MISSION MINDED

LOCAL VALUE

At KSMU Radio and Ozarks Public Television we take our role of serving our audience and upholding their trust very seriously. We strive to keep listeners and viewers across the Ozarks informed, entertained, and inspired through in-depth news coverage, quality educational content, and the civil exchange of ideas. A range of local and national content is distributed through a variety of media platforms, connecting audiences in meaningful ways. With a mission to explore ideas and deepen our shared understanding, the stations are focused on several priorities, including quality content, collaboration, and sustainability.

LOCAL IMPACT

Ozarks Public Broadcasting reaches our entire community. Because Ozarks Public Television and KSMU Radio are available at no charge, through over-the-air broadcast, we’re able to serve all families in our area—regardless of their financial means. Every child in the Ozarks has access to educational programming that promotes success in school, and every resident has access to information and ideas that promote community engagement.

KEY SERVICES

ENGAGING COMMUNITY MEMBERS through local outreach.

EDUCATING FAMILIES from cradle to college and far beyond.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY to develop cultural competence and create inclusive communities.

DOCUMENTING, PRESENTING, AND PRESERVING the history and culture of the Ozarks through local programming.
**Wine & Food with Lidia**

After canceling an important station fundraiser in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the OPT engagement team, along with committee members from the community, put on their thinking caps to re-imagine a virtual event centered around wine and food. The result? *Wine & Food with Lidia*!

Instead of OPT’s traditional large, in-person gathering featuring wine and food tastings, the event was transformed into a meal kit with all the instructions and ingredients to create your own Italian feast at home. Making it even more exciting, the fundraiser was hosted virtually by PBS celebrity chef Lidia Bastianich, joining OPT supporters across the Ozarks from her home in New York. The evening included collaboration and support from local restaurants, businesses, TV personalities, and more, all investing in OPT’s important mission of educating our youngest viewers.

**KSMU Trivia Nights**

2021 included two KSMU Trivia Nights. This partnership with Springfield Brewing Company allowed public radio fans of all ages to come out for nights of food, fun, and fierce trivia competition. It was also a chance for listeners to try the limited release KSMU Pale Ale brewed by Springfield Brewing Company. Teams competed in five rounds of questions hosted by local trivia masters Lauryl Wagoner and Kyle Jeffries at each sold-out event. Prizes, including KSMU swag and gift cards to local businesses, were awarded to the winners.

**Tamara Keith Visit**

Partnering with Drury University’s [LE Meador Center for Politics and Citizenship](https://www.drury.edu/learcenter), Ozarks Public Broadcasting co-hosted a speaking engagement with Tamara Keith. Keith has been a White House correspondent for NPR since 2014 and co-hosts the [NPR Politics Podcast](https://www.npr.org/podcasts/569565624), the top political news podcast in America. She also regularly appears on *PBS Newshour*. A timely discussion in the current political environment, the focus of Keith's presentation was *The Evolving Role of Media in American Democracy*. This event was free and open to the public and attended by students, faculty, local journalists, and other community members.
Future Journalist Training Ground

KSMU invests in training future journalists through our internship program. All internships are paid, to ensure the program reflects KSMU’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. KSMU is also proud to partner with the Missouri State University Bear POWER program (which provides job training for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities) to recruit and place interns.

Seuss Science Day

The 10th Annual Seuss Science Day, OPT’s signature children’s event, was reorganized this year to better reflect our core values of education and access. Partnering with the Ozarks Regional YMCA allowed us to transition from paid admission to a completely free family event. We joined forces with several area non-profits, encouraging each group in attendance to host hands-on S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) activities that corresponded to books written or inspired by the legendary Dr. Seuss. Additionally, we secured sponsorships to not only ensure a no-cost event, but also help fund kids programming on OPT and the YMCA financial assistance fund. Visits from The Cat in the Hat and The Lorax, Dr. Seuss story times, and live science experiments made the day extra special for area kids and families.

OPT/PBS KIDS Writers Contest

In 2021, OPT continued its annual Writers Contest and enjoyed many delightful entries from kids in kindergarten through third grade. The contest fosters a love of literature and builds early writing and illustrating skills. Winning stories were displayed at a local art gallery and their authors were honored at a banquet. This year, the banquet was moved outdoors as a safety precaution, and last year’s winners were also invited to attend since their ceremony had to be moved online. A new partnership with the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum offered winners wonderful prizes, including Little House on the Prairie box sets and tickets to tour the historic homestead in Mansfield, MO.

LIFELONG LEARNING

OPT/PBS KIDS Writers Contest

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Sense of Community

Ozarks Public Broadcasting continues the important work of in-depth local reporting through its Sense of Community series on both radio and television.

Radio reporters explored the Springfield-Greene County African American Heritage Trail, telling important historical stories of schools, parks, churches, cemeteries, and more. Another Sense of Community radio series took inspiration from StoryCorps’ mission to build connection and compassion, encouraging staff members to record interviews with their loved ones. The resulting conversations ranged from reflections on a fifty-year-long career as a doctor to surrogate pregnancies to moving back into a childhood home.

On television, Sense of Community programs include on-air interviews with community guests and host Jennifer Moore. In the last year, viewers were able to gain a better understanding of technology, the housing market, being a good neighbor, and more from local experts.

Highly Acclaimed Content

Ozarks Public Broadcasting makes a continuous effort to tell stories that reflect diverse perspectives, and this year the Missouri Broadcasters Association (MBA) took note. KSMU had two finalists in the Best Feature Reporting category at the MBA Awards. First place was awarded to producer Michele Skalicky for her feature Rally for Change. The story highlighted the experiences of several participants in a racial justice rally on Park Central Square in the summer of 2020. Honorable mention went to Jessica Balisle’s A Musician Recalls a Childhood Surrounded by Racial Discrimination, with local artist King Clarentz’s first-hand account of growing up Black in Springfield during the 1950s and 60s.
The Evolution of the Branson Area

Beginning with early fishermen on the waters to travelers wanting to see the sights and encounter what they had read about in The Shepherd of the Hills novel, Branson has captivated visitors and been an area of change. From the community’s appeal to entertainers, unique attractions, and popular outdoor recreation destinations, the Branson area has evolved into one of America’s top family vacation experiences. The Evolution of the Branson Area premiered on Ozarks Public Television in April of 2021.

Missouri! A Bicentennial Celebration

In celebration of Missouri’s 200th anniversary of statehood, Ozarks Public Television, in partnership with other Public Television Association of Missouri stations, produced and premiered Missouri! A Bicentennial Celebration. This two-hour presentation included a sweeping snapshot of Missouri beginning with her settlement and early territory days. The story progressed with the pivotal role Missouri played during the Civil War and continued with representative highlights of Missourians’ remarkable and unique accomplishments and impact in more recent times.

Milestones for KSMU Programs

January 30th, 2021, marked KSMU’s broadcast of the 2,000th episode of Seldom Heard Music. Host Mike Smith first brought this Bluegrass program to the airwaves in 1982 and listeners have enjoyed episodes every Saturday night since. Smith’s milestone and other career accomplishments were highlighted in a feature article in Bluegrass Unlimited.

2021 also marked 40 years of collaboration between KSMU and the League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri. League volunteers record weekly episodes of Making Democracy Work to help listeners understand the role and services of government, what it means to be engaged in society, and how other organizations help fill a void not provided by public service. The 40-year partnership earned KSMU a Public Affairs Spotlight.