

Pioneer PBS

2020 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



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MISSION STATEMENT

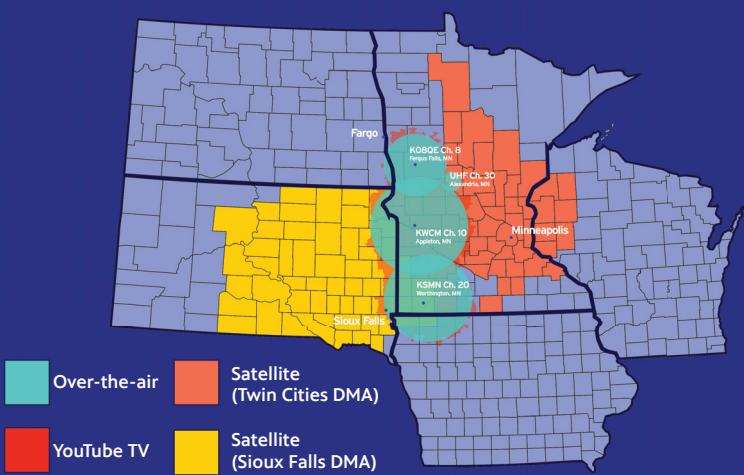
Pioneer PBS is committed to building vibrant and welcoming communities. Our mission is to foster civil discourse and civic well-being through thought-provoking media productions and events that connect people to rural stories and shared values.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to be a forward-thinking media and technology leader whose viewers are engaged and inspired to advance rural values of cooperation, resilience and innovation.

LOCAL VALUE

Since 1966 Pioneer PBS has been serving small towns and farming communities of a five-state area by advancing our ability to share stories, discussing current events and our region's history and learning from each other.



2020 KEY SERVICES

In fiscal year 2020 (July 2019 through June 2020), Pioneer PBS produced the following local broadcast productions: "Minnesota 4H: Growing True Leaders," "The Chord-Ayers 50th Anniversary Celebration," "Prairie Sportsman," "Grassland Jam," "Compass," "LANDMARKS," "Country Music: Made in Minnesota," "Your Legislators" and our award-winning arts, culture and regional history program, "Postcards."

We sponsored screening and community discussion events around "Country Music: Made in Minnesota," "Postcards," "LANDMARKS" and Southwest Minnesota Story Share programs in the communities of [Fergus Falls](#), [Tracy](#), [Granite Falls](#), [Pipestone](#), [Madison](#), [Minneapolis](#), [St. Paul](#) and [Worthington](#).

We organized a meet-and-greet event for the new Minnesota Humanities Center President Kevin Lindsey at the Pioneer PBS studio in [Granite Falls](#).

We sponsored a ballet performance in [Dawson](#), featuring the James Sewell Ballet.

We also staffed booths at events in the communities of [Richmond](#), [Gillfallin](#), [Willmar](#), [Montevideo](#) and [Granite Falls](#).

We participated in the Southwest West Central Service Co-op Career Fair in [Marshall](#) and [Worthington](#).

We served on a panel discussion representing Pioneer PBS at the Rural Arts & Culture Summit in [Grand Rapids](#).

Prior to Covid-19 restrictions, we provided tours of our new studio in [Granite Falls](#) to hundreds of students and visitors of all ages from throughout the region.

Pioneer PBS staff served as speakers and presenters to several civic organizations in our core broadcast area which includes more than [45 counties](#).

We reached out to more than [60 school districts](#), asking them to send senior class photos for station breaks honoring the Class of 2020 because of graduation cancellations due to the onset of COVID-19 restrictions.



2020 LOCAL IMPACT



Fiscal year 2020 was an impactful year for Pioneer PBS in that we produced and aired six programs that went on to win Upper Midwest Emmy® awards in FY 2021.

We continued to make significant progress in our move into our new studio in Granite Falls and this has had a positive impact on the local area economy.

“LANDMARKS,” a special series of programs hosted by Minnesota photographer and storyteller Doug Ohman, continued production in fiscal year 2020 with a new program featuring the people and places along Highway 23 in southwestern Minnesota and this has had a positive impact on our local economy

In fiscal year 2020 two Pioneer PBS employees purchased houses and established permanent residence in Granite Falls.

The presence of young and talented videographers in the community has been noticed by area businesses, nonprofit organizations and the local Chambers of Commerce. Several of these organizations have made use of the new found video communication skills in the community to increase their social media marketing efforts.

Finally, the robust schedule of civic engagement events sponsored in fiscal year 2020 prior to COVID-19 restrictions saw Pioneer PBS spending funds to advertise with local newspapers and radio stations, hiring caterers from local restaurants and employing local printers to produce postcards, flyers, posters and other promotional items.

2020 IN THE COMMUNITY



Through our local programs and website, Pioneer PBS connects a vast underserved region, providing a multidimensional media platform for local people to share their stories with the rest of the world. Many of our viewers are low-income families who cannot afford cable or satellite television. We also serve tens-of-thousands of elderly people living on fixed incomes who regularly tell us that we are their constant companion and best friend.

Pioneer PBS serves a higher percentage of underserved and low income viewers than most other television broadcasters in the region. Pioneer PBS's primary community of license (Appleton, Minnesota) has an average per capita income that is only 52 percent of the national average. Because of the audience composition and the distance to urban centers, Pioneer PBS is the only public television station providing service to many of our counties.

To assist local civic groups and nonprofit organizations, station meeting room facilities are provided free for public use prior to Covid-19 restrictions. In fiscal year 2020, organizations such as the Minnesota Humanities Center, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Granite Falls Riverfront Revitalization and the Yellowstone Trail Alliance of Western Minnesota all used our facility.

Finally, in fiscal year 2020, through a partnership with a regional foundation, Pioneer PBS continued work on a multi-year project to document the stories of local Native Americans and Scandinavian Americans in our small rural communities. These stories focused on cultural traditions and were developed in cooperation with the Upper Sioux Community, the Lower Sioux Community and the Milan Village Arts School. Related outreach events for this effort included two community screenings and discussions about how these cultural traditions are transferred from one generation to the next.

20 PROGRAMS OF IMPACT



Compass Producer Amanda Anderson interviews Mark Olson and Thom Petersen in a story about COVID-19's impact on agriculture

“COVERING CORONAVIRUS”

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pioneer PBS dedicated resources and relied on unpaid volunteer time from staff to interview people via Skype and Zoom to create nine “Covering Coronavirus” programs about how the pandemic is affecting rural areas. This special series was distributed through Pioneer PBS’s public affairs program “Compass.”

Pioneer PBS used new interviewing techniques to examine how our region was being impacted and responding to the pandemic. The programs featured several interviews with area school superintendents, teachers, students, farmers, business owners, journalists, bankers, Native Americans, artists, activists and postal workers.

This special series provided a model of how Pioneer PBS could go forward with adequate funding to provide more timely public affairs programming that connects journalists in the region and cultivates a new community of voices. Based on the learnings from this experiment in fiscal year 2020, Pioneer PBS secured funding in fiscal year 2021 to advance a new version of “Compass” featuring digital-first story releases and a monthly broadcast compilation.

POSTCARDS

“Postcards” is a weekly series highlighting the arts, history and cultural heritage of western Minnesota.

Four Upper Midwest Emmy® Awards were received by the Pioneer PBS team of producer Dana Conroy and videographers/editors Ben Dempcy and Kristofor Gieske. Since 2013 stories created by this “Postcards” production team have received 15 Upper Midwest Emmy® Awards.

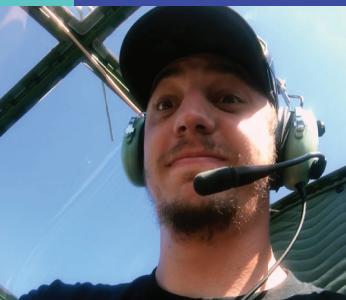
- The story, History in Miniature: Max’s Dioramas about Max Grabow of Gaylord, explores his hobby as a maker of dioramas, many of them inspired by the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum.
- Moment of Action is a story about artist John Sterner who teaches K-12 art classes at Lakeview High School in Cottonwood and has served on the faculty at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall.
- Player Piano Man is a story about Nate Otto and his passion for restoring player pianos. Nate was interviewed for this story at his family’s cabin near Richmond.
- From War to Dance: The Carlyle Larsen Story is about Madison’s Carlyle Larsen, a 95-year-old Morse code radio operator, who survived Japanese bombing raids in WWII. Larsen returned to western Minnesota to play trumpet in thousands of gigs, and he has performed taps at more than 200 military funerals since 1996.

PRAIRIE SPORTSMAN

Pioneer PBS’s “Prairie Sportsman” received two Upper Midwest Emmy® Awards for work performed in fiscal year 2020.

- Bret Amundson received an Emmy award in the “Talent - Program Host/Moderator” category for his role as the public face of “Prairie Sportsman”—the most widely distributed Pioneer PBS program.
- “Prairie Sportsman” also received an award for Living With Wolves, a story featuring the life and work of wildlife scientist Dave Mech, a world-renowned wolf expert and founder of the International Wolf Center in Ely. The program was produced by Cindy Dorn with editors/videographers Dylan Curfman and Max Grabow, assistant producer/host Bret Amundson and voice artist Lisa Cownie.

2020 IN THE COMMUNITY



REACH IN THE COMMUNITY

Pioneer PBS serves the small towns and farming communities located in western and southwestern Minnesota, the eastern Dakotas and northwestern Iowa. We are the only broadcast television station located in this area. On a monthly basis Nielsen data shows that Pioneer PBS is viewed on average by 40% of the Sioux Falls Designated Market Area (DMA) and by 12% of the Minneapolis DMA. This amounts to more than 1.1 million regular viewers of our station.

In addition Pioneer PBS has developed an extensive social media platform focused on sharing stories about local arts, culture, history and the outdoors. The Pioneer PBS video on demand service, combined with our YouTube channel and Facebook page, attracted more than 63,300 views per month resulting in 760,108 yearly views across these platforms in 2020.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2020 Pioneer PBS worked with dozens of local arts organizations, historical societies, businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions and civic organizations to find the stories and shine light on issues important to our viewers.

In fiscal year 2020, Pioneer PBS collaborated with the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership and the Department of Public Transformation on a video about the process of using community-based design/build approaches to repurpose old buildings in the small town main streets of the region.

Other regional organizations that Pioneer PBS has ongoing relationships with include: University of Minnesota, Morris, Southwest Minnesota State University, Southwest Minnesota Arts Council, the Lake Region Arts Council, Minnesota West Community & Technical College, and dozens of local chambers of commerce and historical societies.

2020 IN THE COMMUNITY



IMPACT AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Pioneer PBS knows it is having an impact because our viewers tell us so when we go out in the community and set up booths to meet with our members at local trade shows and events. In 2020 we staffed booths at trade shows in [Willmar](#), [Richmond](#), [Marshall](#), [Worthington](#) and [Granite Falls](#). We love hosting these booths because of the affirming messages we hear from our viewers. It is obvious that people love Pioneer PBS and that is reflected in the increased levels of membership and corporate support in 2020.

It is obvious that people love Pioneer PBS and that is reflected in the increased levels of membership and corporate support we experienced in 2020, despite the challenges COVID-19 presented.

20 IN THE COMMUNITY

EVALUATING OUTCOMES AND MEASURING IMPACT

Pioneer PBS connects with its viewers on social media platforms, too.

FACEBOOK

December 2019: 4,506 followers

December 2020: 5,300 followers



COUNTRY MUSIC: MADE IN MINNESOTA

In coordination with the national release of Ken Burns' documentary about the history of country music,

Pioneer PBS produced a companion documentary "Country Music: Made in Minnesota" in fiscal year 2020. The documentary combines compelling interviews, commentary and music selections from Minnesotans who have shaped the sounds of our beloved country music from the stage and audiences alike.

Narrated and produced by former KARE 11 news anchor Diana Pierce,

the half-hour documentary touches on stories about Ardis Wells from Alexandria, the Walt Benton Hillbilly Rainbow Band from Dovray, WE Fest in Detroit Lakes and the Flame Bar in Minneapolis. The program features interviews with Mylan Ray of Pipestone, Jeffrey Krueger of Detroit Lakes, Sherwin Linton of Minneapolis and several other figures who contributed to the development and popularity of country music in the North Star State.

YOUTUBE

2019: 591,100 views

1,600 new subscribers

2020: 1,026,344 views

2,576 new subscribers

TWITTER

December 2019: 1,013 followers

January 2021: 1,047 followers

INSTAGRAM

December 2019: 743 followers

January 2021: 953 followers

EVALUATING OUTCOMES AND MEASURING IMPACT

Twice a year Pioneer PBS surveys our members to measure our impact. Here is a sample of the hundreds of comments we receive:

“I love PBS, nice entertainment, learn from great documentaries, “BBC News,” love Lawrence Welk as I watched his shows with my gramma growing up. Thank you for bringing me joy!”

- Marcia, Forest Lake, MN

“We love the variety of programs of all rural area interests, including farming, hunting, gardening, etc. Local events and people’s accomplishments. Nice to see our area, not just big cities.”

- Dave, Zimmerman, MN

“I love your educational shows, and I don’t have to worry about my children watching any inappropriate content on your channels.”

- Mary, Olivia, MN

“It is a great learning station; I am 80+ years old and I must keep learning.”

- Sam, Alexandria, MN

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STORY SHARE

In 2020 Pioneer PBS's Southwest Minnesota Story Share project included stories about:

- New immigrant small business entrepreneurs in small towns
- Mental health challenges facing immigrant communities
- What it is like to be a transgender person in rural Minnesota





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