

*To Be Essential to the
Communities We Serve.*

ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021



PBS

The fiscal year 2021 continued to be a challenging one for our region's communities, with a desire to get back to normal, yet still a sense of not being ready. It is times such as these when the community relies on WDSE•WRPT to be that consistent source of information and entertainment. Creating some normalcy amongst an uncertain time continued to be helpful for many to get through the day. We accomplished this through serving national PBS programming for adults and kids, and also making sure we continued to contribute a local perspective for each of you and your neighbors.

Local productions are what set us apart from other local media. During the last year we continued to discover more about our community members, sharing their stories and highlighting both the good and the opportunities that still exist. It is the voice that we give to the sometimes forgotten in our diverse communities that viewers count on and we are frequently told the extra time we give to stories is helpful for all to be aware of the work still to be done in our region.

Your support is so valuable for us to continue our vision of "being essential to every community we serve". Whether that be our efforts to expand our educational reach, highlighting the latest slice of life in the Northland, or exploring how local unsung heroes are making a difference, you're helping us shine a light on our communities throughout our vast broadcast area, and beyond, creating sense of community.

Thank you for supporting WDSE•WRPT. We look forward to the year ahead in helping many make a difference where we live, learn, work and play.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty Mester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Patty" and "Mester" being significantly larger and more decorative than the rest of the letters.

WDSE•WRPT

President & General Manager

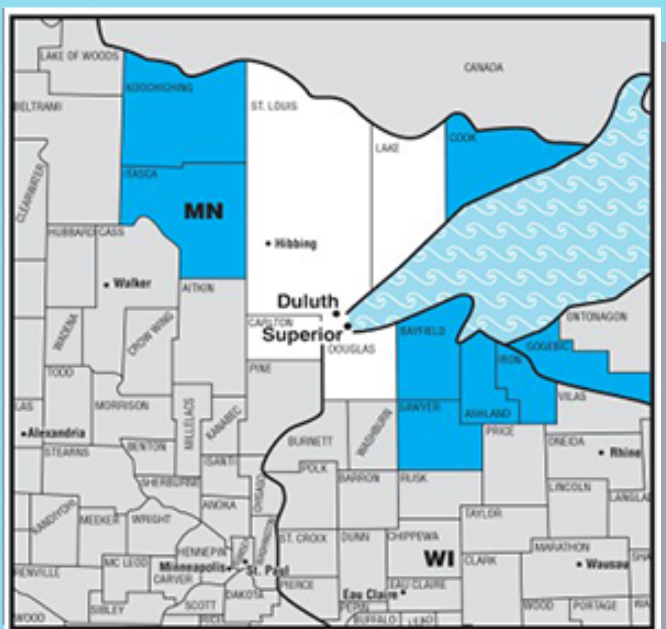


Essential to Viewers

WDSE•WRPT's viewing area has a far reach in northern Minnesota, northwest Wisconsin, the upper peninsula of Michigan and lower Ontario, Canada. In addition, online viewing of our education, arts, nature, health, local news, and entertainment content occurs across the country and the world.

Our continued investment and innovation in technologies and staff allow for year-over-year audience growth, both young and old, in the diverse communities we serve

BROADCAST AREA



WDSE•WRPT's signal via over-the-air, cable, and satellite reaches across three states and two countries.

Essential to be Where You Are

WDSE•WRPT | 04

WE CONTINUE WITH FIVE OVER-THE-AIR CHANNELS



DIGITAL EXPANSION

The industry's expectation of the convergence of traditional (linear) television and digital content was accelerated during the pandemic when an unprecedented number of viewers began to consume their favorite shows more frequently online. Currently just about the same amount of viewing is happening online as on television.

WDSE•WRPT is well positioned for this transition as our digital footprint continued to grow in this past year.

ON DEMAND

FIVE PLATFORMS TO WATCH FULL EPISODES

YOUTUBE

**9,049 NEW SUBSCRIBERS
3.9 MILLION UNIQUE VIEWS OF OUR CONTENT**

SOCIAL MEDIA

PEOPLE THAT VIEWED OUR CONTENT INCREASED IN THE PAST YEAR
+ 454% ON FACEBOOK
+ 600% ON INSTAGRAM



wdse.org



WDSE Passport



Each year the Upper Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences recognizes exceptional work in video and television. Numerous local productions by WDSE•WRPT were acknowledged with regional Emmy Award nominations in the last year. In addition, Production Assistant Joe Mann was inducted as a Silver Circle Honoree, which recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to television well above and beyond that required by their job. Joe also celebrated his 30th year in broadcasting.

2020 Emmy Nominated Productions

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT - PROGRAM

- Signing Off

DOCUMENTARY - HISTORICAL

- This Town

INTERVIEW/DISCUSSION

- Drawn to Write

INTERSTITIAL

- *Intersections: Charles Fai*

PROMOTION: PROGRAM - SINGLE SPOT

- *Be Our Northland Neighbor*

SILVER CIRCLE HONOREE

JOSEPH E. MANN - Production



2021 Emmy Nominated Productions

MAGAZINE PROGRAM

- Making It: Start Up

DOCUMENTARY - CULTURAL

- Unweaving

HISTORIC/CULTURAL/NOSTALGIC - LONG FORM CONTENT

- In This Place: New Horizons

HISTORIC/CULTURAL/NOSTALGIC - SHORT FORM CONTENT

- Intersections: Susana Pelayo-Woodward
- Supper Club
- We Come From The Stars

HEALTH/MEDICAL - SHORT FORM CONTENT

- Lessons from COVID-19: Disability Rights Activist

Essential to Do Well

WDSE•WRPT | 06

2021 BOARD OF GOVERNORS EMMY® AWARD

COVID-19 Vaccines: Finding Answers



On February 24, 2021, we partnered with multiple Duluth media outlets and regional health experts for a day-long effort called COVID-19 Vaccines: Finding Answers. This effort featured health experts and advice, culminating in an hour-long live special on WDSE•WRPT special hosted by WDSE's Dennis Anderson. The goal was to educate the community about how to get vaccinated, vaccine safety and hesitancy, and included a focus on underserved and at-risk communities and communities of color.

This program was awarded the 2021 Board of Governors Emmy Award by the Upper Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. This annual award is the most prestigious regional Emmy awarded by the chapter, honoring visionary, long-standing relationships that creatively and effectively use corporate, non-profit, and broadcast resources to showcase the power of broadcasting to advance a mission or message.



Dana Kazel, Dennis Anderson, Nick Stoltman, Greg Grell, Ashlee Smith

Essential to Learning

WDSE • WRPT | 07

In 2020-21 we aired more than 1,600 hours during 4 hrs/day (M-F) on channel 8.1 and 9 hrs/day (M-F) on channel 8.2 geared towards middle/high school students. And we continue our commitment to providing essential PBS KIDS programming during the day on PBS North, and 24/7 on the PBS KIDS channel.

Each day PBS KIDS reaches preschool and younger elementary aged children with 24/7 access across broadcast and digital platforms (24/7 PBS KIDS broadcast channel, the PBS KIDS video app and pbskids.org)

PBS is the #1 educational media brand: Year after year PBS KIDS ranks as the #1 children's educational media brand compared to a range of other children's media providers. (Source: *Marketing & Research Resources Inc. (M&RR), February 2021*)

- 61% of parents surveyed named PBS KIDS the most educational media brand, substantially outscoring the second-most highly rated kids' brands, Disney + and Disney Channel, which were considered most educational by 6%, followed by Netflix (5%).
- 86% of parents agreed that PBS KIDS helps prepare children for success in school, ahead of Disney Jr. (78%), Disney Channel (76%) and Nick Jr. (72%).
- 85% of parents agreed that PBS KIDS is a trusted and safe source for children to watch television and play digital games and mobile apps.

(Source: *Marketing & Research Resources Inc. (M&RR), February 2021*)

- **Access to MOLLY OF DENALI digital resources improved first-grade children's ability to use informational text to solve problems**, for example, choosing the right book or website to answer a question or using an index to find a topic in the book. (Source: *Mahsi'choo for the Info! Molly of Denali Teaches Children about Informational Text, (EDC) and SRI International (SRI), 2021*)

- **PBS KIDS supports learning, especially in communities that are often overlooked**
 - PBS KIDS offers the only free, over-the-air and digital 24/7 television service for young children ensuring high quality, educationally based programming is available to every child, when and where they want to watch it.
 - The PBS KIDS 24/7 Channel is now available to more than 95% of US TV Households.

(Source: *Nielsen NPOWER, 9/21/2020 - 9/19/2021, L+7 M-Su 6A-6A TP reach, K2-8 w/Inc<\$25K. PBS, children's cable networks*)

Essential to Learning

WDSE•WRPT | 08



Adding the PBS KIDS channel to the WDSE•WRPT channel lineup in 2020 has proved to be valuable to the communities we serve as throughout the country PBS Kids reaches more children ages 2-8 from low-income families than any children's cable TV network.

- **PBS stations reach half of kids ages 2-5, and more moms of young children, than any children's television network.**

(Source: Nielsen NPOWER, 9/23/2019 - 9/20/2020, L+7 M-Su 6A-6A TP reach, 50% unif., 1+min., K2-5, LOH18-49w/K<6. All PBS Stations, children's cable TV networks)

- **PBS KIDS attracts a higher proportion of viewers from African American and low-income homes compared to their representation in the US population**

(Source: Nielsen NPOWER L+7, 9/23/2019 - 9/20/2020, PBS Child Multi-weekly Reach, 50% unif, 1+ min., HH Inc<\$25K, HH (000) vs. UE.)

- **PBS is available in 96% of U.S. TV Households, giving kids access to what may be their only source of educational TV**

(Source: Nielsen TV Universe Estimate, 1/1/22)

- **Hispanic and African American households with children present are twice as likely to visit PBSKids.org compared to the average Internet site.**

(Source: comScore PlanMetrix Multi-Platform Aug '20)

Essential to Storytelling

WDSE•WRPT | 09

When developing local programming and events we listen to and share the stories of our viewers and the communities we serve. We give a voice to the diverse communities across the region reflecting our history, celebrating the arts, and providing a view into everyday life in the Northland. We tell these stories to bring communities together.

History and Culture

IN THIS PLACE



From First Nation to First Generation, In This Place follows the unique origin and immigration stories of Northern Minnesotans – exploring their family histories while creating their own impact on our region. Produced in collaboration with four independent filmmakers, In This Place features diverse origin stories of Dakota, Ojibwe, Arapaho, Vietnamese, Indian, Russian, and Italian individuals, showcasing the often-overlooked diversity of the region.

NATIVE REPORT



In its 16th season, promoting understanding between Native and non-Native cultures, offering a venue for the stories of challenge and success coming from tribal communities. Native Report shares stories of the language and arts of Indian Country – within the Northland and across America.

"IT BROUGHT WHAT WE WERE DOING TO A WIDER AUDIENCE AND EDUCATED PEOPLE ON THE PROCESS AND THE MEANING BEHIND OUR WORK. I APPRECIATE HAVING A NATIVE WOMAN RECORDING AND TELLING OUR STORIES...IT WAS REALLY COOL TO BE ABLE TO BE INTERVIEWED BY SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTOOD THESE THINGS AND CREATED A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE." -MICHELLE DEFOE

Essential to Storytelling

WDSE•WRPT| 10

History and Culture

MAKING IT UP NORTH



A community favorite, Making It Up North shares stories of local entrepreneurs who are persevering through challenging times, keeping their passions alive, preserving traditions through art, and nourishing local communities.

"THE CONTENT AND PRODUCTION QUALITY ARE SUPERB...THIS IS AWARD-WINNING MATERIAL." - VIEWER

"BEST. SHOW. EVER. WE NEED MORE EPISODES!" - RYAN BRUBAKER

THE SLICE

Shared across digital and broadcast platforms, this short-form series chronicles people and events from around our community, highlighting cultures and lifestyles from around the Northland – including local history, fashion, nature, indigenous culture, the arts, and community renewal.

INTERSECTIONS



Through inspiring stories of overcoming adversity and the strength of the human spirit, these short-form videos highlight community members of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds from across the Northland.

"I WATCHED INTERSECTIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME TONIGHT AND LOVED IT. KUDOS TO THOSE WHO CAME UP WITH THIS GREAT IDEA." - NANCY JESPERSON

"SUCH A POWERFUL AND NEEDED STORY FOR THESE TIMES." - MAYOR EMILY LARSON

"THE SLICE MAKES ME FEEL CONNECTED TO OUR COMMUNITY IN WAYS THAT I'M NOT. I SEE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING THAT I AM NOT AWARE OF. I FEEL BETTER INFORMED." - VIEWER

Essential to Storytelling

WDSE•WRPT | 11

News and Public Affairs

Our news and public affairs programming brings more to the stories and current events that are reported in our area by discussing challenges, and leaders that inform daily life for our viewers.

ALMANAC NORTH



In addition to in-depth discussions with local leaders about issues of importance facing the region, Almanac North launched a new segment, Lessons from COVID-19, including discussions on leadership responses to the pandemic, online access for Northland students, the rediscovery of nature, and how we've come together as a community during challenging times.

"I TRULY LOVE PBS STATIONS AND HAVE FOR YEARS. I'M RETIRED NOW AND PBS HELPS IMMENSELY DURING THIS QUARANTINE. I APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN THIS EFFORT." - VIEWER

MN LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Minnesota Legislative Report continues as the region's longest-running public affairs program. Hosted by Tony Sertich the hour-long program is a weekly review of activity at the state capitol, featuring lawmakers from Northeastern Minnesota. Most importantly, it offers viewers an opportunity to call or email their legislative questions.



Essential to Storytelling

WDSE•WRPT | 12

Science and Nature

COVID-19 VACCINE: FINDING ANSWERS

We partnered with multiple Duluth media outlets and regional health experts for a day-long effort called COVID-19 Vaccines: Finding Answers, featuring health experts and advice on February 24, 2021, culminating in an hour-long live WDSE•WRPT special.

This effort was awarded the 2021 Board of Governors Emmy Award by the Upper Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. (See page 6)

"FEELING SOME PRETTY SERIOUS COMMUNITY PRIDE TONIGHT. WE COULDN'T BE MORE THANKFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET SO MANY OF THESE IMPORTANT MESSAGES OUT, AND TO SUCH A LARGE AUDIENCE. THANK YOU TO ALL THE OUTLETS THAT PUT SO MUCH TIME AND EFFORT INTO THIS DAY AND ALLOWED US A SIGNIFICANT PLATFORM. WHAT A FANTASTIC RESOURCE FOR OUR COMMUNITY. THE ENTIRE DAY-LONG PRODUCTION EXCEEDED MY MOST OPTIMISTIC EXPECTATIONS. PROFESSIONAL, ENTERTAINING AND EDUCATIONAL. THANK YOU!" - LOCAL MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

DOCTORS ON CALL



Continuing coverage of COVID-19, Doctors on Call featured a special episode with infectious disease expert Dr. Michael Osterholm of the University of Minnesota. The long-running series continued to cover other important health issues as well, giving our region the opportunity to consult directly with local medical experts.



Essential to Storytelling

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Arts and Music

The arts and music in our region are a wonderful palette as different as each community. Over the past year we developed programming to showcase the area's talent.

WHO IS RAINBOW TROUT?



Continuing our commitment to independent local filmmakers, *Who is Rainbow Trout?* introduced viewers to 89-year-old Rainbow Trout, a beloved volunteer DJ for WTIP Community Radio in Grand Marais, MN. Rainbow engaged and created a space for classic country that inspires a diverse range of people across the Northland and beyond, including a new generation of younger fans and musicians.

DSSO

Our partnership with the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra continued, bringing live concert experiences to all, from the comfort of their own homes. The Twin Ports Holiday Spectacular featured the Strikepoint handbell group and the sites and sounds of the holiday festival Bentleyville. Five spring concerts featured the work of Stravinsky, Mendelssohn, Mozart, and Beethoven

NORTHERN RHYTHMS



This show explored the unique natural landscapes of the Northland through music. *Northern Rhythms* featured local musicians playing everything from country to jazz to classical, in places that inspire them, from deserted mine pits to soaring vistas to popular beaches.

"A STUNNING PRODUCTION OF GREAT PERFORMERS AND LANDSCAPES. AWESOME JOB WDSE." - STEVE GREGORICH

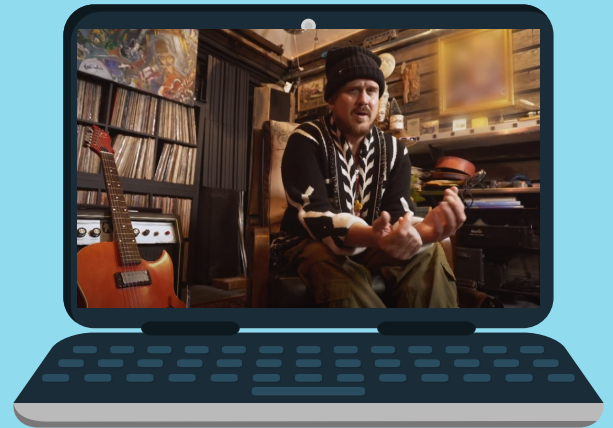
"MY HUSBAND AND I REALLY ENJOYED THE DSSO BENTLEYVILLE PROGRAM. KUDOS FOR A GREAT JOB OF PULLING THIS TOGETHER. WE'LL WATCH IT AGAIN." - ANN T. HOCKMAN

Essential to Community

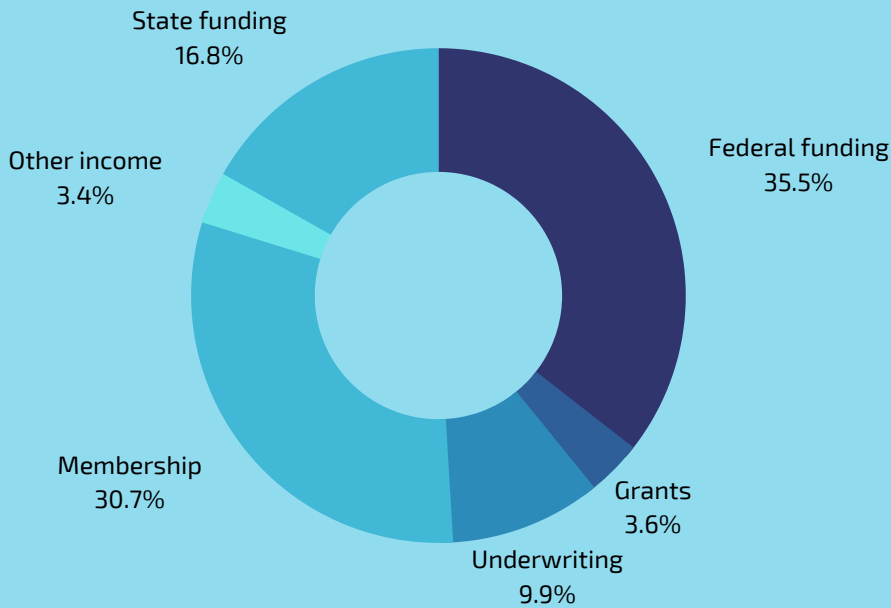
Events

In lieu of in-person events the first half of the year, we held several online screenings to premiere our locally produced work. More than 500 attendees joined online events for *In This Place*, *Northern Rhythms* and *Who is Rainbow Trout?*

“VIRTUAL EVENTS LIKE *IN THIS PLACE* HELP ME SO MUCH DURING THE PANDEMIC. WATCHING THESE VIDEOS IS FILLING MY HEART WITH SO MUCH JOY. I NEEDED THIS!” – EVENT ATTENDEE



Essential to Receive Your Support



SUPPORT FROM SEVERAL SOURCES

WDSE•WRPT's \$4.1 million in fiscal year 2021 revenue came from a variety of sources, including membership support, government funding, foundation grants, and local underwriting support. Unlike other media organizations the major source of WDSE•WRPT funding comes from the members of our community.

MEMBERSHIP

While membership support from our viewers has grown over the past several years, 2021 membership remained relatively flat to 2020.

