

## **Local Content Report to CPB for Grant Year 2013-14**

**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.**

WVPE e-mailed just over half of our known members in 2011 (3,500) with an 8 page survey. The research firm, Press-Ganey of South Bend, managed the collection and analysis. After over 900 responses, they produced a detailed 50-page report which has been used as a 'guiding star' ever since.

Our listener-members clearly said that they wanted us to provide a great collection of public radio news with NPR News as the anchor. Information about national and international issues was the most important programming as long as the programming used similar public radio journalistic sensibilities, the audience was happy with what we were currently providing. They were losing interest in music programs, and only 30% of the audience was interested in more local content, however, they would love more national and international content.

So, without adding staff, we needed to provide more news shows. Since then, we have incrementally taken steps to prepare us to be more national news friendly. We simultaneously have improved our online capability when we switched to NPR's Digital Services last summer for their web content and management. However their streamers exceeded the bandwidth that our licensee allowed WVPE. This resulted in intermittent streams that would stop within 10 minutes of a listener streaming our channels. Months later, we hope to resolve this as the station by switching soon to Comcast so they may provide us significantly more robust upload capacity for our streamers.

The long and short is that 2014 was not the year to provide more news content on a 2<sup>nd</sup> Digital Station...but 2015 will be. We're soon to heavily promote an all news 2<sup>nd</sup> channel, and during the delay, we added a 3<sup>rd</sup> station that utilizes students. This has not regularly been done since WVPE became an NPR affiliate in 1991; we have wanted to do something because we're still owned by a K-12 school system, and were once a teaching tool for audio production students at the Career Center for the Elkhart Community Schools. Students are again announcing on HD3, a 24 hour Blues channel using our library of blues music aggregated by a 31 year host of a legacy music program, *The Blues Revue*.

**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.**

One organization we partnered with involved bringing two national programs to the area. The University of Notre Dame College of Science was celebrating 150 years. They wanted to make a big splash, so we helped bring *Science Friday* with Ira Flatow, and *Big Picture Science* with Seth Shostak and Molly Bentley to the ND campus for several days. After 1,000 people attended the recording for Science Friday and 300 attended a lecture by Ira Flatow, the ND Vice-President for Government and Community Relations, Tim Sexton, said, "I have heard nothing but great reviews regarding Science Friday...I am happy that this collaboration worked at so many levels."

We wanted to develop more collaborations, so when *Big Picture Science* visited South Bend/Elkhart, we built in more time so that Seth and Molly could record the program with 500 people, lecture to several hundred faculty and students, participate in a 'Science Alive!' event for 2,500 kids through the St. Joseph

County Library, and teach 100 inner city Elkhart 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade kids at a STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Math) school about the scientific method in collaboration with ETHOS (Encouraging Technology and Hands On Science). Additionally, because they were here during another midwinter station event where WVPE is a media partner with the South Bend Museum of Art and for the opening exhibit of the Regional Scholastic Art Awards exhibit, we had the largest audience ever attend that event (nearly 1,500).

Upon their return to California, Molly wrote:

“We truly had a fantastic time in South Bend although we were somewhat bowled over by the very warm reception. Not because you would be anything BUT gracious ... but because we work in a contained environment, at least Gary and I do, where we don’t mingle with or even see our audience. It was stunning to meet people face-to-face in South Bend who genuinely appreciated the radio show.

In fact, the trip was profound for me – in many ways – so that as I work on next week’s program, I picture the smiling faces of the WVPE listeners we met; I have renewed focus about why it all matters.

A special thanks for being such generous hosts. I want to think about how what we learned in South Bend can help us build listenership and maybe even financial support.

But first we have a lot of editing to do by Friday – our goal is to make the Notre Dame show available to radio stations and podcast sites by Monday! I’ll follow up with an update later in the week.”

**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.**

WVPE partnered with 40 organizations to help promote community events including our own licensee—Elkhart Community Schools. Events ranged from: Aids Ministries Anniversary, Art Beat, Bike the Bend, Buchanan Jazz Art and Antiques, Dogwood Fine Arts Festival, Leighton Lecture, Lemonade Day, Musical Arts Indiana, Rain Barrel Ball, St. Joseph County Public Library’s 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, & Wagon Wheel Theatre.

We set an attendance record for an event at Fernwood Botanical Garden with 1,200 people. They ran out of space in 3 parking lots and had to begin parking cars along the drive into the Garden.

Honestly, the staff had trouble finding superlative comments from these organizations, so I thought instead I’d include comments from our listeners from the last campaign:

I appreciate the pace and thoroughness of the reporters and interviewers who present the news on NPR and WVPE locally. I also like the variety of programming choices and scheduling of same. It makes our community richer! Craig Blue – Mishawaka, IN

We've listened to other NPR stations in other areas of the country and know that WVPE is truly a gem.  
Julie Fridley – Cassopolis, MI

I listen to the Blue's Revue every Saturday and Sunday. I love the great music Ole Harv plays and I love his show!  
Barbara Race – Dowagiac, MI

I love the variety and diversity of the shows!  
Mary Martin – Buchanan, MI

Live stream listener! I Like our selection better than other regional NPR stations.  
Joyce Mote – Logansport, IN

Never gets out of the car until Michiana Chronicles is finished.  
Pam Gunterman – Bremen, IN

I need NPR in the AM more than I need my coffee!  
Pierpaolo Polzonetti – South Bend, IN

His daughter prompted him to contribute because they listen all the time. He feels his daughters are successful now because she's grown up listening to WVPE!  
Rick Becker – South Bend, IN

I absolutely love The Back Porch and Thistle & Shamrock!  
Margo Ferguson – South Bend

It's how I invite the world in.....in the morning.  
Margaret Carmen, South Bend, IN

I became a new member so I can now listen to WVPE without being a mooch!  
Kevin Leary – Cassopolis, MI

I became a sustaining member last pledge drive.....but I can't stand not contributing during the campaign's challenge hours to help the station meet its goals.....how bad is that?! Thank you for all that you do; keep up the good work!  
Linda Brookshire – Granger, IN

I love listening! I feel informed. Besides the bad stuff, I get the good stuff too.  
Chris Hahaj – South Bend, IN

Thank you NPR - for fact checked news and high quality entertainment!  
Barb Anderson – Benton Harbor, MI

I listen 24/7 to WVPE and even got rid of my TV! I love our music and honest reporting.  
Ann Preissing – South Bend, IN

Thank you for being informative, entertaining and making my mornings more bearable. I'd cite one show in particular, but I manage to enjoy them all.  
Neil Rippey – Goshen, IN

I enjoy all programs! I belong to several NPR station but I think WVPE is the BEST!  
Isabelle Thayer – Plymouth, IN

I get all my news from NPR & WVPE and feel it's the best balanced news in the country.  
Mark Abram-Copenhaver – South Bend, IN

When I travel, I miss WVPE programming so much I stream it.  
Richard Strasser – Benton Harbor, MI

I completely love your line-up! I could listen to 3 NPR stations, but ours is the best! Beverly Gregus – Marcellus, MI

I love the news and discussion shows; they're informational and not sensational! Paul Bondo – South Bend, 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 in 2012-13, nor did we make any specific programmatic on-air outreach to area minority populations. However, to begin making strides to reach out to the fastest growing minority, the Chief Administrator of a Hispanic Public Radio station is now on our Advisory Board. He runs the all Spanish language station, but listens mostly to WVPE. I hope further conversations with him will include exploring the possibility of an LMA to help them operate the station better. [This will also require an extended conversation with Radio staff at CPB about possible grant support towards a bigger, regional community collaboration.]

**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?**

With a significant increase in UW in 2014, WVPE finally reached the cash cushion required by our licensee to maintain a positive cash flow (\$200,000). However, without CPB's funding, that cushion would go away, and the station would again become financially insecure, which we have been in recovery since 2009.

Over the past several years, even as we gained more financial flexibility, our licensee immediately asked us to take on additional costs of our operation. So while things have improved enough that we were able to offer the first salary increases since 2009 (1.5%) AND absorb the 10% insurance increase the school is paying for all employees (WVPE pays all benefits for its own employees), we have yet to have money available for an external marketing campaign, a staff training and travel budget, and maintaining more than 3 Chamber of Commerce memberships in a 17 county area like we had before the economic meltdown 6 years ago.

The appropriation from CPB now keeps WVPE away from the 'hand to mouth' type of operation, but even today, we are not yet back to 'normal.' Hopefully by 2016.