



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2025

DEAR FRIEND,

In my 22 years as President & CEO of Prairie Public, I'm not sure there has been a year as momentous as this one.

At the North Dakota legislative session, a bill threatened to prohibit state funding for public broadcasting. You responded with overwhelming support — submitting more than 170 testimonies, calling and emailing your representatives, sharing your voices online, and proudly displaying “I Support Prairie Public” stickers across the region. Your voices made a difference.

We also faced unprecedented challenges at the federal level when Congress eliminated funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Public media stations nationwide, including Prairie Public, are now navigating the difficult realities of this decision.

Still, there was much to celebrate this year. We premiered five original documentaries, launched two new podcasts, hosted political debates, and brought Prairie Public into communities across the region through events and our Learning Express — all part of our mission to **educate, involve, and inspire** the people of the prairie region.

The year ahead may hold uncertainty, but one thing is clear: **we are here because of you.** Thank you for your steadfast support.

With gratitude,
John Harris
President & CEO



EDUCATE • INVOLVE • INSPIRE

2025 IN REVIEW

“Prairie Public was a part of my childhood, informed me as a young adult, and now that I’m back in the state, it’s on to the next generation with my young daughter. We appreciate you so much.”

- Jess from Bismarck, N.D.

THE WEEKLY

NEW INITIATIVES

The Weekly is Prairie Public’s new flagship e-newsletter, and streamlines our communication to a format that is simple, smart and straight from the heart of Prairie Public.

The limited podcast series **In Session** covered the 2025 North Dakota Legislative Session. For the show’s final episode, we hosted a live recording event in Fargo with columnist Rob Port.

The radio team also launched **Prairie Beat** — a weekly, eight-minute podcast. Danielle Webster and Erik Deatherage cover timely regional news updates about topics ranging from economy, agriculture, education, and more.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

With grant funds and a partnership with Audubon Great Plains, we hosted a series of “Learn Like Leo” guided birding walks to celebrate the Ken Burns series, **Leonardo da Vinci**. We also partnered with the State Historical Society of North Dakota to host “da Vinci Day” at the North Dakota Heritage Center & State Museum in Bismarck.



Through grant funding provided by PBS’s Indie Lens Pop-Up, we hosted film screenings of the new public television documentary **Free for All: The Public Library**. We facilitated community conversations that were timely to key library-related legislation introduced in the 2025 North Dakota Legislative Session.

More than 300 children in our broadcast area wrote, illustrated, and submitted original stories to our annual **PBS KIDS Writers Contest**. This year, we expanded the age range to include kindergarten through 5th graders and hosted a series of writing workshops at local libraries.

Made possible with funding from Fred Rogers Productions, we hosted our second **Be My Neighbor Day** — a free outdoor event for families to celebrate kindness and learn how to be a caring neighbor. More than 500 attendees learned from community helpers, met PBS KIDS’ Daniel Tiger and Katerina Kittycat, and brought household items to donate to the Jeremiah Program of Fargo-Moorhead.



TELLING THE STORY OF OUR REGION

We hosted a two-hour **live radio broadcast**, partnering with Indigenous news organization Buffalo’s Fire, at the 55th Annual United Tribes Technical College International Powwow in Bismarck.

Our daily radio show **Main Street** continues to tell the story of our region with in-depth interviews with newsmakers. A popular segment, **Prairie Plates**, features local restaurateurs, foodies, farmers, and home chefs.

Our longstanding original productions — **Prairie Mosaic**, **Prairie Musicians**, **Prairie Pulse**, **North Dakota Legislative Review**, and **political debates** — continue to reflect the public affairs, culture, music, and art of the prairie region.

AWARD RECOGNITION

Danielle Webster was awarded the **Eric Sevareid Award of Merit** from the Midwest Broadcast Journalists Association for her story, "From Hardship to Hope: The Story of Great-Grandma Maude's Butterscotch Pie."

Written by news director Dave Thompson, the story "How Dickinson State University lost the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library" won the **Regional Edward R. Murrow Award** from the Radio Television Digital News Association.

Five Prairie Public original television productions received **Telly Awards**, the premier award honoring excellence in video and television from across all screens, from all 50 states and 5 continents.

Lowell Loritz was named **Ambassador of the Year** by the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC.



2025 BY THE NUMBERS



2,315 **NEW MEMBERS** of Prairie Public



2,700 bumper stickers and sticker sheets distributed with the phrase "**I SUPPORT PRAIRIE PUBLIC**"



170 **TESTIMONIES** written by our supporters and submitted to the North Dakota Legislature



33 locations in 23 towns visited by Prairie Public's **LEARNING EXPRESS**

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

7.6 MILLION+ local streams of PBS KIDS shows

219,000+ podcast downloads

879,000+ views on our YouTube channel

20,000+ newsletter subscribers to The Weekly

1.1 MILLION+ website users

1.6 MILLION+ accounts reached on Facebook

TELEVISION PREMIERES

Lawrence Welk: A North Dakota Farm Boy explores the enduring life and legacy of the iconic TV big band leader — from Strasburg, N.D. to Hollywood. Welk created "The Lawrence Welk Show," which still runs on Prairie Public and public television stations today, marking a historic 70 years of continuous syndication on television.

Trapped in Paradise follows the dramatic experience of four nuns in the Solomon Islands during WWII — based on the journals of North Dakota-born Sister Hedda Jaeger.

Through first-hand accounts and archival footage, **Chosen Home** explores immigrant and refugee experiences — their challenges, successes, and how their experiences have shaped their new life in Minnesota.

We hosted a free premiere event of two new original documentaries about veterans, followed by a panel discussion featuring regional veterans and veteran service professionals. **It's Never Left Me** shares the experiences of Minnesota veterans who served during wars in Iraq and Afghanistan adjusting to post-war civilian life. **Wounded** shows veterans experiencing healing, therapy, and camaraderie through outdoor activities in Minnesota.





PRAIRIE PUBLIC PROVIDES QUALITY RADIO, TELEVISION, AND PUBLIC MEDIA SERVICES THAT **EDUCATE, INVOLVE, AND INSPIRE** THE PEOPLE OF THE PRAIRIE REGION.



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2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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★★★★ Charity Navigator, a nonprofit organization providing free access to data, tools, and resources to guide philanthropic decision-making, has given Prairie Public a four-star rating (with a score of 100%), meaning you can confidently support Prairie Public.

Our audited financial report for the fiscal year beginning 10/1/2024 and ending 9/30/2025 will be available in early spring 2026 at prairiepublic.org

