



## 2023 Local Content and Service Report to the Community

**WCMU Public Media is one of Central Michigan University's principal public service commitments. WCMU Public Media has provided television and radio programming and other outreach activities for more than 50 years to residents in central and northern Michigan and portions of Ontario. Our mission is to educate, inform, entertain, and engage our communities. It is our goal to improve the quality of life in our service areas, promote cultural understanding and facilitate civil discourse on issues of public interest and importance.**

**WCMU Public Television**, with four full-power digital transmitters, reaches a potential audience of more than 2 million people in 42 counties in Michigan on 4 different channels including WCMU, Create, PBS KIDS, and Michigan Learning Channel with programs and services that engage, entertain, and enlighten. Combining our high-definition studio production facilities with our talented staff that travels to communities to craft stories, WCMU Public Television locally produces series content that informs viewers on issues of importance and programs that showcase the communities we serve.

**WCMU Public Radio** reaches a potential audience of nearly 3 million listeners in 46 Michigan counties through a network of eight transmitters, bringing the world to central and northern Michigan. On our main signal, WCMU broadcasts both locally and nationally produced news and talk programming on weekdays, and during the daytime on weekends. On weekend evenings, listeners hear folk, Americana, blues and jazz programming through a mix of local and nationally produced programs. Our HD-2 station, **WCMU Classical**, presents 24/7 classical music programming in the communities of Mount Pleasant, Bay City, Alpena and Harbor Springs. Both of our program feeds are available online, on our mobile app, and on smart speakers. Many of the communities we serve are rural, with limited access to local and national news, as well as programming focusing on music and the arts.

**WCMU Public Media** embraces cultural diversity and provides a forum to better understand our rich heritage. We believe that education is essential to improving our future and that lifelong learning is desirable and necessary. We believe an informed public is better equipped to make decisions on the social issues that face our communities.

## WCMU Public Television

Produced and aired several program series focused on educating and informing the viewing public

### DESTINATION *Michigan*

WCMU Public Television's original series, is now broadcast on stations throughout Michigan. It features the people and places across the state that define the Michigan experience. The **Destination Michigan** crew travels across the state to find creativity, beauty, and unique businesses to share with its viewers. Segments showcase a variety of topics including local artists and authors, unique collectibles, hometown businesses, community gathering places, natural beauty, and landmarks, as well as historical towns, stories, and personalities. The series finished its fourteenth season in 2023 while continuing its tradition of showcasing what makes Michigan truly unique. Episodes air every Thursday evening on WCMU as part of the "MI Thursday" block of Michigan-themed programs.

**Destination Michigan** has been nominated for a regional Emmy Award in the category of Human Interest-Long Form. This episode of **Destination Michigan** introduced our audience to Michiganders with a passion for collecting. We stopped in Ludington to meet a football helmet fanatic with a passion for pigskin. We rolled up to Traverse City to meet the area pinball wizard who has an impressive collection of games. Our next stop was in Lansing where we visited a postcard collector and to get a peek at some photography from Michigan's past. Our final stop was in Bay City where we checked out **Retro Attics** and its mid-century furniture collection.

### Quiz Central

Now in its 19th season, **Quiz Central**, WCMU's academic quiz show, features 16 teams from high schools across Michigan. At the finale of the competition, textbook stipends were awarded by Central Michigan University and the CMU Bookstore. Schools began the bracketed tournament by being placed in four divisions based on school enrollment. Last year, schools that participated had a wide variety of student populations. Our largest participating school had an enrollment of over 1,500 students while our smallest school had a total student population of 44. In the near two-decade run of **Quiz Central**, teams from all four divisions have found a way to win the grand championship title. **Quiz Central** has welcomed thousands of Michigan's best and brightest students to compete on this academic quiz show.



Because WCMU serves a rural geographic area, its viewers are often unable to access information that improves their quality of life. Many families in WCMU's coverage area don't have access to the internet or cable television. **Ask the DNR (Department of Natural Resources)** is a live call-in program that airs biannually on WCMU Public Television. **Ask the DNR** is one of the most popular WCMU programs and is scheduled for an hour in the spring and fall.

## ADAPTING to ADVERSITY

UNDERSTANDING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

WCMU produced the half-hour documentary **Adapting to Adversity**, focusing on youth mental health in mid-Michigan. Highlighting the issue and normalizing the conversation around youth mental health were the primary objectives of the documentary. We heard the tragic story of a father losing his son to suicide and the struggles trying to avoid that outcome. Health care experts spoke of ways to better understand the topic as a community and how to aid in prevention. Additionally, we identified possible treatment options that are best for young people.



### **50 Years Later: The Impact of Title IX**

To mark the 50th anniversary of Title IX, WCMU Public Media shared the stories of some of Central Michigan University's most legendary coaches including: Marcy Weston, who coached hockey, women's basketball, and volleyball; Margo Jonker, who compiled a 1,246-780-6 record while leading the CMU softball program to 10 Mid-American conference titles and 13 NCAA Tournament appearances; Christy Freese, who led the Chippewa field hockey program for 27 seasons; and Sue Guevara, who led the CMU women's basketball team to their first NCAA win in school history. These monumental coaches discussed the landmark law, how it impacted them, and shared advice for future female athletes and coaches.

## **WCMU Public Radio**

Committed to bringing fact-based news and information, diverse voices, and differing perspectives to listeners throughout central and northern Michigan. Many of the communities we serve are in so-called 'news deserts,' where there is no access to a local daily or weekly newspaper. In response, WCMU expanded its local and national news programming in 2023, filling a need for in-depth, fact-based journalism in our coverage area.

In 2023, WCMU's news department produced over 1,000 unique reports, covering a range of topics including the environment, economy, state and local government, healthcare, and education, among others. WCMU produces 17 local newscasts per day, plus regular extended news segments where we broadcast long-form reporting. News stories are also made available on our website and on the WCMU App.

The environment was a major focus of WCMU's news efforts in 2023. WCMU has a full-time environment reporter based in Cheboygan – a position that is supported in part by Report for America. Over the course of the year, WCMU spent significant resources reporting on PFAs contamination in groundwater, efforts to shut down or enclose the Line 5 oil pipeline, and efforts to protect the Great Lakes and their waterways from pollution and invasive species.

In fiscal year 2023, WCMU broadcasted over 2,000 hours of locally produced music programming, including classical, jazz, Americana, folk, and blues. Our hosts also interviewed numerous musicians, poets, writers, and others involved in central and northern Michigan's arts community. WCMU also launched WCMU Classical in March via our HD-2 network. The 24/7 classical music service can be heard streaming online at [wcmu.org](http://wcmu.org), through the WCMU app, or smart speakers.

### **WCMU Public Radio Locally Produced Programs**

It's important to note that the following programs and initiatives don't happen in a vacuum, Listener support and funding through CPB are vital in providing the resources and staffing necessary to highlight the voices of the underserved in our communities, as well as educate and entertain our diverse listenership.



This two-minute locally produced review of children's literature is broadcast twice weekly on WCMU, and is distributed as a podcast on our website, and on all major podcast distribution platforms. Each episode also provides a study guide and discussion questions for each book. The series is hosted by Dr. Sue Ann Martin, the founding Dean of the former College of Communication and Fine Arts at Central Michigan University. The series is distributed nationally via the PRX Exchange.



In May 2023, WCMU launched a new weekly broadcast series and podcast called 'From The Ground Up!' Hosted by Judy Wagley, the program is designed to inspire and educate home gardeners throughout central and northern Michigan. Each week, Judy talks with experts from all around Michigan on topics ranging from invasive species and common garden pests to soil, sunlight and hanging baskets.



Hosted by the 'Duke of Juke' Robert Barclay, The Juke Joint is a popular locally produced program featuring blues, soul, R&B, gospel, and zydeco. Each week, Robert shares his extensive knowledge of these musical genres, and plays interviews he's conducted with some of the biggest names in the music industry. In April 2023, the program celebrated its 38th year on the air.



Each week on the WCMU original program Homespun, listeners hear a wide range of folk and Americana music. Hosted by Tom Ball, the program has been on the air for over 40 years on WCMU.



Jazz, traditional world music, and improvised music all have a home on the locally produced program Destination Out. Hosted by Mike Johnston, this three-hour broadcast presents a unique feature each week, focusing on a particular artist or a unique style of music.

### **News Coverage**

During Fiscal Year 2023, WCMU's News Department consisted of five full time employees, and up to five student reporters from Central Michigan University – most of whom study in the College of Arts and Media. Together, they produced over 1,000 unique local stories on issues relating to our expansive coverage area. One reporter, Teresa Homsy, focuses exclusively on environmental issues, including PFAs contamination, oil pipelines, and wildlife management.

### **Arts Coverage**

The arts remain a crucial part of WCMU. WCMU's reporters interviewed numerous musicians, authors, poets, and other artists during Fiscal Year 2023, bringing their stories to our regional audience.



## **Student Employment**

### **Public Television Students**

In WCMU's television operation, students help with our promotional effort to let viewers know when they can watch their favorite shows. With professional guidance, students use Adobe's Premiere Pro to help tell the promotional story. Students focus on balancing audio levels, graphic creation and placement, and see the entire process through to the exporting and uploading of completed promos to master control.

### **Public Radio Students**

WCMU continues a tradition of hiring and training students from Central Michigan University to fill a variety of roles. This includes serving as announcers and local hosts during our evening and weekend broadcasts, and as reporters and production assistants. These students learn valuable skills that are directly applicable to careers in journalism, broadcasting, communications, and a variety of other fields.

### **Summer Internship Program**

The Michigan News Group Internship at WCMU Public Radio originated in 2019 to train the next generation of journalists. Selected interns are placed with local newspapers where they cover the community and produce content for the newspapers and WCMU and the websites of both.

Each year, WCMU's news director also leads a one-day "boot camp" to provide training for Central Michigan University students who are interested in the internship program. This intensive, one-day training session also serves as the selection process.

These unique partnerships allow WCMU to expand its offerings to listeners on important issues of the day, help cover news deserts in its rural coverage area and continue its long tradition of training young journalists.

2023 Michigan News Group interns were placed at the Cadillac Daily News, Cadillac; Midland Daily News, Midland; Traverse City Record-Eagle, Traverse City; Alpena News, Alpena; The Big Rapids Pioneer, Big Rapids; The Huron Daily Tribune, Bad Axe.

Click [HERE](#) to view stories produced by this year's Michigan News Group Interns.

### **Support Staff Students**

The students at the front desk are at the heart of WCMU. They are the first contact for many of our audience, assisting callers with a wide variety of questions, concerns, requests and problems. They assist with and learn basic office duties, such as maintaining supplies, mailing, developing and maintaining spreadsheets, daily acknowledgements, and operating fax and copy machines.



## **WCMU Family**

WCMU family is a trusted resource for parents, children, classrooms, and communities, to guide childhood development throughout Michigan. With the use of content highlighting trusted PBS and MLC resources for parents and kids of all ages.

## **Michigan Learning Channel**

The Michigan Learning Channel (MLC) continued in 2023 as a statewide public television partnership offering instructional content to support the education of students and to provide alternative resources for families and teachers. This has led to a new “era” and prioritization of Education for Northern Lower Michigan.

WCMU partnered with the Michigan Learning Channel and the Chippewa River District Library on several special events throughout the month of June including our annual Summer Reading Club Kick-off Celebration which attracted more than 500 Michigan students. Due to our partnership with the Michigan Learning Channel, we were able to supply every child who attended with a Summer Activity Book suited to their grade level.

## **Library Outreach**

A very important factor of education in Northern Lower Michigan is the presence of our local libraries. Through extensive outreach attempts, presentations at conferences such as the Michigan Library Association Conference and holding events at multiple libraries throughout Northern Lower Michigan, WCMU family is a clear presence and reliable source for libraries throughout our coverage area. In 2023, we were able to work with the Traverse City District Library, Presque Isle Library, Pentwater Library, Otsego Library, and the Roscommon Library.

## **Engagement Highlights**

WCMU family’s “Connecting with Families” E-newsletter improved from a 22% open rate in 2022 to a 48% open rate in 2023. Our E-newsletter is created for educators and parents who are looking for educational resources to help their students and/or children build a foundation for more learning.



## Community Involvement

WCMU continued our partnership with the Feeding America food banks serving our audience throughout central and northern Michigan. Our partners shared information about food insecurity and how much need there is in our communities for food assistance. Those partners included The Greater Lansing Food Bank, Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, Feeding America West Michigan and their partner distribution organization The Manna Food Project.

Our listeners could choose a Gift of Food as a thank you gift from the station for their support of WCMU. Their Gift of Food resulted in meals acquired and distributed by the Feeding America food bank serving their area. Eligible donors who chose the Gift of Food had an impact of more than 4,000 meals distributed into our communities to help those that needed them.

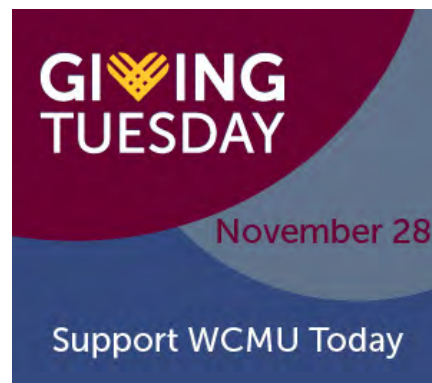
We also had some fun, again this year, with Giving Tuesday encouraging our listeners to highlight other non-profits from our coverage area that are doing important work. Our donors could nominate an organization in the comment section of their donation. Their support of WCMU counted as votes, with every dollar counted as a vote. The top three nonprofits with the most votes received free time on our air mentioning the work they do.

WCMU celebrated National Estate Planning Week in October. We once again continued our partnership with attorney Mark Pasquali and licensed life and health agent Jordan Wood-De Long to bring our viewers and listeners virtual estate planning seminars. Attorney Pasquali discussed estate planning, trust and elder law basics and allowed for a Q&A at the end of the presentation. Wood-De Long presented on the basics of Medicare and also had a Q&A opportunity. These are free educational events for the public. We sent out more than 100 National Estate Planning Guides to our supporters this year.

## Outreach

WCMU's Judy Wagley and Dr. Sue Ann Martin took The Children's Bookshelf on the road four times during Fiscal Year 2023, presenting stories, music, and games to children and their caregivers in Mount Pleasant, Alma, and Midland. These interactive events are meant to expose children to literature and spark their curiosity and imaginations.

WCMU's Judy Wagley also participated in the Celebration of Children's Books from Around the World on the campus of Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant in February 2023. This event features a 'read-a-thon' where various people from the CMU community read children's books to the audience. Books from all around the world, in many different languages, were featured during the event.







WCMU hosted inquisitive grandparents and their grandchildren for a Grandparents U event on the campus of Central Michigan University. Grandparents and grandchildren explore the beautiful campus of Central Michigan University while also enjoying hands-on educational sessions conducted by faculty, staff, and community members.

In our session, Behind the Scenes with WCMU Public Media, guests are immersed in activities with both our radio and television staff. A group of 16 to 18 guests are broken down into two groups, both having the same experience. A tour of our facility is conducted to give guests a general understanding of how our operation works. Then, our reporters guide grandparents and grandchildren through the process of cultivating questions to pose to an interviewee. In this case, the grandchildren prepare to interview their grandparents.

Once questions have been formulated grandparents and grandchildren arrive at our television studio where they'll be able to put their hard work into practice. We record the interviews and then distribute them to the families, making for a wonderful keepsake.

## **WCMU Received the Following Recognition**

### **WCMU Public TV**

Michigan Regional Emmy Nominations:

**Destination Michigan**

*Human Interest-Long Form Content*

*Editor-Long Form Content*

*Program Host/Moderator/Correspondent*

### **WCMU Public Radio**

Regional Edward R. Murrow Award

Breaking News category

Coverage of a devastating tornado that hit the Gaylord, MI community on May 20, 2022.