incredibly busy. It's hard to really tell you what has happened in the past year as weeks and months seem to blur together. BUT from what I can recollect, we've done quite a bit.

In late November, we launched our new and improved website. While we are STILL working out the kinks, we are happy to have a mobile-friendly site and more flexibility in the content that we post. During this time, we also moved our audio stream to a secure stream. With a secure stream people can't hack your Alexa device and order large volumes of dog treats and essential oils. A big thanks to Jennifer who was my partner in the build process.

A lot of work has also gone in to the *Great Northern Radio Show*. Aaron and I have worked incredibly hard on the overall flow of the show, the writing (mostly the initial editing process) and the pace of the show. It's been a lot of hard work, but we have been very happy with the results. Make sure to join us on June 17th for the next *GNRS* at the Reif Center in Grand Rapids.

Another big accomplishment has been our quarterly newsletter that is sent to our sustaining members. It's been a fun way to engage with our members! Don't receive the *Inside Track*? Become a sustaining member now at KAXE.org. The 6th issue will be in mail boxes in early June!

Looking forward, I am so excited for the summer membership drive and the Mississippi River Festival.

-Sarah Bignall, Director of Operations

Audit and Finances

KBA Peterson Associates in Bemidji conducted Northern Community Radio's audit for FY2016. We received a clean opinion from the auditors, which means they found that our records fairly and accurately represent the organization's financial position. Northern Community Radio follows a federal fiscal year, from October 1 through September 30.

The organization is financially healthy. Except for monthly bills, it does not have any debt. Total assets of the organization were valued at \$1,405,246 at the end of

Social Media as of 4/30/17

Facebook

- What We're Reading (and KAXE Book Club): 271 members
- Season Watch: 2,185 members
- KAXE/KBXE On-Air Volunteers: 121 members
- Northern Community Radio KAXE/KBXE: 4,982 likes

Twitter: 1,801 followers

FY2016. This is about \$15,500 less than at the end of FY 2015. We began the year with \$64,919 cash and ended with \$60,712 (a difference of \$4,207--net

| Major sources of revenue in FY16 | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| State of MN Grants | | \$351,937 |
| Arts and Cultural Heritage Grants | \$263,950 | |
| Community Service Grants | \$74,000 | |
| Equipment Grants | \$13,987 | |
| Listener Support | | \$239,788 |
| Business Underwriting | | \$219,176 |
| Corporation for Public Broadcasting | | \$147,047 |
| Other Grants | | <u>\$65,000</u> |
| | TOTAL (major sources only) | \$1,022,948 |

cash from operating activities was \$4,469, and \$8,676 was invested in equipment).

The audited change in Northern Community Radio's net assets in 2016 was -\$31,608. Depreciation and amortization expenses of \$110,117 are part of this total. There is also some non-cash revenue in this total (\$42,515 in underwriting trades).

KBXE qualified for an Arts and Cultural Heritage grant and an operating grant from the State of Minnesota for the first time in the state's fiscal year 2016 (which includes 3 months of Northern Community Radio's FY 15), effectively doubling the organization's state support. This means the impact of potential budget cuts at the state level are also doubled. Northern Community Radio's state grant support in the current fiscal year (FY17) is about \$33,500 less than in FY2016. KAXE receives federal funding through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and maintains a National Public Radio membership that allows NPR programs to be broadcast on both stations.

For additional financial information, Northern Community Radio's full audit report, IRS 990 and CPB reports are posted online at KAXE dot org. Hard copies are available by request.

Notes from the Back Office (Business Manager Report)

When people ask me what I do, it is hard not launch in to the laundry list of tasks that make up the business operations for KAXE and KBXE. As the Business Manager, there are any number of jobs to tend to that help keep the organization on an even financial keel, and some that will keep you awake at night. The year goes by in a blur of programs and events and then it is audit time again. It is not glamorous, but it is important work, and I love it.

In 2015 at the NFCB Regional Meeting in Minneapolis we had the honor to meet Bill Siemering, the founder of National Public Radio. A MacArthur Foundation Fellow and genius grant recipient, he invented the first signature public radio program, *All Things Considered*. At the time of the conference, Bill was working building community radio in Africa. He told us "Few social investments have a broader reach and affect more people than an engaging local radio station." That has stayed with me. That is what Northern Community Radio is. That is what I do.

Penny Holcomb, Business Manager

Endowment

Northern Community Radio's endowment is managed by the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation. We use the revenue from the endowment for local programming. The endowment has been performing well because the stock market has been strong. At the end of March 2016, the fund balance was \$336,384.58. At the end of March 2017 it was \$355,370.20. The organization received a disbursement of \$15,750 during the year and paid \$3,453.69 in administrative fees to GRACF. The

endowment was established in 1999 by Northern Community Radio, with member support and some matching funds from the Blandin Foundation.

Development Director Report

Twenty-one years and counting as Development Director at Northern Community Radio. Over those years many businesses have come and gone. Whether they were a small mom and pop business that invests \$550, or a large business that invests thousands, they all share one common characteristic: they expect results. Results, to them, are mostly measured by people through the door and by sales.

I can't stress enough the importance of a visit or call from a NCR member thanking them for their support. You can't put a price tag on a simple gesture of thanks. So the next time you get new tires on your car, buy some fresh kale from a farmer's market, purchase a lathe-turned piece of art, or sprinkle some crappy granola on your yogurt ... thank someone—anyone—in that store. One thing I've learned over all these years is that if you take care of our business supporters, they will take care of you.

Business support remains strong for KAXE/KBXE at \$219,176 for the year (this includes cash, trades, and statewide underwriting). That's down \$1,699 from last year.

-John Bauer, Development Director

| Revenue by Location | KBXE (only) | Non-KBXE (KAXE and other) |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Contributions | 49,169 | 187,569 |
| Grants | 163,246 | 400,738 |
| Underwriting | | |
| Cash | 28,748 | 147,913 |
| Non-cash/trade | 11,395 | 31,120 |
| Ampers | 4,667 | 7,506 |
| Other | | |
| Rentals/Subcarrier | 0 | 15,250 |
| Endowment | 0 | 15,460 |
| Special events | 4,785 | 37,380 |
| Miscellaneous | 2,043 | 4,365 |
| Sale of equipment | <u>0</u> | <u>800</u> |
| Total | 264,053 | 848,101 |

Development Associate/Legacy Coordinator Report

It's been another great year working at Northern Community Radio. My start here began four years ago in a part time position as development associate, working with businesses in the Bemidji listening area. This year was my first year as a full time staff member and like most, if not all of the staff, I now wear two hats. Development Associate and Legacy Coordinator.

As Legacy Coordinator I help to track the data required by the state of Minnesota to fund the arts and cultural heritage programs on Northern Community Radio. It has been a pleasure to work closely with the talented producers and organizers of our many legacy programs.

As always for me, this past year was filled with awesome music events, great radio programming, creative fundraising, unique radio shows and much more!

-Peggy Stevens, Development Associate/Legacy Coordinator

Award Recipients 2016

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>Phil Collins Volunteer of the Year</u> | Brandon Lentz |
| <u>Bill McKeever On-Air Creativity and Artistry</u> | Milt and Jamie Lee |
| <u>Marcia Nottingham Community Impact Award</u> | John Bauer |
| <u>Deb Lentz Silent Star</u> | Chris Bergquist |
| <u>King and Queen of Green Cheese</u> | Paul and Jill Mattson |

Calendar of Events 2016-17

- 6/18/16 Great Northern Radio Show at Grand Rapids/Reif Center: Featuring Sonny Knight and the Lakers, Sam Miltich and Charmin Michelle, Charlie Parr, Katie Houg
- 7/15-16/16 Mississippi River Festival: Featuring Mayda, the Jimmys, Corey Medina, Shel, David Wax Museum, Bones and Beeker
- 8/20/16 19th Annual Green Cheese potluck picnic
- 8/27/16 Turtle River Day: Roe Family Singers, Slammin' Doors, the Occasionals
- 9/1/16 Northern Community Radio at the MN State Fair
- 9/15/16 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Cactus Blossoms
- 9/24/16 Great Northern Radio Show at Tower/Fortune Bay Casino: Featuring Keith Secola, Rich Mattson and the North Stars, Katie Houg and the Track (house band)
- 9/26/16 Community Advisory Meeting and listening session/Bemidji (KBXE studio)
Attended by 22 listeners, plus board and staff
- 10/16 Heidi Holtan and Scott Hall were among the hosts for candidate debates for MN House and Senate Districts 2, 5, 9 and 10. The debates were held in Brainerd and Bemidji and were a partnership between Northern Community Radio, Lakeland Public TV, the Bemidji Pioneer and the Brainerd Dispatch. Maggie Montgomery moderated city, county and state legislative candidate forums in Bemidji on October 5, 6, and 12. She also moderated forums for a special election for City Council on March 2 and April 19, 2017, sponsored by Northern Community Radio, the City of Bemidji, and Citizens for an Informed Electorate.
- 10/20/16 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Davina and the Vagabonds
- 11/12/16 Great Northern Radio Show at Duluth/Lincoln Park Middle School: Featuring Lowest Pair, Woodblind, Dance Attic, Katie Houg and the Union Forever (house band)
- 11/17/16 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Lowest Pair
- 12/15/16 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Haley Bonar
- 1/19/17 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: The Honeydogs
- 2/16/17 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Sam Miltich, Charmin Michelle and Friends
- 3/3/17 First Friday Reception in Bemidji to honor Paula Swenson, creator of the KBXE mural
- 3/4/17 Great Northern Radio Show at Bemidji/Chief Theater: Featuring Known Only Locally, Babe and the Pauls (house band)

- 3/16/17 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Corey Medina and the Incepticons
- 3/27/17 Community Advisory Meeting and listening session/Hibbing (Sammy's Pizza)
Attended by 17 listeners, plus board and staff
- 4/6-10/17 NCR Trips: New Orleans French Quarter Festival
- 4/20/17 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Dusty Heart
- 4/22/17 Record Store Day pop up record store at Rail River Folk School in Bemidji with Dan Gannon (DJ Dang) and Nathan Michel spinning vinyl and Flower Power Blond beer release from Bemidji Brewing
- 5/6/17 Annual Membership Meeting, potluck, party, and dance with The Jimmys
- 5/18/17 Centerstage MN Concert Series in partnership with the Reif Center in Grand Rapids: Actual Wolf (upcoming)

Lineup for 13th Annual KAXE Mississippi River Festival July 14-15 2017

- Friday: Haley and Har Mar Superstar
- Saturday: Lowest Pair, Dawg Yawp, ¡Esso! Afrojam Funkbeat, Professor Louie and the Crowmatix!

Staff news:

- Host/Announcer Linda Johnson resigned after more than 20 years' service. Production Assistant Chris Julson retired last fall. We are not filling these part time positions.
- Brett Carter moved into a full-time job, combining his duties as Volunteer Coordinator with hosting Centerstage MN.
- Tammy Bobrowsky left KBXE last summer to return to her old job at the BSU library. She had taken a 1-year leave of absence to work with us to develop systems to track and evaluate Arts and Cultural Heritage programs at KAXE and KBXE. After she left, Peggy Stevens added Tammy's former duties as Legacy Coordinator to her job as Underwriting Associate. Doing so made Peggy a full-time employee.
- Katie Carter was hired as Area Voices Producer in July.
- Music Director Kari Hedlund is going on maternity leave anytime now (if she hasn't already)!
- Member Services Manager Jennifer Poenix is filling in for Kari Hedlund while she is on leave. Carolyn King is filling in temporarily for Jennifer Poenix while Kari Hedlund is away.

Staff

Full-time staff

Maggie Montgomery, General Manager
 John Bauer, Development Director
 Heidi Holtan, News and Public Affairs Director
 Dan Houg, Engineer
 Penny Holcomb, Business Manager
 Jennifer Poenix, Member Services Manager/Interim Music Director
 Peggy Stevens, Development Associate/Legacy Coordinator
 Kari Hedlund, Music Director
 Sarah Bignall, Director of Operations
 Brett Carter, Volunteer Coordinator/Producer
 Carolyn King, Interim Member Services Manager/Music Librarian

Part-time Staff

Scott Hall, Producer/Senior Correspondent
 Katie Carter, Producer (since 7/16)
 John Latimer, Staff Phenologist
 Chris Julson, Production Assistant (until 10/16)
 Linda Johnson, Host/Announcer (until 10/16)

NCR Board of Directors

Julie Crabb, Meadowlands, President
Charlie Parson, Puposky, Vice
President
Maria Kne, Bemidji, Secretary
Jack Shelton, Bemidji, Treasurer
Doug Baker, Grand Rapids
Christina Brown, Bovey
Chris Bergquist, Grand Rapids
Kent Montgomery, Brainerd
Dave Lathrop, Squaw Lake
Eric Ramlo, Park Rapids

Great Northern Radio Show Report

The *Great Northern Radio Show* posted another year of exciting live radio shows from around Northern Minnesota. In September 2016 we broadcast from the Fortune Bay Resort and Casino with Keith Secola and Rich Mattson and the North Stars. In November 2016, we did our first show from Duluth featuring Woodblind, Dance Attic and Mayor Emily Larson. Last March we returned to the Chief Theater in Bemidji featuring Known Only Locally and an all-star lineup of Bemidji musicians. On June 17, we return for our annual summer show at the Reif Center in Grand Rapids. Our musical

Morning Show Volunteers And Contributors

Dan Anderson
Tammy Bobrowsky
Don Boese
Shelly Boyum-Breen
Aaron Brown
Christina Brown
Bob Conzemius
Julie Crabb
Jesse Davis
Jeff Edmonds
Kyle Erickson
Fred Friedman
Jim Gallagher
Dan Gannon
Chad Haatvedt
Dave Harrington
Marshall Helmberger
Harry Hutchins
Iris Jensen
Robert Jevne
Jack Lavalier
Milt and Jamie Lee
Chuck Marohn
Katie Marshall
Jack Nachbar
Colleen Nardone
Tom Saxhaug
Robert Saxton
Michael Small
Jeff Sundin
Harvey Tjader
Aaron Wenger

guests include “Them Coulee Boys,” an exciting bluegrass act, and other local talent.

Here’s what was new for the Sixth season of the *Great Northern Radio Show*:

- Executive Producer Aaron Brown and Producer/Stage Manager Sarah Bignall continued to lead the production team, joined by Heidi Holtan, Tammy Bobrowsky and Brett Carter at different shows.
- House piano player Katie Houg was named bandleader and tasked with forming a house band. She did not disappoint. For this entire season we’ve featured the fabulous Corey Medina on vocals and guitar, Eric Sundeen on drums and William “D.C.” McKenzie on bass. We have fun renaming the band for each show, but this tight group remains grounded in great musicianship and versatility. We’re lucky to have them! Having a house band like this allows us to customize the musical experience for each show without having to book as many bands.
- We have been experimenting with creating two one-hour shows out of each two-hour live broadcast event. This gives our station and other stations the option of running just one hour if that’s what fits programming needs.
- The *Great Northern Radio Show* website finally features all six season of programs, including individual segments and full shows. You can listen to all past shows at www.greatnorthernradioshow.org. Coming this year will be an iTunes podcast option.

We look forward to another exciting season of Minnesota shows, which we’ll announce soon.

-Aaron Brown, Producer, *Great Northern Radio Show*

Off-Air Volunteers

Tom Anderson
Lisa Arnold
Chris Baker
Chris Bergquist
Paul Bignall
Christina Brown
Mike Bruhn
Wendy Carter
Tom Cobb
Barb Crabb
Betsy Crabb
Julie Crabb
Daniel Dix
Joan Downham
Ian Dunshee
Jess Ebert
Pam Elj
Linda Flanagan
Janet Florine
Shirley Frashier
Chris Friedlieb
Jim Gallagher
Dan Gannon
Tracy Goodwin
Chad Haatvedt
Frieda Hall
Hannah Hafar
Alycia Holter
Carolin Humpal
Augie Jensen
Iris Jensen
Mary Jensen
Dennis Jerome
Jen Kellen
Jane Kimball
Carolyn King
Dave Kne
Maria Kne
Diamond Knispel
Earl Wendell LaMaack
Becky LaPlant
Dave Lathrop
Bonnie Lundorff
Tim Lundorff
Barry Lyons
Dave Martin
Jimi Martin
Sarah McBroom
Kathy McCarty
Randy McCarty

Engineer Report

NCR has rolled out several new systems this past year. Chris Julson, Sara Bignall, and Jennifer Poenix were instrumental in working with NPR Digital Services to develop our current website, which displays on portable devices better as well as being easier to edit. Brett Carter and Kari Hedlund introduced the Composer II studio interface that tracks data for SoundExchange reporting as well as providing Now Playing data. The Radio Data System, RDS, which displays Now Playing data on RDS-enabled radios is again functional after being disabled when our new website was launched in November 2016. As an addition, streaming listeners now will see the Now Playing data as well.

NCR has contracted with Computer Enterprises of Grand Rapids to upgrade the IT infrastructure of both KAXE and KBXE studios with cloud based email services, hardware firewalls, a new server, and new desktop machines. This is an ongoing project that will greatly increase the security of our office computers and member data.

I have concluded my term as President of the Association of Public Radio Engineers, a national organization with high visibility in the public radio world as well as with equipment suppliers, tower builders, and transmitter manufacturers. This year our Public Radio Engineering Conference was a great success with the record attendance levels and we have re-introduced scholarships for new engineers to attend the PREC, made possible with generous manufacturer support of the conference. It has been deemed the 'go to' public radio engineering conference of the nation.

The *Great Northern Radio Show* tech production continues but without the experienced help of Chris Julson. Chris' experience with live sound and stage production was a valued asset and is greatly missed. Chad Haatvedt has stepped in, volunteering his time on this large production show mixing a live stage of multiple music acts, skits, monologues, and a live radio broadcast—all with one day setup time and one rehearsal in a new venue each show.

The KAXE transmitter site rebuild project continues, awaiting funding, and planning includes a new transmitter, antennas, broadcast tower, and transmitter building. KAXE's transmitter is now 27 years old and does not have a backup should a major failure occur. Parts are difficult to source for this transmitter as this model has been out of production for a number of years. This is a large scale refurbishment that will set the KAXE transmission plant in good standing for the next 20 years.

-Dan Houg, Engineer

Podcasts You may have heard us talking about our new podcasts for *Phenology* and *Dig Deep* and have wondered to yourself: "What is a podcast?" Simply put, a podcast is a series of audio files that you can subscribe to and listen to whenever you like.

If you have an Apple device, you can subscribe through iTunes. If you don't have an Apple device, you can add the RSS feed to your Outlook inbox and new audio will be sent to you as an email. If you are a subscriber, all the podcasts in a series will be automatically sent to your device. Listen when you have time!

Nathan Michel
Dennis Montgomery
Kent Montgomery
Cindy Nelson
Therese Nett
Karen Oothoudt
Richard Oothoudt
Charlie Parson
Karen Ryan
Cassidy Schlauderaff
Nancy Schmidt
Cindy Shelton
Jack Shelton
John David Schirber
Tim Sullivan
Connie Vincent
Lucy Vitali
Mark Widing
Alex Zimmerman

Music Volunteers

John Andringa
Chris Baker
Doug Baker
Tim Baldwin
Nyssa Beech
Tammy Bobrowsky
Jerry Brademan
Sarah Breeze
Ashley Brubaker
Ryan Brubaker
Jen Buie
Brandon Chase
Mindy Conradi
Julie Crabb
Rollie Dethloff
Daniel Dix
Katelyn Dokken
Joan Downham
Andrew Dziengel
Jeff Edmonds
Dennis Elj
Linda Flanagan
Janet Florine
Grant Frasier
Maddi Frick
Allison Friesen
Jim Gallagher
Dan Gannon
Tracy Goodwin
Judy Grewe

Volunteer Coordinator Report

It has been another great year for volunteers at Northern Community Radio. It is so wonderful to be involved in helping people do something that brings so much enjoyment to others. I appreciate all the efforts of our volunteers to provide an entertaining, meaningful, and important public service to the upper half of our state.

In the past year, volunteers have thrived as hosts of *On the River*, learning a new program for keeping track of playlists, continuing to grow their knowledge of music, and developing their on-air skills during breaks. We've added a new group of on-air programmers to our list, and have another gathering of interested hosts waiting for training.

We also added a new host to *Green Cheese* this year (shout out to Mike Spry). It's a demanding volunteer opportunity that serves a loyal group of listeners. You can meet Mike, Brandon, and Julie at the annual *Green Cheese* picnic.

Volunteers continue to step up to fill important positions in the music library; at events like the Mississippi River Festival, Record Store Day, and more. A special thanks to anyone who has helped during fundraisers. It's a critical part of what we do and not always the easiest time to volunteer, so I appreciate the extra effort involved.

I can't say enough about the ongoing commitment of our volunteers. They make my job lots of fun. Look for increased training in the coming year; more tips for on-air programmers; and more off-air volunteer opportunities. And, as always, thanks to all who help make this radio station a one-of-a-kind treasure and a treat for listeners.

-Brett Carter, Volunteer Coordinator

Music Director Report

Our collaboration with The Reif Center in Grand Rapids kicked off in September, the Centerstage MN Concert Series. This series allowed me to create a lineup from scratch, while the Reif was able to provide funding for the whole thing. It gave us the opportunity to connect with great MN musicians, many of whom we hadn't linked up with before. I've heard awesome things from the bands and musicians featured, and they're talking with their friends about it. Currently working on the 2017-2018 lineup which is almost complete. And I'll say this much, you won't be disappointed!

We've started a new program on Mondays and Saturdays, called Mixtape. It's a presentation of music, featuring old, new, and a rotation of staff hosting each week. It's been a really fun program to produce, and think it can add some great depth to our afternoon programming. Can't wait to hear what each staff person does...

There will be a new (but not *new*) voice with you Tuesday-Thursday this summer as I'll be on maternity leave until September. Jennifer Poenix has graciously agreed to fill in for me while I'm home with a new baby!

-Kari Hedlund, Music Director

Alycia Holter
 Nicole Hoops
 Dennis Jerome
 Robert Jevne
 Paul Kivi
 Diamond Knispel
 Erika Kooda
 Steve Krause
 Dave Lathrop
 Julie Legg
 Tom Legg
 Brandon Lentz
 Dan Lentz
 Susan Lick
 Barry Lyons
 Doug MacRostie
 Eric Mann
 Jimi Martin
 Nathan Michel
 Kristi Miller
 Pat Miller
 Bruce Muckala
 Mark Nesheim
 Karen Oothoudt
 Charlie Parson
 Dave Peterson
 Michael Peterson
 Nekoal Phoenix
 Curt Randa
 Steve Ross
 Karen Ryan
 Val Satterstrom
 Jack Shelton
 Michael Small
 Mike Spry
 Brian Stanaway
 Jim Thelen
 Greg Tix
 Bill Tucker
 Lucy Vitali
 Mark Westergaard
 Ross Williams
 Alex Zimmerman

| Community Advisory Board KAXE/KBXE 2017-2018 | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aaron Brown | Bovey |
| Larry Killien | Balkan Township |
| Kaleb Stoffel | Hibbing |
| Larry Stoffel | Hibbing |
| Jamie Monte | Hibbing |
| Bryan Monte | Hibbing |
| Parker Monte | Hibbing |
| Steve Cory | Grand Rapids |
| Jim DeVries | Britt |
| Deb Meissner DeVries | Britt |
| Klara DeVries | Britt |
| Julie Marinucci | Side Lake |
| Carolyn King | Grand Rapids |
| Amalia "Malie" Spagnolo | Keewatin |
| Cory Kolodji | Hibbing |
| Kim Grillo Nagler | Nashwauk |
| Dan Gannon | Shevlin |
| Cal Rice | Bemidji |
| Pat Rice | Bemidji |
| David Harrington | Bemidji |
| Bonnie Lundorff | Bemidji |
| Mary Mitchell | Bemidji |
| Mary Anderson | Hackensack |
| Nils Anderson | Hackensack |
| Sarah Breeze | Bemidji |
| Dorothy Broste | Bemidji |
| Gary Broste | Bemidji |
| Harvey Tjader | Bemidji |
| Jim Gallagher | Bemidji |
| Jill Parson | Puposky |
| Mark Farabee | Bemidji |
| Greg Tix | Bagley |
| Rema Keprios | Bemidji |
| Dave Kne | Bemidji |

Area Voices Report

It's been an amazing year producing Area Voices segments for Northern Community Radio. I've been incredibly honored to share the arts, culture and history stories of northern Minnesota with our listeners and I certainly hope they've enlightened, educated and inspired our listeners in one way or another.

When I started last July, I had limited skills in terms of using the editing software and have been learning as I go. A big thanks to the staff for their support, advice, encouragement and confidence as I've made it through this first year on the job. We have the most fascinating people doing the most fantastic things in our listening region. The future looks bright for Area Voices segments as the surface has only just been scratched!

Katie Carter, Producer

To all the members, volunteers, board and staff who share their time, talent, or funds with Northern Community Radio: **All of us at Northern Community Radio give you sincere respect and deepest regards. Thank you!**

-Maggie Montgomery, General Manager