

Telling Public Radio's Story – KETR-FM – FY 2023

Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

KETR's local audience service goals include providing Northeast Texas with unhindered access to relevant local and regional content. Our locally-produced daily newscasts are filled with curated and original reporting, and we maintain a strong partnership with our statewide journalism hub which provides our audience with multiple daily statewide newscasts, longer-form individual news item contributions, and a network of valuable content creators and editors to support the telling of the most accurate stories, most of which are shared both over the air and through text and pictures online. Our news staff also produce a weekly community news program with invited guests who discuss local topics ranging from governance to public services to education, arts and culture, and health. These offerings reach thousands of weekly radio listeners (as measured by Nielsen Audio) and tens of thousands of monthly website visitors. Our content, in its various forms, and our facilities, remain available for use by the faculty of Texas A&M University-Commerce to support their lessons and the educational goals they've set for their students.

Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you're connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.

Our key initiatives include the provision of: real-time vital weather and news information aimed at preparing our Northeast Texas listeners to safely plan their days; up-to-the-hour information about national, state, and regional policy implementation and how it affects our audiences; informative exploration and discussion of relevant music, arts, and cultural topics; and outstanding stewardship of the resources provided to 88.9 KETR in service to our audiences and our community.

Our content partners include: NPR, American Public Media, the Public Radio Exchange, The Texas Newsroom (our statewide journalism collaboration hub,) WNYC, Luke Clayton, Texas Public Radio, The Greenville Herald-Banner, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce Independent School District, local law enforcement, and others.

Our operational partners include: Hunt County Emergency Management/FEMA, NPR Digital Services, National Public Media, the Texas A&M Forest Service, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, and others.

What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.

Our partnership with The Texas Newsroom provides our audiences with statehouse and governance reporting and with regular stories from our nation's southern border and stories that illustrate the regional impact of national and regional policies. This partnership also provides a much larger audience with the opportunity to learn about conversations and stories that affect our local region, and how they fit into the larger statewide picture. And our status as an auxiliary function of a state educational institution allows us to connect the analysis of some of the brightest minds in any number of fields with our audiences, and in return, the opportunity to help shape the formative classroom discussion for some young people as they prepare to enter tomorrow's workforce and society. Finally, we maintain operational partnerships with the Texas Forest Service and the North Central Texas Council of Governments which allow those organizations access to high-quality communications infrastructure which supports official emergency management communications, fire suppression communications, and backup 911 dispatch and call centers. This year we also conducted a full review, by request, of the possibility of partnering with local LEO and emergency management personnel to strengthen their ability to respond to real-time situations throughout the county.

Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2020, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2021. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

KETR's weekday newscasts and occasional features present stories of interest to the station's audiences in Commerce, Greenville, Sulphur Springs, Bonham, and other Texas cities with significant African-American and Mexican-American populations. News topics range from local issues to statewide public policy matters that have a significant effect on rural communities, many of which depend on county-provided systems and services, which are in turn dependent on state funding and guidance. Like commercial news outlets, KETR provides news about crime, weather, and other public safety topics. However, KETR implements public radio editorial values by inclusion of news about education, health care, consumer finance, and other subject areas more directly relevant to the daily lives of our audience. KETR's audience demographics trend older and more African-American than the state average, and so KETR's newscast story editorial process reflects this awareness.

KETR also participates in The Texas Newsroom, a collaboration led by the four NPR member stations in the state's metropolitan centers in Dallas, Austin, Houston, and San Antonio. In addition to the hour-long weekday news magazine Texas Standard, The Texas Newsroom also produces 15 live statewide newscasts weekly, and also distributes features for use on KETR's broadcast and digital platforms. The Texas Newsroom features content relevant to immigrant, African-American, Latino, and other communities that compose the diversity of Texas. Additionally, The Texas Newsroom has reporters in Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio that produce reports and features in Spanish for KETR's audience.

The nationally distributed programs from NPR, American Public Media, WNYC, and PRX also serve KETR's commitment to content relevant to diverse audiences. In addition to Latino USA, a weekly news and culture review, leads this effort. On the arts side, Concierto is a two-hour, weekly classical music program featuring performers and performers from the Hispanophone diaspora with content in English and Spanish. Snap Judgment, an hour-long weekly storytelling program, features African-American voices, as does Shout! Black Gospel Music Moments, a weekly module-length program distributed by the NPR member station in Waco. In 2023, KETR expanded its audiences for these programs by providing additional weekly broadcasts of Latino USA and Snap Judgment in its broadcast schedule.

KETR improved its local offerings in FY 2023 with the creation of Palabra, a Latino-issues podcast produced in collaboration with the Texas A&M University-Commerce Office of Latino Engagement & Outreach. Although the podcast only lasted one season due to staffing changes on the university side, the venture was a success. Palabra presented KETR's audience with thoughtful discussions on topics of academic life, personal and career development, identity and community, language, and regional cultures as experienced by faculty, staff and students from the local Mexican-American and other Spanish-speaking, indigenous or Latin-identified communities.

Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?

Funding from the CPB is generally used to assist in securing the quality nationally-distributed programming that serves as the hallmark of public media stations under globally-recognized branding. In FY2023 we used CPB funds to replace our transmitter and to create and stand up new HD Radio program offerings to our radio and online audiences. Without these funds, our development efforts aimed at these upgrades would have come up short, and the service they provide would not have come to fruition.