



2019-20 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY: RADIO



Connecting people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth, exploration of our world and positive change.



WKAR Radio is a valuable part of Michigan’s capital area advancement.

The station provides public broadcasting service with WKAR-AM, WKAR-FM, online, and the Radio Reading Service.

Serving a 60-mile radius from East Lansing, WKAR is involved with nearly 80,000 weekly listeners. WKAR’s range of programming includes WKAR News, classical music, folk, jazz, live musical performances, participation in community events and with station representatives serving on a variety of boards and community committees; and community support through student learning internships.

In FY20, WKAR provided these vital local services:

- Two Radio Stations
 - WKAR (AM) 870 & 105.1 FM
 - WKAR-FM 90.5
- One Television Station with four channels
 - WKAR-HD
 - WKAR-Create
 - WKAR-World
 - WKAR-PBSKIDS
- Online Streaming (24/7 Classical, Jazz, and News streams)
- Radio Reading Service
- National and local news, public affairs, arts and culture, health, science, and education programming.
- Music education throughout Michigan’s capital area.

WKAR’s local services had deep impact in Michigan’s capital region.

WKAR reached a weekly audience of nearly 80,000 listeners through the station’s partnership with local educators, businesses, governments, arts organizations, schools, and social services agencies.

Through our timely local and national news reporting and coverage, WKAR helps local non-profits and government agencies reach and engage new audiences.

Volunteers at WKAR’s Radio Reading Service read local newspapers to area listeners who are unable to see or turn a page.



2019-20 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

This past year at WKAR (July 2019-June 2020) was marked by more news, and more classical music, and a greater digital presence.

News that matters, Music that inspires

For 98 years, WKAR-FM from Michigan State University has informed and entertained listeners across the capital area of Michigan. That tradition continued in 2019-20, as WKAR filled the airwaves from Grand Rapids to Detroit with news, classical music and an intense dedication to connecting with our community.

NEWS

Michigan was in the national spotlight as politicians campaigned in advance of March's primary election. WKAR News rose to the occasion, with 11 features heard nationwide on NPR News magazines including **Morning Edition**, **All Things Considered**, and **Weekend Edition**. WKAR News reporters were also heard during **NPR News** national newscasts, and, in partnership with other public radio stations in the state, shared 138 stories with the Michigan Public Radio Network.

In the second half of 2019, WKAR News provided coverage on topics ranging from a strike by UAW affecting workers at two local General Motors plants, to marijuana dispensaries transitioning to the sale of recreational cannabis.

Near the end of 2019, the US House began impeachment hearings. While not a local event, WKAR was in a position to utilize existing resources to make unfiltered gavel-to-gavel coverage of Impeachment hearings in the House, and the Senate trial available on WKAR (AM) 870, and also heard on 105.1 FM and worldwide at wkar.org. WKAR News interviewed Michigan Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters about the historic Impeachment trial.

The first quarter of 2020 was a tumultuous time for Michigan State University athletics. WKAR News covered the trial of former MSU gymnastics coach Kathie Klages and the abrupt retirement of Mark Dantonio, head coach of MSU's football team.

The first quarter of 2020 was also when the coronavirus pandemic struck in Michigan. WKAR news provided a wide range of related coverage, from efforts of local schools to disinfect classrooms, effects on those visiting loved ones in hospitals, how to get tested for coronavirus, how it affects pets and activities that remain available, such as golfing and exploring the local river trail. This was all during the first month. Because new information was being released constantly, WKAR news added newscasts on the weekends to help listeners stay up to date on the latest developments.

After the killing of George Floyd, the nation was awakened to the need for police reforms. In the second quarter of 2020, WKAR News was there to chronicle the needs of and response from our community. Our reporters covered protests in Lansing and East Lansing, dove into the changes the Black community was demanding of the police, and reported on the promises for change from both government officials and the police.

Throughout 2019-20, the **Michigan Minute**, a locally produced daily look into historical events around the state continued to be appointment listening during **Morning Edition**. WKAR News is heard WKAR (AM) and WKAR-FM 7-days per week, and is available online at wkar.org and through the NPR One app.



2019-20 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

CLASSICAL

WKAR-FM's classical music programming remains a mainstay for 90.5FM. WKAR-FM's classical music team presented 1,976 hours of locally produced classical programming in 2019-20. Many Friday matinee performances of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra were broadcast live on WKAR-FM.

WKAR's flagship Michigan Music program, **Great Lakes Concerts**, began its second season highlighting a variety of ensembles in Ann Arbor, Traverse City, Jackson, Lansing, Interlochen and the Michigan Philharmonic in Detroit; as well as smaller in-state partnerships with the Absolute Music Series in Lansing and the Baroque on Beaver Island Festival right in the middle of Lake Michigan. In 2020, the program expanded its partnership to include concerts recorded by the Saginaw Bay Symphony and will continue to knit together more of The Mitten's classical music makers into hour-long programs.

Other unique local classical music programming included initiatives to underline the diversity in music. For the third year running, the entirety of our International Women's Day programming featured centuries of composers who happen to be women, and highlighted their struggles and successes working in a stereotypically male music genre. For Juneteenth our local programming exclusively featured composers from the African diaspora, including Robert Nathaniel Dett, who spent much time in Battle Creek, Michigan serving with the USO. In addition, WKAR posted our Juneteenth playlist online with links to the albums with a challenge to other classical artists and radio stations to use the recordings as starting points to further diversify their year-round music libraries as well.

WKAR continued its statewide partnership with Detroit's WRCJ-FM and Traverse City's Interlochen Public Radio, producing the programs **MSU In Concert**, **Michigan Matinee**, **The Fugue** and **Great Lakes Concerts** for broadcast on those stations.

FOLK

The Michigan-centric program **Folk with Matt Watroba** continued its lynchpin presence in the WKAR-FM Sunday line-up. This unique show features folk legend Matt Watroba as he hosts an evening of acoustic folk, blues, bluegrass, and more, performed by artists from the Great Lakes region and from all over the world.

COMMUNITY

WKAR-FM is not just active inside the studio. Classical hosts Jody Knol and Jamie Paisley participated in local fine arts events as concert guides and hosted pre-concert lectures. When live music venues were closed because of the pandemic, Jody and Jamie continued their involvement with local music ensembles by participating in virtual events. WKAR also used the national Public Radio Music Day initiative for non-musical purposes and produced interviews with several leaders of the mid-Michigan cultural community for the listeners to hear how they and their staffs were adapting to the pandemic restrictions. WKAR News sports reporter Al Martin served as emcee at several MSU and community events.

We hosted a **Pop-Up Stories** storytelling event, in partnership with MSU's Abrams Planetarium, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first lunar landing. At the event, amateur community storytellers shared their perspectives in front of a public audience. The event was free and select stories are produced for later broadcasts and online.

WKAR Promotes Community Dialogue

WKAR invited listeners to a “Pop-Up Stories” event to share stories about acts of kindness that have touched their lives. Stories are recorded, edited, and then featured during Morning Edition or All Things Considered.



WKAR Engages with our Community

Absolute Music Chamber Series

Regularly scheduled shows highlighting performances of local music ensembles

Concert Guides and Pre-Concert Lectures at Lansing Symphony Orchestra Concerts



WKAR News

Politics, education, health, and safety were cornerstones of news coverage provided during 2019-20.

Our reporters were there when protestors rallied in support of police reform and against restrictions put in place to slow the spread of the coronavirus

WKAR is committed to providing opportunities for the next generation of journalists. Two of our student interns won first place awards in the 2019 Associated Press Media Editors broadcast competition for Best Newscast and Best Use of Photography.





WKAR engaged with our community through live and virtual hosting, and by leading discussions at live and virtual music performances.

We expanded our programs and specials to showcase Michigan Capital Region talents and professions.

We increased awareness around local issues, providing timely and quality news content and discussions.

As a result, membership and listenership are up and our audiences are more diverse.

"I have always turned to WKAR for my classical music. Thank you WKAR for keeping classical music alive."

Brett from Pinckney, MI

"I wake up to Morning Edition and appreciate the news local, domestic as well as world. I also tune in to All things considered, BBC News and Sports Talk when I'm driving around. And occasionally to Wait, Wait Don't Tell me which is really hilarious."

Pat from Lansing, MI

"WKAR NPR keeps me informed and entertained almost every day. I listen to the operas, and especially appreciate having classical music at home and when I travel."

Jean from Lansing, MI

"All radios - car and home - are set at 90.5. It's the only station with unbiased and varietal listening options. Thank you Susi Elkins for your incredible leadership. Thanks to Kevin, Scott, Jamie, Karel, and my favorite, Jody Kno!"

Yvonne from Lansing, MI

"YOUR Station is giving me the up to minute info on the Supreme Court and DACA. We do not have cable TV so your station gives us the NEWS! We love WKAR AM and FM."

Tina (location unknown)

WKAR continues to play an essential role in Michigan's Capital Region as a key source for quality news, music and cultural programming, giving a voice to a broad and deep variety of conversation, community, concerts, and more. WKAR commits to expanding its community relationships to better share the talents, interests, concerns and cultural backgrounds of the people in mid-Michigan.
