

TODAY'S TIP:

Martha Bebinger with WBUR combines voice memos with field assignments so that she can gather voices and still make first-hand observations.



How? She asks the interviewees to record audio using voice memos.

"Everybody has phones, so I ask them to record audio using voice memos. We can stand six feet apart and so I never have to share equipment. I don't touch anything they've touched, and they email me the file afterwards. I could've done this story from home, but if you're not in the field and seeing what the person you're interviewing is seeing it's hard to prompt them to tell you about what they can see."

For more reporting tips, [see this story from NPR training](#).

As part of our goal to amplify voices from rural communities,

we've launched a new series called "rural spotlight," focusing attention and engagement outreach activities on four communities across the country.



Our reporters either live in these communities or will continue to engage with them over the course of this year, producing local and national content that arises out of a deepening knowledge of the residents' concerns and hopes.

The series opens this month with two stories from the **Mountain West News Bureau**: **Nate Hegyi** reporting on the resort town of Sandpoint, Idaho, and **Savannah Maher**, reporting on the Wind River Reservation in central Wyoming.

Both stories focus on how these communities are coping with the coronavirus but their engagement strategies were different.

Maher is the Wind River Reservation reporter for Wyoming Public Media and has developed relationships with tribal leaders as part of her beat. She built on those relationships to [report on how the reservation is helping tribal members during the pandemic](#).

Hegyi found some of the sources for [his story about the political divide in Sandpoint](#) by joining community Facebook forums and engaging in conversation there. He says he was surprised that many people were ready to engage and that "there was some agreement from folks on both sides of the [political] divide -- that the perceived anonymity of social media stokes partisan divides."

In his digital story (which was also posted on some of those community forums), Hegyi wrote that his reporting is part of an ongoing conversation with the community. "I want to hear from the people I interviewed about how they perceived the article and radio story. Did I misstep in explaining something? What am I missing? ... I hope that goes a long way to garnering trust with the community."

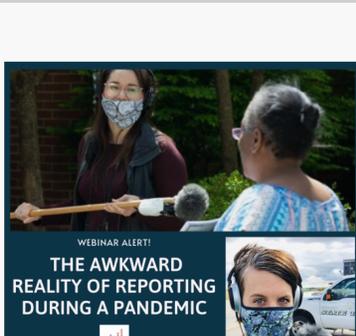
In coming weeks we'll have stories about the eastern Kentucky community of Whitesburg, from **Sydney Boles of Ohio Valley ReSource**, and from **Megan Feeny** in Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Our goal is to continue to hear from and about these communities as the pandemic's effects play out and as the cacophony of a presidential election campaign begins to build. We hope this intentional and transparent effort will cultivate trust between the newsrooms and the communities to bring more of their stories to public radio.

-- Alisa Barba, senior editor

Register for our Friday webinar!

Getting out into the field to report during a pandemic presents a unique situation for journalists because they can no longer remove themselves from the story.



By wearing a face mask, using a boom mic, or simply standing a distance away from the subject, the reporter is signaling his/her safety preferences.

That can create an immediate value difference, as face masks and business closures are increasingly becoming political issues.

How can a journalist navigate this fraught situation to get at a deeper story? How can a reporter build trust with people who disagree? And what can journalists do for their own emotional well-being during this crisis?

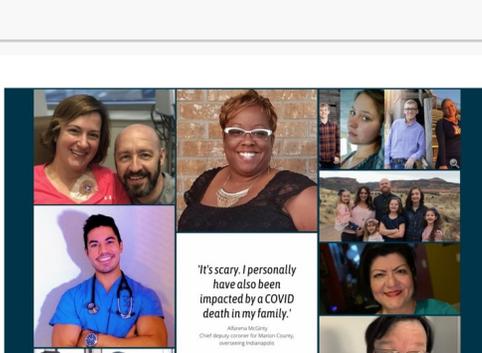
These are some of the topics we'll cover in a discussion with Ariel Worthy from StateImpact Pennsylvania, Harvest Public Media independent producer Meg Feeny, our coordinating producer Andrea Tudhope and Hearken consultant Bridget Thoreson. This is a group moderated discussion, so we're encouraging participation during this difficult time for reporters.

The webinar will be **led by Ann Alquist**, our community engagement director.

Sign up now! Friday, May 15, 12 p.m. CT. [Register here.](#)

We're Engaged!

A quick look at the results of community engagement efforts around public media.



'Voices of the Pandemic' audio diaries

We now have a page featuring the many audio diaries being collected across the country by our partner networks. Stations have found that doing one diary often leads to others. Together, it's a riveting collage of experiences across America. [See the page.](#)

NHPR launches WhatsApp Spanish experiment

NHPR has launched an experiment with WhatsApp: a Monday-through-Friday 5-minute cast in Spanish. NHPR announced this on their Spanish site with a [video on how to subscribe](#).

We'll be hearing more from NHPR later this month on results and lessons learned.

Our COVID-19 talk show seeks voices for audio diaries

This weekend's "Life, Community, and COVID-19" talk show will explore the tense divide over wearing face masks in one hour and the realities of unemployment in the other.

We're looking for voices for our audio diary on both topics. If you have any to share from your reporting, please email coordinating producer Andrea Tudhope at andrea@americaamplified.org. [See our Facebook post here.](#)

Resource center

- **No doubt you're appealing to your audiences right now to support your newsroom.** If you need some ideas, see if this roundup from Cory Brown, founder of Impact TK, helps. He looks at 6 publishers (including KQED) about their "respectful and useful" appeals. [Read about it.](#)
- **Here's a revenue partnership idea that benefits all involved.** Chicago Reader created a coloring book featuring local artists that generated thousands in revenue that was split between the participating artists and the alt-weekly. The book was offered in print and as PDF download. They had other ideas too. [Check out the Nieman Lab story here.](#)

HOW TO HELP

- **HELP FROM HOME:** We've rounded up ways you can make a difference in your community, even while you're stuck at home. [LINK](#)
- **SUPPORT ESSENTIAL LOCAL JOURNALISM:** Become a member of The Colorado Sun to help support our team's in-depth coverage of this crisis—for about the price of a fast-food burger. [Click here to join.](#)
- **ALREADY A SUN MEMBER?** There are a few ways to make your support go further:
 - **Share** this page on social media: coloradosun.com/coronavirus
 - **Encourage** people to sign up for a Sun newsletter so they don't miss a thing: coloradosun.com/newsletters
 - **Upgrade** your membership. [Instructions here.](#)

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