

# BROADCAST TELEVISION AND RADIO IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



More than other demographics, rural communities within the United States continue to rely on free and local broadcast stations. Through broadcast stations, Americans in rural communities receive their news, weather, sports and entertainment at a local level. As such, broadcast television and radio remain a vital and irreplaceable resource to rural individuals across the United States.

## RURAL POPULATION ACROSS THE U.S.

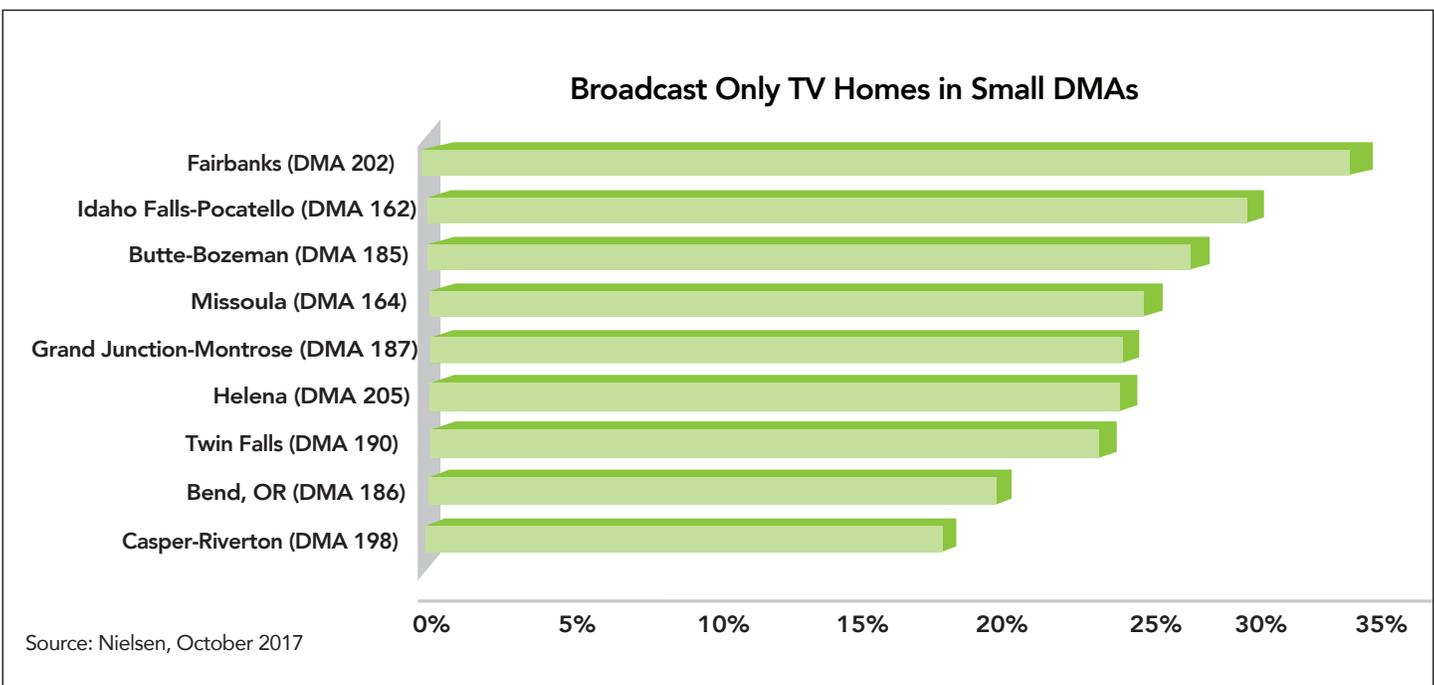
Rural America accounts for 72 percent of the United States' land area and 46.1 million people.<sup>1</sup> Maine and Vermont are the most rural states, with nearly two-thirds of their populations living in rural areas. The southern region of the U.S. contains nearly one-half (46.7 percent) of the rural population, with 28 million people residing in rural areas in these states.<sup>2</sup>

## BROADCAST TELEVISION

The number of broadcast-only households in the United States continues to rise, jumping nearly 16 percent from 2016 to 2017.<sup>3</sup> More than 30 million American households, representing over 77 million individuals, receive television through over-the-air broadcast signals.<sup>4</sup>

## OVER-THE-AIR TELEVISION PENETRATION IN RURAL AREAS

Americans in small television markets that include rural areas depend on over-the-air broadcasting at greater levels than the general American population. The table below provides the percentage of households in 10 rural designated market areas (DMAs) that rely on free over-the-air television.<sup>5</sup>



## AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMMING ON BROADCAST TELEVISION IN RURAL AMERICA

Over-the-air television provides immense local and informational program choice for rural and farming communities across the country. The following table highlights examples of agricultural shows and segments on broadcast television:

Program	Description	Program Stats
<b>"America's Heartland"</b>	A television program providing positive stories about American agriculture, this program allows agriculturalists to connect urban and rural viewers.	Now in its 12th season, this Emmy Award-winning show can be viewed on over 240 stations covering 60 percent of the U.S. This popular series maintains its audience each week, with more than 1 million people watching each episode. <sup>6</sup>
<b>"The Georgia Farm Monitor"</b>	"The Georgia Farm Monitor" has been providing Georgia's farming community agriculture stories of interest to farmers and the rural community since 1966.	For over 50 years, this weekly program has produced over 2,500 original episodes and airs on 13 stations throughout Georgia, along with many areas in Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee. <sup>7</sup>
<b>"Ag Day"</b>	A daily news program focused on agriculture and rural America.	On the air for more than a quarter century, this program can be seen on stations nationwide. <sup>8</sup>

## EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING ON DIGITAL MULTICAST AFFILIATES

In addition to broadcasting on primary channels throughout the U.S., public television provides a variety of local and educational programs on 777 multicast digital television (DTV) channels. Below are examples of such digital multicast channels across the U.S.<sup>9</sup>

Public and Educational DTV Multicast Channels	Number of Channels	Public and Educational DTV Multicast Channels	Number of Channels
PBS Kids	222	MN Channel	14
Create	210	First Nations Experience	12
World	145	The South Carolina Channel	11
PBS	36	PBS Encore	7
MHZ Worldview	21	Florida Channel	7
PBS Plus	19	Montana Legislature	6
Kentucky Channel	16	Wisconsin Channel	6

## FAITH-BASED PROGRAMMING IN RURAL AREAS

Religious broadcast stations are a growing presence, with 104 full-power and 514 multicast television stations across the U.S.<sup>10</sup> Many faith-based radio and television stations are in small markets that include rural areas. For example, KWOG-TV, a local broadcast station in Arkansas affiliated with Daystar Television Network, offers religious programming through free over-the-air broadcast signals.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, faith-based multicast networks offer programming to their respective audiences throughout the nation. Below are examples of faith-based multicast channels.<sup>12</sup>

Religious DTV Multicast Channels	Number of Channels
SonLife	70
Smile of a Child	49
Hillsong Channel	46
Enlace	44
Light TV	43
Juce TV (US)	42
TBN Salsa	37
Three Angels	36
Daystar	21
TCT	9

The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) is an association of Christian communicators, including radio and television broadcasters, whose member organizations represent millions of radio listeners and television viewers. NRB provides educational, ministry and fellowship opportunities for its radio and television members located across the U.S.<sup>13</sup>

## BROADCAST RADIO

### AGRICULTURE PROGRAMMING ON BROADCAST RADIO IN RURAL AMERICA

Broadcast radio reaches over 270 million listeners each week in the U.S.<sup>14</sup> Local radio continues to provide rural communities with a variety of informational and ethnically diverse programs through more than 16,600 commercial and non-commercial stations across the country. Americans living in rural areas can listen to over 7,300 broadcast radio stations located in non-metro counties and markets.<sup>15</sup>

Many commercial radio stations in rural areas air agricultural programs and segments that focus on local farming and ranching news. Such farm broadcasters provide the latest information to radio listeners on more than 1,300 stations nationwide,<sup>16</sup> with 83 percent of farmers and ranchers listening to farm radio.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, farmers and ranchers listen to nearly 20 percent more radio daily than the average person.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, several states and regions have agricultural radio networks that provide localized weather and industry information focusing on the state or region's agribusiness.

---

Examples of agricultural radio networks that air on several radio stations throughout the state or region include the following:

Network	Description	Coverage
<b>Iowa AgriBusiness Network</b>	The network provides Iowa with special coverage, interviews, weather and news on markets such as corn, soybean, wheat, cattle and pigs.	With over 50 affiliate AM and FM radio stations, Iowa AgriBusiness reaches 37 individual cities within the state. <sup>19</sup>
<b>Kansas Farm and Ranch Radio</b>	Provides relevant news to local farmers and ranchers with weekly reports and interviews.	The network has 32 affiliate AM and FM radio stations throughout rural Kansas, reaching around 20 towns. <sup>20</sup>
<b>Southern Farm Network</b>	SFN distributes the latest ag news, regional weather readings and key crop market information through radio programs, interviews and research.	Serving counties across the Carolinas and Virginia, SFN has 18 affiliate stations. <sup>21</sup>
<b>Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network</b>	Delivers the latest in weather, markets and stories about rural Texas to farmers and ranches in the Texas ag industry.	Rated the top agriculture news network in Texas, TFB Radio programming is aired on nearly 70 AM and FM radio stations throughout the state. <sup>22</sup>
<b>Red River Farm Network</b>	Programs include morning and evening market recaps, farm news, weather forecasts and other relevant ag news.	Serving the ag industry across Minnesota and the Dakotas, Red River Farm Network programming is aired on 19 radio stations. <sup>23</sup>
<b>AgNet West Radio Network</b>	The network's programs include news on farming markets, pests, and technology, as well as business and regulation updates and special features.	Launched in California, AgNet West's programming can be heard on 31 radio stations throughout the state. <sup>24</sup>
<b>Southeast AgNet</b>	The network produces around 20 news headline programs each day focusing on farming markets reports, customized for each state.	Southeast AgNet's programs appear on more than 60 radio stations in Alabama, Florida and Georgia. <sup>25</sup>
<b>Northern Ag Network</b>	Provides up to date farm news, market reports, weather updates and opinion pieces.	Serves counties across Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas. The network's programs can be heard on over 50 affiliate stations. <sup>26</sup>

In addition to radio networks, “AgriTalk” is a popular radio show hosted by Chip Flory that facilitates a discussion about issues and ideas important to rural America.<sup>27</sup> “AgriTalk” broadcasts each week from rural areas across the country and can be heard on 78 radio stations in 16 states – Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin.<sup>28</sup>

## FARMING COMMUNITIES’ RELIANCE ON RADIO BROADCAST WEATHER REPORTS

Rural radio stations provide farmers and ranchers with local weather reports vital to the success of agribusiness. For example, Iowa news/talk radio station KICD-AM delivers weather and farm updates each weekday morning.<sup>29</sup> Entertainment radio stations, such as KUTT-FM in Nebraska, also offer listeners critical farming and weather updates throughout the day.<sup>30</sup>

## PUBLIC BROADCASTING’S INFLUENCE ON RURAL AMERICA

Public radio and television stations play an important role in small towns throughout the country. Millions of Americans rely on public broadcasting as a critical lifeline, providing lifesaving emergency news and information to their small communities. Today, more than 95 percent of Americans can access public broadcasting’s over-the-air signals.<sup>31</sup> The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a nonprofit that stewards federal aid to public broadcasting stations, reports that about 43 percent of all its grantees are rural broadcasting stations, and these stations employ over 5,900 people in their communities.

National Public Radio (NPR) creates and distributes news, information and music programming to more than 900 public radio stations throughout the U.S., with 95 percent of the U.S. population within listening area of at least one station that carries NPR programming.<sup>32</sup>

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), America’s largest public broadcasting network, provides trusted programming through its 350-member television stations serving all 50 states. Over the course of a year, 79 percent of all U.S. television households and 200 million people watch PBS.<sup>33</sup> PBS offers educational programming for a wide range of ages, interests and genres. PBS is available to all children across America, providing content to young children who are not able to attend preschool.<sup>34</sup> Through PBS’s programs, children living in rural areas are able to receive programs that improve their critical skills and performance in school, as well as teach them valuable life skills.

## LOCAL TELEVISION AND RADIO ECONOMIC IMPACT

Local broadcasting generates billions of dollars in annual gross domestic product (GDP) and thousands of jobs in states with large rural populations.<sup>35</sup> The table below shows the economic impact of local television and radio in states with 40 percent or more of the state’s population living in rural areas.<sup>36</sup>

Local radio and television stations are a vital and irreplaceable resource to rural communities, providing them with the entertainment, important news and emergency information they rely on each day. Broadcast stations are innovating to provide more services and diverse content to their viewers, such as ethnic, faith-based and agricultural programming. Working together, rural groups and local stations can ensure the strong growth of broadcast radio and TV and successfully meet the needs of rural communities across America.

---

State	Percent of Rural Population	Total Economic Impact (billions)	Number of Jobs (thousands)
Vermont	61%	\$1.8	4.2
Maine	61%	\$4.1	9.3
West Virginia	51%	\$5.8	12.4
Mississippi	51%	\$8.2	18.7
Montana	44%	\$3.1	7.1
Arkansas	44%	\$8.4	18.7
South Dakota	43%	\$2.9	6.3
Kentucky	42%	\$14.1	30.1
Alabama	41%	\$14.2	31.1
North Dakota	40%	\$3.5	6.9

- 1 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. "Rural Economy and Population." Accessed 1 February 2018. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/population-migration/>
- 2 U.S. Census, "Rural American: Do You Know These Rural Facts?" Accessed 1 February 2018. <https://storymaps.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=9e459da9327b4c7e9a1248cb65ad942a>
- 3 The Nielsen Company. The Nielsen Total Audience Report, Q2 2017. Accessed 29 January 2018.
- 4 GfK-, "Home Technology Monitor Ownership Survey," Spring 2017.
- 5 The Nielsen Company. *Nielsen Local Television Market Universe Estimates: DMA Quarterly UE's*, October 2017.
- 6 America's Heartland, "About the Show." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.americasheartland.org/>
- 7 The Georgia Farm Monitor. Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.rfdtv.com/story/22874908/georgia-farm-monitor>
- 8 Farm Journal Media, Ag Day. Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.farmjournalmedia.com/agday/>
- 9 SNL Kagan, "Digital Multicast TV Networks," *SNL Kagan Data Services: TV Station Database*, January 2018.
- 10 BIA Media Access Pro, February 2018. 3AB,CAN,CGN,CTN,Dst,HsC,Lgt,JUC,ENL,CTV,REL,Sal,SBN,SML,TBN,TCT.
- 11 Daystar Television Network, "Ways to Watch." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.daystar.com/watch/>
- 12 BIA Media Access Pro, February 2018. 3AB,CAN,CGN,CTN,Dst,HsC,Lgt,JUC,ENL,CTV,REL,Sal,SBN,SML,TBN,TCT.
- 13 National Religious Broadcasters, "Who We Are," Accessed 29 January 2018. [http://nrbc.org/about/who\\_we\\_are/](http://nrbc.org/about/who_we_are/)
- 14 Nielsen: State of the Media: Audio Today. How America Listens," June 2017.
- 15 BIA Media, BIA MEDIA Access Pro, February 2018.
- 16 National Association of Farm Broadcasting, Press Release. Accessed 29 January 2018. [https://nafb.com/sites/default/files/pages/1202/nafb-researchrelease\\_0.pdf](https://nafb.com/sites/default/files/pages/1202/nafb-researchrelease_0.pdf)
- 17 National Association of Farm Broadcasting. Farm Radio Habits, Wave 1, Winter 2015. Accessed 29 January 2018. <https://nafb.com/sites/default/files/pages/1202/nafb-farm-radio-habits-wave-1-winter-15site.pdf>
- 18 National Association of Farm Broadcasting. Farm Radio Connects, 2015. Accessed 15 February 2018. <https://www.nafbplanner.com/research/2015-Farmer-Usage-Study.pdf>
- 19 Iowa AgriBusiness Radio Network. Accessed 29 January 2018. <https://www.iowaagribusinessradionetwork.com/>
- 20 Kansas Farm and Ranch Radio. Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://kansasfarmandranchradio.com/>
- 21 Southern Farm Network, "About Us." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://sfntoday.com/about-us/>
- 22 Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network, "Radio." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://texasfarmbureau.org/radio/>
- 23 Red River Farm Network, "Coverage Map." Accessed 29 January 2018. [http://www.rfn.com/resources/RRFN\\_032317CoverageMap.jpg](http://www.rfn.com/resources/RRFN_032317CoverageMap.jpg)
- 24 AgNet West, "Affiliate Radio Stations." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://agnetwest.com/affiliate-radio-stations/>
- 25 Southeast AgNet. "Radio Network Affiliates." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://southeastagnet.com/affiliate-radio-stations/>
- 26 Northern Ag Network, "Find a TV or Radio Station." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.northernag.net/More/FindaStation.aspx>
- 27 AgriTalk, "The Program." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.agweb.com/agritalk-about/>
- 28 AgriTalk, "Stations." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.agweb.com/agritalk-affiliates/>
- 29 KICD-AM, "Schedule." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://kicdam.com/schedule/>
- 30 KUTT 99.5, "Radio Programming." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://kutt995.com/radio-programming-2/>
- 31 Corporation for Public Broadcasting "About CPB." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.cpb.org/aboutpb/>
- 32 NPR, "NPR Stations and Public Media." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.npr.org/about-npr/178640915/npr-stations-and-public-media>
- 33 PBS, "Overview." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.pbs.org/about/background/>
- 34 PBS, "PBS Mission and Values." Accessed 29 January 2018. <http://www.pbs.org/about/corporate-information/mission/>
- 35 Woods and Poole Economics, "An Analysis of the Importance of Commercial Local Radio and Television Broadcasting to the United States Economy." Released 2017.
- 36 United States Census "2010 Percent Urban and Rural by State." [http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/ualists\\_layout.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/ualists_layout.html)