

## **ESSAY QUESTIONS IN CPB'S ANNUAL SURVEY (FY 2015)**

**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.**

Several years ago in a comprehensive survey, WVPE asked members what they most wanted, the response was overwhelmingly as much national/international news and information as possible. Because there are limits to how many shows fit on one channel, when adding digital channels, the goal has always been to offer more news and information content (with as little additional cost as possible). WVPE's staff created a news channel that counter-programs against our main FM channel with 23 other news-talk programs that have never been aired in this market before, while main channel favorites are re-broadcast at alternate times. The concept is to provide more options so more listeners will be introduced to the public radio journalistic and storytelling style; increased numbers of listeners will then generate more revenue for the WVPE network.

Initial feedback has been positive, but it has been difficult to get our audience—older, habitual radio users—to listen to radio online rather than through their radio. We hope to expand our streaming audience by introducing a WVPE app later this year that will allow Apple and Android smart phone users to easily access the station's multiple programming channels.\*\*

Additionally, in an effort to partner with our own licensee, Elkhart Community Schools, and again involve students in the operations of the station, WVPE is coordinating a 24/7 blues channel with the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of the Audio/Video Production program at the Elkhart Area Career Center (<http://www.myeacc.org/audiovideo-production.html>) along with Harvey Stauffer, the station's local, weekend blues host for the past 33 years (<http://wvpe.org/programs/blues-revue>). This is our HD-3 channel.

An interesting side note: 1/3 of the online audience is not from the Elkhart/South Bend Market Area. As more people listen outside what would be original terrestrial boundaries, I hope CPB records the percentage of people listening to streams from beyond that stations original market.

\*\*This presumes there will never be a significant HD audience, because those radios are too expensive, so the largest audience of HD listening will be through smart phones.

**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.**

WVPE worked with over 35 different non-profits to help promote their events, plus we partnered with several organizations to do joint concerts, especially in our summer concert series: 'Meet Me on the Island,' 'Fernwood Friday,' and 'Envirofest.'

There was also a successful hybrid when we brought the hosts of "Big Picture Science" to South Bend in February 2015. The hosts had a fabulous time while recording a live program at the University of Notre Dame.

While in the area, the staff of BPS participated in two other science events. The first was a science conversation with nearly 100 inner city elementary school children. Speaking about that, Patsy Boehler, Executive Director of ETHOS [Encouraging Technology & Hands-On Science] wrote, "Our inner-city STEAM students are still talking about Seth [Shostak]'s visit. Thank you for arranging it."

Then, Seth Shostak and Molly Bentley went to a science day at the St. Joseph library, where Linda Conyers, 2015 Science Alive Chair for the St. Joseph County Public Library later wrote, "During the 23rd Annual Science Alive, nearly 4,000 children came to this event, making it the best attended. Many attendees told us they came specifically to see Seth and Molly. Many families told us they heard the WVPE ads for Science Alive, so thank you for promoting our event so effectively."

Other non-profits told us about their success from our media sponsorships by writing:

Lydia Aurinko-Mostow, Director at the Conservatory of Dance said, "I had several staff and parents of our dancers mention that they heard about the Nutcracker on WVPE. We did have better attendance this year."

Dave Dufour, Executive Director at Elkhart Civic Theatre said, "The extra publicity on WVPE helped 'The Addams Family' because all shows were sold out and we added an extra performance. Thanks."

**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.**

In May of 2015, the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County hosted its first-ever 24-hour “giving day” to raise support for many area non-profits and their endowments. The *WVPE Public Radio Friends Fund* was one of the 52 nonprofit organizations that participated. Throughout this region, people did their part by making nearly 5,500 gifts to participating organizations over the course of the day. The “Give Local St. Joseph County” one-day event raised more than \$6.73 million for this community’s nonprofit organizations. Of that, \$2,580,000 went directly to the participating organizations, and \$4,150,000 went into their endowments.

The *WVPE Public Radio Friends Fund* received more individual gifts than any other organization: 314 gifts, totaling more than \$46,000. “While they did not raise the most money, WVPE was a critical partner in the Community Foundation’s marketing efforts to raise awareness of the event and its success through the station’s on-air, web, and social media mentions,” said Laura Moran Walton, Director of Communications and Public Relations at the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County. <https://www.givelocalsjc.org/#leaderboard>

Of special note, St. Joseph County came in 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 180 participating community foundations in the 2015 national ‘Give Local America’ campaign edged in total support by Seattle, Washington and Charleston, South Carolina. Out of the 9,000 participating non-profits across the country, six local organizations were in the national Top 10 for raising the most for their respective charities: the CASIE Center, the Community Foundation’s Greatest Needs Fund, Habitat for Humanity of St. Joseph County, Hope Ministries, South Bend Youth Symphony Orchestras, and Women’s Care Center.

Regarding our station’s impact, here are quotes from listeners; the first few come from teachers.

‘I really like **Science Friday** and use it a lot in my classroom.’ (*Valerie Roe, Three Rivers, MI*)

‘I teach Social Work at IUSB [Indiana University South Bend] and listen all day using what I learn in my classes.’ (*Charlotte Pfeifer, South Bend, IN*)

‘I’m a Spanish teacher. It’s amazing how my conversations start with “I heard this on WVPE/NPR....” I also promote the station in my classroom, and share info with kids via podcast!’ (*Zachery Netzley, Warsaw, IN*)

‘WVPE is the only station I listen to. I am constantly learning new things and staying informed on what’s going on in our world. Thank you for that.’ (*Mandy Leazenby, Elkhart, IN*)

‘In a media landscape dominated by hyper-partisanship and big-moneyed interests, publicly-funded news sources like WVPE and NPR are crucial for a well informed electorate and responsible civic engagement.’ (*Nathan Foster, Berrien Springs, MI*)

‘WVPE is an oasis of **FACTUAL** information among a desert of **MIS**information & opinion. **Diane Rehm, To the Point** & NPR are critical to educate & inform us!’ (*Cathy Hughes, Osceola, IN*)

**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 2014, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2015. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.**

WVPE did not broadcast in any other language besides English this past year, nor did we make any specific programming decisions to reach our region's minority populations. We have added the CEO of a Hispanic Public Radio station to our Advisory Board. He runs the Spanish language station, but listens mostly to WVPE. I hope further conversations with him will include exploring possible operational collaborations. To show our conviction, we recently shared our entire underwriting plans with Radio Sabor Latino to help them see how they might run their operation better.

**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?**

WVPE continues to hold one of the highest metro shares of any public radio station in the country (<http://www.rrconline.org/reports/pdf/Sp15%20eRanks.pdf>). However, we've barely kept up with the national program licensing dues which have increased 50% since 2009. At the peak of the recession, the station eliminated several positions including its local news position. We went from 12 full-time staff down to 7. While we're back to 9 positions in early 2016, we've never restored the reporter though membership and underwriting have continued to increase. Over that same time, our licensee has eliminated its cash support. [It would be good to see CPB review what the expectations of a public broadcasting licensee are]

The point is that WVPE has served the community with fewer staff doing nearly the same amount of work for several years, but outreach has been curtailed in favor of continued broadcast and local fundraising support. While the staff have already shown they can absorb a loss of 10% of WVPE's annual budget—CPB's percentage share of WVPE's operating budget—that decrease would likely again throw the station back into a full crisis further weakening the station. Should we lose 10% of our funding, we could lose our ability to purchase many of our audience's favorite national programs, thus losing some audience, which would decrease our funding, which would make us further cut programs, audience, funding. Etc...