

# 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



## Our State. Your Stories.





## Storytelling is our strength.

Every day, we deliver thoughtful, in-depth stories about Nebraska, our nation and our world on television, radio, online, social media and mobile apps. From compelling PBS and NPR reports to our award-winning local programs, the simple art of storytelling connects us to Nebraskans and to each other.

This year, we went back **On the Road** to visit Columbus, Fremont, Omaha, Valley, Wayne and West Point, listening to stories about local communities. We shared our **Classic Car Love Stories** documentary on the big screen and fresh episodes of **Nebraska Stories** on television, tablet and smartphone screens.

Our **What If...** series on innovation and creativity introduced risk takers and leaders, and a mental health series examined services across the state, especially in rural areas. We also premiered a fifth television channel devoted to Native American and World Indigenous content.

Nebraska Public Media is committed to three guiding pillars that measure our success – public safety, civic engagement and education. From small towns to big cities and every mile in between, your stories uphold these pillars and the promise of public media in Nebraska.

## Our State. Your Stories.

"I love how I can always learn something new about my home state when I watch, read or listen to Nebraska Public Media."

– Monica Starr, Lincoln

- A free drive-in movie night near Valley featured our local documentary *Classic Car Love Stories* which told stories about car enthusiasts across the state.





Since our first broadcasts 70 years ago, we have served Nebraska families with educational and entertaining television. Now, research shows that more and more families find our PBS KIDS programs and characters anytime, anywhere in digital spaces – watching on smart devices and computers, as well as on traditional television.

Our PBS KIDS programs are part of our education pillar – preparing kids for school and leading them to a bright future. Teachers, parents and caregivers can access free, research-based PBS KIDS series that are accessible, equitable and educational.



**224.5 HOURS** of  
trusted educational children's  
television each week

**TRUSTED  
MEDIA FOR  
CURIOUS  
MINDS**





## innovator insights



Kids ask questions in our *Innovator Insights* educational videos.

This media collection, developed with teacher input, is a classroom resource with age-appropriate content for upper elementary, middle and high school students. Curious kids inquire about things like risk-taking, collaboration, innovation and learning from failure and success.

In the classroom, students can use design thinking to become an innovator themselves. The full collection is available in English with Spanish subtitles, along with resources for teachers.



Search for *Innovator Insights* at [pbslearningmedia.org](https://pbslearningmedia.org)



[nebraskastudies.org](https://nebraskastudies.org)

337,796 page views

Nearly 7% increase over last year

"I think it's important to have a wide variety of topics and educational programming available to the public to learn, especially children."

– Heather,  
Dorchester

## smart scoop

**5,200+** educators and caregivers  
subscribe to our weekly  
education newsletter.

[NebraskaPublicMedia.org/smartscoop](https://NebraskaPublicMedia.org/smartscoop)



## Ready To Learn

We know how important it is for kids to develop early literacy and critical thinking skills.

Our national Ready to Learn Planning Grant funded the creation of a **Learning Neighborhood** to engage local partners and extend the reach and impact of PBS KIDS early learning resources where kids, families and caregivers need them most.

The collaborative effort fosters a culture of learning at home, in the community and within local systems and spaces.



### MAKING MATH PART OF YOUR ROUTINE

Families can find math everywhere in their daily lives – cooking, driving, grocery shopping, sorting laundry and even reading.

New **Family Math** resources, including a bilingual activity flipbook, are available in English and Spanish. Filled with take-home activities, videos and interactive games, the flipbook engages kids ages 2-5 and encourages conversations about math used in daily routines.

Goals can be as simple as sorting laundry by color, identifying shapes of street signs or creating patterns with favorite fruits or vegetables during a meal.

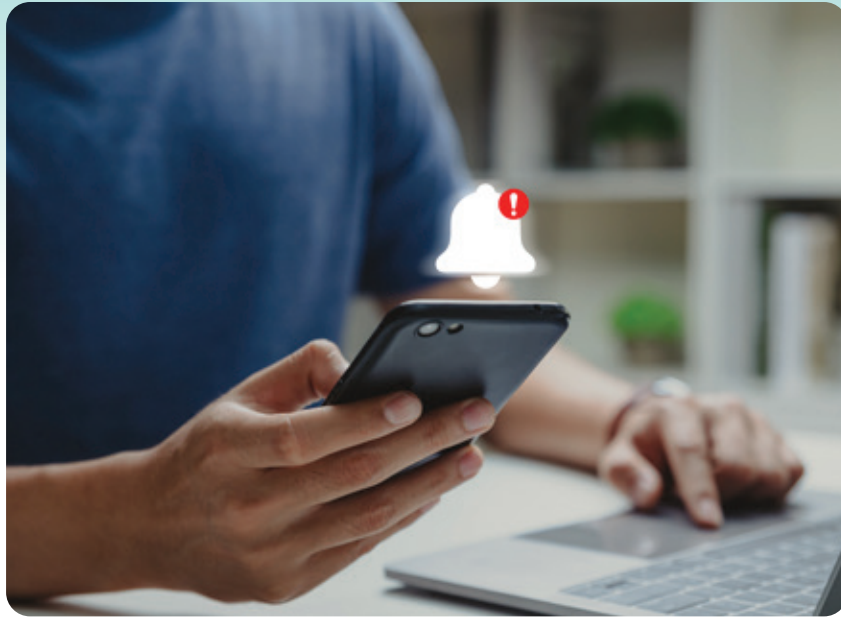
*PBS SoCal created the Family Math resources and Nebraska Public Media received a grant to share them and support early math literacy across our state.*

**[NebraskaPublicMedia.org/kids](https://NebraskaPublicMedia.org/kids)**



Teachers inspire students with thousands of free teaching resources including videos, lesson plans and games aligned to state and national standards.





## KEEPING NEBRASKANS SAFE

We understand that safety for families and communities is important for all Nebraskans, and we are committed to fulfilling public media's role in protecting them in times of emergency.

Nebraska Public Media's FM radio station is the state's primary dissemination point for the Emergency Alert System (EAS), originating both routine tests and actual alerts from the Nebraska State Patrol and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

We relay information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for nationwide tests and presidential alerts to all Nebraska broadcasters and cable companies. During times of severe weather, our network relays tornado warnings from the National Weather Service.

Nebraska Public Media is also the primary origination point for Amber Alerts when the Nebraska State Patrol issues messages to the public as part of their efforts to find missing or endangered persons. Amber Alerts are sent from our network to all other television and radio stations in Nebraska.

As part of a national plan, Nebraska Public Media has expanded emergency alert capabilities to mobile apps and digital platforms so that alerts can be heard and seen on phones, HD radios, car devices, Radio Data System (RDS) displays and online.

Through PBS WARN (Warning, Alert & Response Network), we serve as back-up for nationwide Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) distribution between FEMA and mobile carriers.

# TELLING STORIES WITH INTEGRITY

**"We love to listen to NPR.  
In the car, in the morning, on  
podcasts... wherever we are!"**

– Rhonda,  
Meadow Grove



## YOUR TOP STORIES ON FACEBOOK

### MOST READ

Free Land, No-Strings Cash  
Aim to Tempt People to  
Small Midwestern Towns

Read **42,080** times

### MOST SHARED

An announcement about  
I-80 being closed between  
North Platte and the Wyoming  
border due to a blizzard

Shared **3,745** times

### MOST LIKED

A post wishing NPR a happy  
birthday featuring Nina  
Totenberg, Linda Wertheimer  
and the late Cokie Roberts

Liked **37,300** times



## INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

When the Keystone Pipeline leaked 14,000 barrels of oil along the Nebraska-Kansas border, our news team was there, gathering facts, documenting the crisis and sharing some of the first pictures of the environmental disaster.

From rising rent to rural grocery stores, our award-winning news team delved into topics important to Nebraskans, telling more local stories and increasing diverse voices. Our partnerships with *Report for America* and *Harvest Public Media*, and our collaboration with NPR's *Midwest Newsroom* create greater capacity for investigative reporting.

**REPORT  
FOR AMERICA**







## CONNECT TO THE CAPITOL

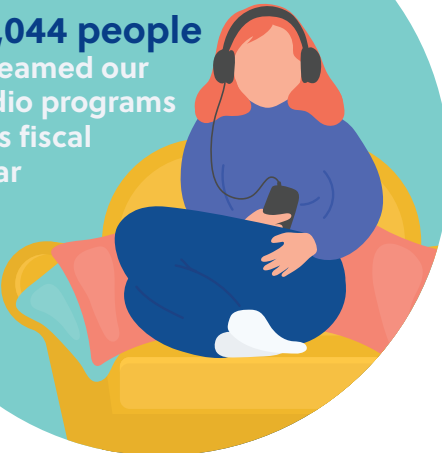
Our gavel-to-gavel television coverage and daily radio reports from the Nebraska Legislature put you in touch with YOUR state government. You started watching on our WORLD channel in 1980 and now you can livestream from the floor and more than a dozen state government venues.





NPR broadcast **40 of our radio news stories** to a national audience.

**16,044 people** streamed our radio programs this fiscal year



**"Thank you for the statewide news coverage and national shows! (We) couldn't live without your app!"**

– Amy and Rob, Sidney



## LOCAL STORIES THAT MATTER

We tell stories through the voices of people who call Nebraska home.

## BACKYARD FARMER

You were invited to get your lawn and garden questions answered in-person by our experts when we took our perennial favorite series on the road. At Vala's Pumpkin Patch near Gretna, the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island and Lauritzen Gardens in Omaha, fans lined up with pest and plant samples, and plenty of questions about their green spaces.

*The series is a co-production between Nebraska Public Media and Nebraska Extension.*

**"Enjoyable, educational and entertaining radio and TV programming."**

– Rebecca, St. Paul

## *your stories are* Nebraska Stories

Season 14 of **Nebraska Stories** premiered with stories about fast cars, fast feet and founding the South Omaha Stockyards. Viewers across the state enjoy the award-winning, local television series for its feature-based, character-driven storytelling about art, science, history, sports, performance, nature and more.

A selection of stories about the origins of Kool-Aid, a Lincoln-area cave famous for clandestine meetings and romantic interludes, the real-life woman who inspired Willa Cather's novel *My Antonia* and a partnership between the Pawnee Nation and Nebraska farmers that is saving ancestral seeds were just a few of the stories produced throughout the season.





## HEARTLAND HANDMADE

For Nebraska craftspeople, artisans and artists, every project marks a step along their creative journey. From handcrafting custom boots using 100-year-old techniques to building one-of-a-kind guitars, our local documentary discovered the inspiration, passion and creativity of seven heartland makers.



## WHAT IF...

Good ideas often start with a simple question and Nebraskans respond with creativity and innovation. Our local series about innovation and invention takes you from the Sandhills to our cities, introducing people who aren't afraid to think outside the box. The season's new episodes explored a "ranch of the future," Oglala Lakota artists at work, and rural and urban kids merging their worlds as they zipline, skateboard and create beats.



## CONNECTS: WELCOME HOMES

Everyone has the right to fair housing – whether buying, renting or applying for a home loan. Our Connects program **Welcome Homes: Fair Housing in Nebraska** explained ways to combat housing discrimination and identify illegal practices.

## STORYTELLERS SHARE SACRED TRADITIONS, SYMBOLS

**Stories From the Stage** invites storytellers from around the world to share extraordinary tales of what it means to be human and share these emotions.

In cooperation with Vision Maker Media, the **WORLD** television series was in Nebraska in April to record performances for two episodes featuring Indigenous storytellers. Headquartered at Nebraska Public Media in Lincoln, Vision Maker Media's mission is empowering and engaging Native people to share stories for public media broadcast across the United States.







## SHARED STORIES

You shared important stories from your local communities during our *On the Road* trip to Northeast Nebraska.



**11 events**  
**3 days**  
**6 towns**  
**771 people**

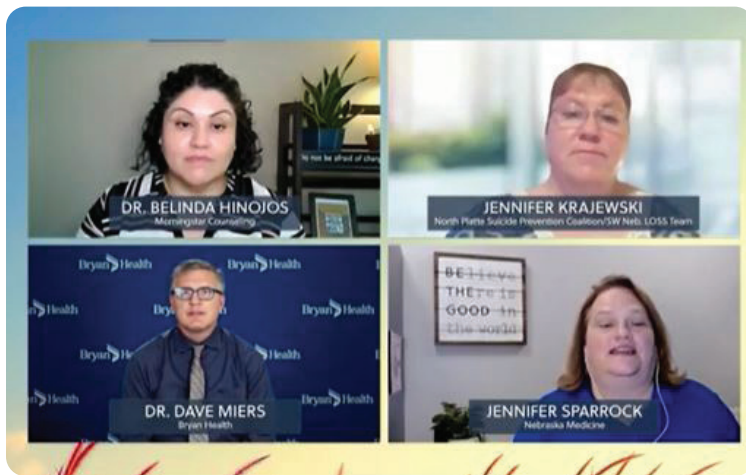
## ON THE ROAD

We know the power of a handshake, conversations over coffee and time spent together.

Our ***On the Road*** trips are a chance to meet our viewers and listeners in the communities we serve. In April, we shared programs, free events and entertainment with stops in Fremont, Columbus, Wayne, West Point, Omaha and Valley.

Community leaders participated in *Town Talks*, families met Daniel Tiger and enjoyed PBS KIDS activities and our *Friday LIVE* arts and humanities radio program featured local talent.

Entrepreneurs from the area shared their journeys in a panel discussion connected to our *What If...* innovation series, we tested your knowledge at a public media trivia night and the week ended with a car show and screening of *Classic Car Love Stories* at the Quasar Drive-In in Valley.



**"I attempted suicide when I was 14, and I'm still struggling with depression. As a proud supporter of Nebraska Public Media, I anticipate watching this documentary in full."**

— Virtual Event Participant

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELL BEING

If you have a mental health condition, you're not alone. One in five American adults experiences some form of mental illness in any given year. Nebraska Public Media wanted to bring attention to these biologically based medical problems with several virtual programs inspired by the documentary *Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness*, produced by Ken Burns.

[NebraskaPublicMedia.org/mentalhealth](https://NebraskaPublicMedia.org/mentalhealth)

### ***Facing Suicide***

This online discussion about suicide prevention in Nebraska was inspired by the PBS documentary *Facing Suicide*. This event featured a live panel discussion and personal stories from Nebraskans impacted by suicide.

### ***Mental Health Resources Across Nebraska***

There is a nationwide shortage of mental health care providers, especially in rural areas. This online discussion explored mental health resources across Nebraska, challenges that currently exist, and ways that individuals and organizations are working to close the access gap.

### ***Home and School Connections for Youth Mental Health***

Strengthening partnerships between schools, providers and families gives our youth better mental health support. This discussion explored how we can create these connections in Nebraska.

Our fifth television channel is available free over-the-air with an antenna. It is the first and only national broadcast television network devoted exclusively to Native American and World Indigenous programming.





## WE ARE SOCIAL

We connect with our audiences in ways our founders never imagined.

In today's digital age, viewers and listeners are streaming more content online and engaging with our social media channels, as well as consuming our programming on radio and television.

**1.2 million users**  
clicked on  
**NebraskaPublicMedia.org**

**30% increase from**  
last fiscal year



## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Facebook

Our reach on Facebook increased 8% to nearly 6 million people.

### More Followers

Facebook – up 7%

Twitter – up 8%

Instagram – up 22%

### More Engagement

Facebook, Twitter & Instagram (Combined)

400K+ likes – up 47%

40K+ comments – up 24%

45K+ shares – up 24%

### YouTube

1,583,107 video views



### Nebraska Public Media App

3,217 users

### PBS Passport

44,316 average monthly streams





As technology transforms broadcast television and radio, we are preparing for a revolutionary future that is just coming into focus. In partnership with NOVA, we continued experimenting with the delivery of digital-only content.

## ANCIENT FISH, MODERN PROBLEM



**Across Nebraska Public Media and NOVA social media platforms, we had over 30,000 views of this digital short.**

For thousands of years, pallid sturgeon thrived in the Missouri River's murky waters, but flood control and river navigation infrastructure are endangering the ancient fish's survival.

Our digital story explored the struggle to protect the pallid sturgeon, as well as manage flooding as part of ***Climate Across America***. The national initiative pairs local public media with the award-winning PBS science series **NOVA** to produce and distribute multiplatform, climate-focused content.

In April, the digital story launched on the Nebraska Public Media website and its social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

## BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Nebraska Public Media Labs is our R&D unit. It pushes the boundaries of public media by combining innovative technology with compelling storytelling. In collaboration with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Labs provides hands-on, invaluable experience to the next generation of media creators.

Labs is recognized for advancements in digital video production, podcasting, 360-video and immersive virtual experiences. Currently, Labs is exploring the untapped potential of generative AI. The technology holds enormous promise for public media as it can streamline the creative process and empower us to efficiently generate more high-quality content.

We are embracing the spirit of innovation and developing best practices for these advanced tools – and keeping our focus on serving Nebraska as a trusted source of information and inspiration.

**"Nebraska Public Media is one of the major unifying forces of the state. Locally made programs like *Backyard Farmer* and specials like *Heartland Handmade* speak volumes about the opportunities and creativity within this great state."**

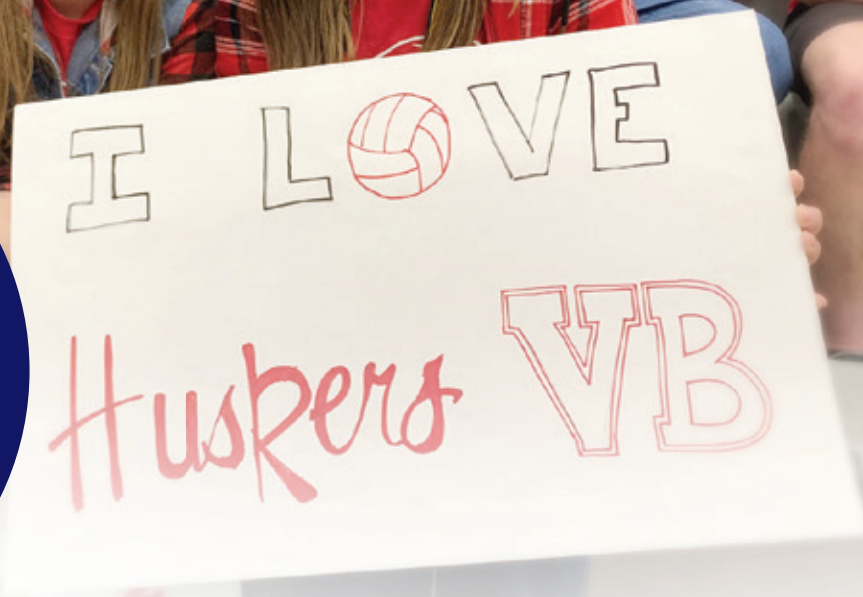
– Lora, Talmage



**More than 136,351 people downloaded Nebraska Public Media podcasts during this fiscal year.**

# NEBRASKA'S HOME FOR SPORTS

We offer more than **200 hours** of local sports programming every year!



In partnership with the Nebraska School Activities Association, our award-winning sports team delivers unmatched high school sports coverage. Our network is a leader among just a handful of public television stations in the country that feature boys and girls high school sports, as well as college and university athletic competitions.



This year, we added championship games for high school baseball, adding to our already full slate of coverage that includes basketball, football, volleyball, soccer, swimming & diving, wrestling and bowling.

We also broadcast high school All-Star games for basketball, softball and volleyball. During our high school sports television broadcasts, streaming for both in-state and out-of-state viewers is available on our website and app.



Our sports series offers highlights and expert analysis by Nebraska football experts.

*Big Red Wrap-Up* had over 1 million video views on Facebook and Twitter last fiscal year.



Coaches break down schedules, preview rosters and highlight players.



**"We enjoy Nebraska Volleyball and educational programming offered."**

– Gegetta and Laverne,  
North Platte

We live in a state where sports are more than a game and fans are more than loyal. Our sports coverage is more than just a presentation of athletic games. The competitions are a series of community events that connect people across our entire state and demonstrate support for positive things happening with our youth and in our schools – at both the high school and collegiate levels.

## COLLEGIATE SPORTS

On the court, on the field and on the baseball diamond, our award-winning sports production team delivers live coverage and heart-stopping college and university sports moments.

Our recent coverage includes:

- Creighton University baseball, volleyball and women's basketball
- University of Nebraska at Kearney volleyball
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln baseball, volleyball, soccer and softball, as well as the Spring Football Red/White Game and Spring Volleyball Match
- University of Nebraska at Omaha baseball, volleyball and women's basketball
- Wayne State College Volleyball

**"We are exceptionally fortunate to have Nebraska Public Media and its commitment to sports in the State of Nebraska."**

– Viewer from LaVista



## CAPTURING EVERY MOMENT


Our remote production facility is a 53-foot-long semitrailer that expands to double its size, creating space for the directors, audio engineers and other professionals who produce our local sports coverage. Our advanced "super slow motion" technology makes sports replays crystal clear, so every fan can see the call up-close.



## ACE COVERAGE

We were the first to bring Nebraska volleyball to a statewide television audience. Our coverage officially began with the Huskers' first game, and first win, against Concordia College in Seward on Sept. 20, 1975.





● *All About Books*  
host Pat Leach

## THE POWER OF PUBLIC RADIO

Music on Nebraska Public Media hits the high notes, our news ranks high in trust and our weekends are quick-witted.

Did you know our radio is not just for your commute? Listeners of our two radio channels – News/Classical and News/Jazz – hear us online, on smart speakers and on podcasts. We’ve accompanied your busy days for more than 30 years!

Our local series enrich your listening experience, adding more enjoyment to what you already hear from our local team and NPR.

***"(I) listen to *Morning Edition* every day and various entertainment on weekends."***

– Shannon, Grant

### FRIDAY LIVE

Our weekly arts and humanities program brings you music, performances, news, events and culture from across the state. The show’s podcast is available on demand.

### ALL ABOUT BOOKS

Our weekly discussion program goes far beyond just book reviews, inviting people who are passionate about books and reading to give their personal stories and insights. The show’s podcast is available on demand.

### NEBRASKA CONCERTS

Listeners enjoy highlights of concerts and musical events happening across the state.

### THE VERGE

Music from composers and performers who like to color outside the lines of the usual classical music boundaries.

### CLASSICS BY REQUEST

Classical music lovers call in requests during the week, and we play their favorites on Friday afternoons during this local series.



## AWARD-WINNING NETWORK

Through the years, we've earned more than 1,000 local, regional and national awards for outstanding work in our industry. In this fiscal year, the network was honored with 26 awards for work including radio news, news series, digital media work, marketing, excellence on the internet, program production and promotion.

### 27th Annual Webby Awards

*Expedition Nebraska: A Virtual Natural History Experience* was honored for Metaverse, Immersive and Virtual Experiences by the leading international organization honoring excellence on the internet. A collaboration between Nebraska Public Media Labs and the University of Nebraska State Museum, Expedition Nebraska allows visitors to virtually travel to prehistoric Nebraska.

### Women in Technology

Nebraska Public Media's Ling Ling Sun was named among the Top 50 Women Leaders in Technology of 2022. Sun is chief technology officer, leading a statewide television and radio network that offers multi-platform communication services.

### Omaha Press Club

Senior Producer Bill Kelly was inducted to the Omaha Press Club's Hall of Fame. The Michigan native joined the network in 1990 and has produced more than 20 documentaries and countless news stories, bringing insight into the workings of government, courts and politics.

### Ron Hull, Gold Circle

The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Heartland Chapter inducted special advisor Ron Hull into the organization's Gold Circle in July 2022. The Gold Circle is an elite group of professionals who have made a significant contribution to television during a time period of at least 50 years. Hull died April 20, 2023, in Lincoln. He was 92.

**There's a place in the middle of America  
with a story to tell.**

**A place with roots that's never done growing.**

**Where we feed young minds and feed the world.**

**A place that knows the future of power and  
the power of the future.**



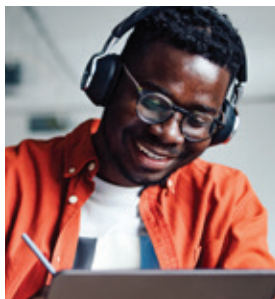
We demonstrate our value to Nebraska by telling stories, showcasing fine arts and music, turning the pages of history, discovering science secrets, embracing new technologies and serving communities with trusted news. But our reach extends beyond our broadcasts and digital content.

Guided by the three pillars of public media – education, civic engagement and public safety – we work with families and educators to prepare children for future success, bring attention to important local issues and play a critical role in public safety by supporting first responders and emergency alert systems.

Your public media network is essential. It connects Nebraskans to each other and the world.







1800 North 33rd Street  
Lincoln, NE 68503

[NebraskaPublicMedia.org](http://NebraskaPublicMedia.org)