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NEWS RELEASE

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Charlotte public radio station WFAE to experiment with mobile innovation, better connection with audiences with \$100,000 from Knight Foundation

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - Oct. 17, 2017 - WFAE, Charlotte's NPR station, today announced a plan to better connect with its audiences and develop fresh content using NPR One, a digital news application that blends NPR and member station news reporting into a personal, localized on-demand experience. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is investing \$100,000 to support the plan and the sharing of lessons in audience engagement with other local newsrooms.

Charlotte is one of the country's fastest growing cities, with a rapidly increasing young ethnically and racially diverse population. In keeping with national trends, the city's younger residents are increasingly turning to mobile to consume news and information, and engaging with audio content through digital streaming and on-demand platforms.

Recognizing the need to meet new information needs and reach diverse communities, WFAE will use NPR One to deliver new local content, and utilize fresh local voices to report on topics of civic concern. The station will hire an on-demand producer to implement these innovative efforts. It will also develop podcasts, uncover unique, untold stories and create content to serve diverse audiences. The community will be invited to submit ideas for topics and stories.

"In today's rapidly changing media landscape, local and public media newsrooms must keep pace with audience preferences by experimenting with new engagement approaches and technology tools. WFAE's efforts will help create lessons for the field, allowing reporters to connect with communities more deeply and better serve their needs," said Jennifer Preston, Knight Foundation vice president for journalism.

"Charlotte expects of us the best journalism on multiple platforms," said WFAE President and CEO Joe O'Connor. "NPR One is a remarkable app that combines the reporting talents of NPR and WFAE to meet the increasing demand for cutting-edge context on the nation's and our community's critical challenges."

In addition, using data generated through the NPR One application, the station will help improve the user experience by more deeply examining audience preferences and measuring success. It will further use the data to turn dedicated listeners into station members, and share these best practices with other public radio stations.

“We’re excited about the opportunity this creates for us to reach new audiences who may not be traditional listeners of our broadcast programming,” said Ju-Don Marshall, WFAE’s chief content officer. “Through this initiative, we hope to build deeper engagement with the community, and to partner with them to share some of the stories and perspectives we haven’t heard.”

Funding for WFAE is part of Knight Foundation’s efforts to support innovative approaches to the use of technology to advance local journalism and public media. Knight has made many investments in this area, including the [Knight-Lenfest Newsroom Initiative](#), which aims to help advance digital transformation at local news organizations across the country.

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About WFAE

[WFAE 90.7 FM](#) is a nonprofit public radio station, licensed to the University Radio Foundation Inc. With 90.3 FM in Hickory, 106.1 FM in Laurinburg and 93.7 FM in Southern Pines, WFAE serves over 200,000 weekly listeners with an award-winning lineup of local, national and international news, and weekend entertainment programs from NPR, American Public Media, Public Radio International and Public Radio Exchange.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy. For more, visit knightfoundation.org.