



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Established 1964 • wdse.org • Located in Duluth, MN

It is our mission to illuminate, inspire, and enrich lives, to strengthen community.



WDSE•WRPT is a valuable part of the Lake Superior Region and committed to this area’s advancement.

WDSE provides a value you can’t get anywhere else...consistent and in-depth storytelling about our region and our community, in all genres. From history to arts to culture, WDSE reflects our community in Northeastern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin, and all those we serve. On Almanac North we dig deeper into the stories heard on the news each week, exploring issues in our region in a more holistic way. On Native Report, we tell the important stories of our native communities, sharing tales of both challenge and success. We showcase the work of local filmmakers, artists and performers through productions like Who Is Rainbow Trout and The Slice. WDSE is for the community and by the community, without which we would have no stories to tell. That is the true value.

In 2021, WDSE provided these vital local services:

In 2021, WDSE provided a wide array of learning opportunities, from step-by-step instructions on how to cook farm-to-table recipes on our YouTube channel to engagement through discussion questions about waterways and contamination in On The Water Trail. WDSE opens learning opportunities to community members of all ages. WDSE was also a venue for viewers to get their own questions answered. We provide a direct line for our viewers to get their burning questions answered live, whether from medical professionals on Doctors on Call, horticulturalists and garden experts on Great Gardening, or our local legislators in Legislative Report. Finally, WDSE is and has been a source of inspiration, making the arts more accessible by showing our local creators at work.

WDSE local services had deep impact in the Northern areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

WDSE’s impact is reflected in our broadcast reach to diverse members of our population. Nielsen ratings tell us that, within our viewing area, 83% of the Native American population and 64% of the African American population tune in to WDSE every week to WDSE. The substantial growth we experienced on our primary YouTube channel in 2021 is another significant indicator of our impact. The channel had 4.4 million hours viewed with an average view duration of 27 minutes and 30 seconds and has 9.6 million total views, an increase of 378% year over year. These numbers, our high Nielsen ratings, and social media engagement are a strong reflection and indicator that WDSE is serving community through the identification of what is important to our viewing area through struggles and celebrations alike. These programs tell the stories of our neighbors and are a true reflection of our collective experience in the Northland.



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

Intersections: Intersections is a series of five-minute stories highlighting community members who have overcome adversity and made a difference. This season, we interviewed Samuel Miltich, an international musician spent his adult life living with paranoid schizophrenia. During the pandemic, Sam's message to the world was "adaptation, acceptance, and gratitude." One viewer wrote, "Sam is a beautiful soul that battles daily with his struggle of schizophrenia. He is inspiring for all of us, reminding me how my situation is so very manageable." In another interview this season, in honor of Black History Month, WDSE featured activist, mother, and poet, Sandra Oyinloye. Sandra is the co-founder of DanSan Creatives, an artist collective. Her story had a powerful effect on many viewers, one commenting, "I know of Sandra and her husband Daniel. They enrich the lives of the community and fearless in bringing forth what it means to be black in Northeastern Minnesota."

Great Gardening: Corona virus, for many reasons, created new and renewed interest in gardening with people from all ages. Our eight-part series focused on the new gardeners and how to garden during times of COVID. This series also included six segments of farm to table, demonstrating ways to maintain the efficacy of the vegetables in cooking, aimed at those on a tight budget and limited resources. We created a YouTube channel where we are experiencing success. Two examples: within three months the spring special had 2,086 views. In addition, 16,000 views of how to get rid of Creeping Charlie. Facebook Comment: "Loved the show! So much great information!" Cookie Pautz.

Making It Up North: A 10-episode magazine show for people making their way in Northern Minnesota. In this WDSE-TV series, explore stories artists, artisans, and entrepreneurs who carved their own path to make a living and broken through the barriers of life in the northland to thrive by using their talents to create economy for self and community realizing their dreams. The impact of this program ranges from increasing business of the artistic entrepreneurs featured to creating connection between community members and how the lifestyle of one community resonates with many. Episodes include Finding Neverland: Ashley Bredemus and Cassidy Ritter redefine the term of what it means to be an outdoorswoman and what it is like to live in the woods close to the Canadian border. One viewer comment, "*I have new insights to my own struggles. Life is hard in the northland, and they give me a sense of belonging, a sense of sisterhood.*" Making It Up North's episode, Sauna Traditions, has 44,597 online views. Comments include: "*Beyond impressed with the quality of this documentary and how the makers put together the story of sauna in our heartland.*" – Sauna Times, and "*Best. Show. Ever. We need more episodes!*" – Ryan Brubaker. Media mentions in newspaper, radio and blogs: Duluth News Tribune, WTIP, KAXE, Northshore Art Scene. This program had a 20% increase on Social Media platforms.

Northern Rhythms Documentary: Explores the unique natural landscapes of the Northland through music. This documentary will feature Northern Minnesota musicians playing everything from country to jazz to classical in the places that inspire them, from deserted mine pits to soaring vistas to popular beaches. The documentary will feature sweeping views of some of the Northland's most beloved natural and industrial landscapes, as well as interviews with the featured musicians about how this region inspires them.

IMPACT: During a time when music venues were yet to be fully opened, this program gave viewers the opportunity to see incredible local performers. Not only that, but they were able to view them in some of the most awe-inspiring locations in the region.

"A stunning production of great performers and landscapes. Awesome job WDSE." – Steve Gregorich



Art Heals: The Jingle Dress Project

Native Report: The Native Report team, predominantly of Native descent, creates this magazine style series that celebrates Native American culture and heritage, listens to tribal elders, elevates the voices of youth, and talks to game-changers and leaders of Indian Country today. This program is the oldest of its kind in the PBS station member system. Each passing year, the Native Report team, made up of Native Americans, increases their quality of production as well as their reach through word of mouth and distribution through the PBS system. Native Report has been on 193 channels in 69 markets and in 38 states since its first season.

Examples of these important stories include Art Heals: The Jingle Dress Project: A Diné (Navajo) Nation photographer, takes the healing power of the jingle dress to the land. The group stopped in Minnesota's 'Indian Mounds Regional Park' as part of a national 'Art Heals: The Jingle Dress Project' photography journey. The mission was to learn more about the origin of the jingle dress dance tradition, to bring healing during the pandemic and to reclaim special places.

Viewer Comments:

"I feel that it brought what we were doing to a wider audience and educated people on the process and the meaning behind our work. I appreciate having a Native woman recording and telling our stories...It was really cool to be able to be interviewed by someone who understood these things and created a completely different interview experience. It's important that we are portraying the right messages from our stories so that we are not enforcing stereotypes. That I believe has a big impact on both our own communities and the wider public." -Michelle Defoe

"For me, working on the story about the revitalization of the Dakota language has encouraged me to study the language to help preserve it. I received amazing feedback from Dakota people and also non-Native people who have shared this story with people they know. I'm excited to continue telling stories of the native people highlighting our strengths as community."

– Tina Morgan



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT STORIES OF IMPACT

On the Water Trail explores the water science of the St. Louis River Watershed. In a new six-episode series featuring short online videos, meet the people who are working to improve the waterway after decades of dumping sewage and other legacy contamination. The intended audience is middle school science students and anyone with an interest in the issue. This is a nationally relevant story in our own backyard that far too few of our community understand at this level, particularly young people. Our relationship with the key organizational players in this work, along with our goal to increase collaboration with educational institutions, makes this a key project for WDSE.



Host Emily Lockling

IMPACT: On the Water Trail will be published December 2021. The goal for the program is to really provide a resource to students, educators, and lifelong learners on the impact of the St. Louis River and the issues it faces. We had community partners, teachers, and students review the pilot episode in our process of completing production and this received excellent reviews and helpful feedback.

Teacher's feedback from her students: "They appreciated that you explained the WHY = relationships to the present/reasons it matters to us now."

Community partner feedback: "I found this very effective in explaining the conditions of the river around Wood waste, why the restoration was needed, and what the outcomes will be."



Documentary: The Question Who Is Rainbow Trout? is familiar one to the fans of Rainbow Trout classic country shows on WTIP. The passion, sacrifice, and a desire to empower people can be heard in his voice stories and sounds. The feeling of home. A celebration of life. We document a journey around the mystery of this dynamic and fun volunteer DJ, with voices of well-known classic country artists singing classic tunes and voices of fans from way past the boundaries of the air waves. Rainbow through WTIP (a community radio) engaged and created a space for classic country in a way that has left a diverse range of people inspired around **Minnesota and beyond.**

IMPACT: Who Is Rainbow Trout? was our chance to work with local filmmakers and producers to tell a hyper-local story. People in this region know and love radio DJ Rainbow Trout and were thrilled to share in the celebration of his career. Producers Ivy and Arne Vainio and filmmaker Daniel Oyenloye, along with WDSE, brought together over 1,400 people for the screening of this program on Facebook! Comments from attendees include:

"Impossible to pick one highlight, the entire program was AMAZING!"

Another viewer said they learned "about resilience! Rainbow had such a hard life, but is still a kind, gentle soul."

“COVID-19 Vaccine: Finding Answers,”

In 2021, WDSE was not only recognized with five Emmy nominations for our local productions, but also received the Board of Governor’s Emmy® Award from the Midwest Chapter, in honor of our production “COVID-19 Vaccine: Finding Answers,” the most prestigious award from the Midwest Chapter as it is the only one voted on directly by the Board of Governors which represent all media professionals from TV stations and various other platforms across our five-state region. The Governor’s Emmy® Award honors visionary, long-standing relationships that creatively and effectively use corporate, non-profit, and broadcast resources to showcase the power of broadcasting to advance a mission or message. WDSE worked in collaboration with our St. Louis County Health Department and all area hospitals as well as with the local ABC, NBC/CBS, and FOX television stations and the Duluth News Tribune to educate viewers on the challenges our community and local health care providers faced due to coronavirus, and to provide answers to many of our burning questions. WDSE also leveraged this opportunity to interview Dr. Michael Osterholm as part of our call-in program, Doctors On Call. As part of Joe Biden’s COVID-19 Advisory Board, Osterholm discussed national and local issues. This episode received a 2.5 HH Nielsen rating and garnered 4,110 views on our YouTube Channel. One viewer commented, “Thank you for bringing Dr. Osterholm to Duluth! We love our local docs information, and it helps to hear that our medical community is on track!”



“COVID-19 Vaccine: Finding Answers”

Partner Comment

"Now that a few days – almost a week – has passed, I’ve had time to digest and reflect on just how well last week’s COVID vaccine programming went. I want to thank you again for all that you did. I’ve received so much positive feedback, and I hope you are hearing it, too!

Dana Kazel, St. Louis County
Communications Manager



Twin Ports Holiday Spectacular!

DESCRIPTION: For more than 90 years, the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra (DSSO) has delighted audiences throughout northern Minnesota with orchestral music of the highest caliber. From chamber concerts performed throughout the city, to the epic works of the orchestral repertoire, from Young Person's Concerts to delightful Pops for the entire family, the DSSO reaches thousands of individuals throughout its season. In this special concert produced by WDSE, The DSSO and the Twin Port's "Strikepoint" bell group brought the joys of the season to home viewers, complete with the lights of Duluth's "Bentleyville" Holiday attraction. Founded in 1984 and led by Bill Alexander, Strikepoint is comprised of community members, including high school and college students, who share a love of making music with handbells.

IMPACT: At a time when concert halls were not fully open, the experience of providing a broadcast concert experience for the holidays was unparalleled for many viewers.

"My husband and I really enjoyed the DSSO Bentleyville program. Kudos for a great job of pulling this together. We'll watch it again on Christmas Day." -Ann T. Hockman

WDSE has illuminated, inspired, and enriched by shining a light on stories that are difficult to tell, stories that ultimately inspire and enrich each community member in the telling of them. At the same time, we share in the joy of our celebrations! Knowing our neighbors and understanding our neighbors strengthens our community.
