



Blue Ridge Public Radio - Local Content and Services Report – 2017

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BPR strives to explore, reflect and discover the community concerns of citizens across a geographically and economically diverse region of Western North Carolina. We provide weekday newscasts and reports and features that support this effort. The majority of our on air reports are available online and on demand- with website and FB support. We partner with other local/regional media, non-profits and educational resources. We maintain a Community Forum of 25-40 individuals chosen from geographic, ethnic and racial cohorts across our region. We require that our Forum members report community, concerns, issues, opportunities and events to the station. We also require that the Forum report how the station is performing in regards to reflecting regional concerns. We hold 2-3 Forum meetings each year and regularly maintain communication through email and a Forum member-only FB page .

Blue Ridge Public Radio has collaborated with public radio station WUNC-Chapel Hill to offer a state-wide news and culture program to listeners across the state of North Carolina since 2014. The State of Things includes live reports from Western North Carolina as well as the voices and stories of people who live and work in the region, along with state-wide issues and legislative reports that impact every citizen in our region. BPR routinely collaborates with local/regional media outlets, including The Asheville Citizen-Times, The Smoky Mountain News, AshVegas and Mountain Xpress. Reporters from these media resources are frequent contributors to our news reports. Local /regional educational resources are used often by the Blue Ridge Public Radio news staff – including academics from UNC-Asheville and Western Carolina University.

BPR hired a reporter to report exclusively on issues, people and events in areas outside of the largest metro-area, Asheville. This greatly increased our reflection of what life in this region is actually like: economically, culturally, and historically. The response to this attention to rural communities has been enthusiastic – from both rural and urban listeners.

Blue Ridge Public Radio has collaborated with two professors at UNC-Asheville to produce a weekly program that explores the experiences of historically marginalized people and their communities, and considers the influence those experiences have within our increasingly diverse society. This program concentrates largely on the experience of African Americans in Appalachia and the US – but is not limited to that community.

BPR collaborated with National Public Radio to produce a Going There event in Asheville. The public event explored the benefits and downsides to what happens when a community becomes extremely popular as a tourist and relocation destination. What are the economic /cultural/infrastructure issues that this raises? What happens to historically marginalized communities and long-time residents when this happens? What happens when people who built a community are marginalized?

Blue Ridge Public Radio collaborated with the nationally produced program The Moth Radio Hour to produce monthly storytelling sessions in Asheville. These feature local and regional citizens performing personal narratives in front of a live audience.

Our Community Forum is active and engaged. We have received more information /suggestions from rural and economically challenged regions of our broadcast area. Our partnership with UNC-Asheville has produced anecdotal evidence that minority listeners are more engaged with the station. We continue, through our own efforts and those of our Community Forum, to investigate issues and concerns of minority communities throughout our region.

CPB funding has allowed Blue Ridge Public Radio to increase our reporting of local/regional issues. We are able to devote more staff time to researching editing and reporting – and it supports a staff member to report exclusively on issues, people and events in areas outside of the largest metro-area, Asheville.