

# BROADCAST TELEVISION AND RADIO IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The number of broadcast-only households in the U.S continues to rise, experiencing a 12 percent increase over the previous year.<sup>1</sup> More than 27.3 million American television households, making up 23 percent of all television viewing households in the U.S., receive television through over-the-air broadcast signals.<sup>2</sup> In fact, 14 percent of those consumers receiving television through over-the-air signals live in non-metro areas, representing 3.5 million homes and 9.2 million people.<sup>3</sup>

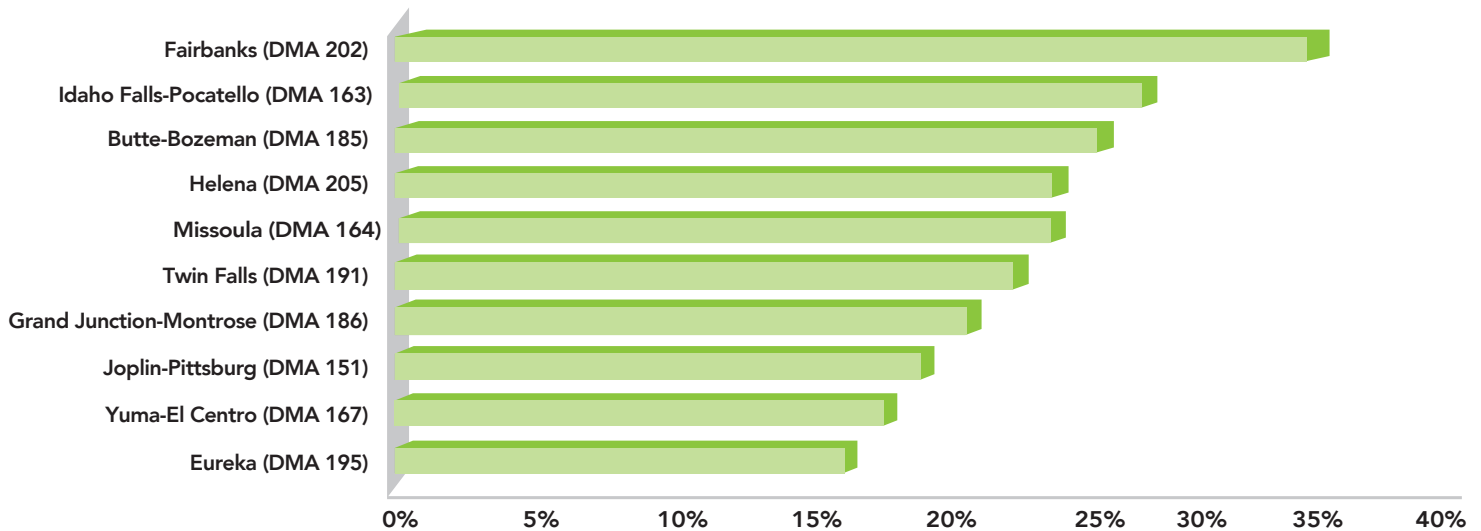
## RURAL POPULATION ACROSS THE U.S.

Rural America accounts for one-fifth of the total U.S. population, representing nearly 60 million people.<sup>4</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>5</sup>

## RURAL AMERICANS AND OVER-THE-AIR TELEVISION HOUSEHOLD PENETRATION

Americans in a number of small television markets that include rural areas depend on over-the-air broadcasting more than the general population. The table below provides the percentage of households in a variety of small designated market areas (DMAs) relying on free over-the-air television.<sup>6</sup>

**Broadcast Only TV Homes in Small DMAs**



## 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> <sup>7</sup>	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 one million people watching each episode.
<b>The Georgia Farm Monitor</b> <sup>8</sup>	The <i>Georgia Farm Monitor</i> 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 16 stations throughout Georgia.
<b>The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation</b> <sup>9</sup>	The Idaho Farm Bureau's TV news department covers stories about agricultural, environmental and natural resource issues that affect Idaho residents.	Twice a week, The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation provides agriculture and natural resource news segments to the following broadcast television news departments: Boise – KBCI-TV    Lewiston – KLEW-TV Idaho Falls – KIFI-TV    Twin Falls – KMVT-TV
<b>Ag Day</b> <sup>10</sup>	A daily news program focused on agriculture and rural America.	On the air for more than a quarter-century, this program can be seen nationwide on stations coast-to-coast.

## AGRICULTURE PROGRAMMING ON BROADCAST RADIO IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Radio reaches over 268 million listeners each week.<sup>11</sup> Local radio continues to provide rural communities with a variety of informational and ethnically diverse programs through more than 15,500 commercial and non-commercial stations across the country. Americans living in rural areas can listen to more than 6,800 broadcast radio stations located in non-metro counties and markets so small they are not even rated by the audience measurement service, Nielsen Audio.<sup>12</sup>

Commercial radio stations in rural areas air agricultural programs and segments that focus on local farming news. Farm broadcasters provide the latest information to radio listeners on more than 1,300 stations nationwide<sup>13</sup> with 83 percent of farmers listening to farm radio.<sup>14</sup> Several states and regions have agricultural radio networks that provide localized weather and industry information focusing on the state or region's farming business. Examples of agricultural radio networks that air on several radio stations throughout the state or region include the following: Iowa AgriBusiness Network,<sup>15</sup> Kansas Farm and Ranch Radio<sup>16</sup> and the Kansas Ag Network,<sup>17</sup> RFD Radio Network in Illinois,<sup>18</sup> Southern Farm Network<sup>19</sup> and Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network.<sup>20</sup> The Northern Ag Network provides up to date farm news and market reports to an audience covering states including Montana, Wyoming and Idaho.<sup>21</sup> In addition, The Red River Farm Network has nearly 20 radio stations covering the Minnesota and North Dakota listening area.<sup>22</sup>

AgNet West Radio Network launched in California with the goal of being a local farm radio network serving the state’s large agricultural community.<sup>23</sup> AgNet West Radio Network can be heard on over 20 radio stations in California, covering 95 percent of all key crop areas in the state.<sup>24</sup>

Station	Counties Covered by AgNet West Radio Network
KCAA-AM K272FO-FM K293-FM	S/W San Bernardino, Western Riverside and Orange County
KERN-AM K241CI-FM	Kern, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Santa Barbara
KION-AM	Monterey, San Benito, Western Merced, Santa Cruz, Southern Santa Clara
KPAY-AM K25AV-FM	Butte, Tehama, Sutter, Yuba, Colusa, Yolo, Northern Sacramento, Eastern Napa, Solano
KRKC-AM K285FW-FM	Monterey, San Benito
KSAC-FM	Sacramento, Yolo, Sutter, Placer, Yuba, Butte, Napa, Solano, Lake, San Joaquin
KSRO-AM	Sonoma, Napa, Lake, Yolo, Solano, Marin, Southern Mendocino, Southern Colusa
KTIP-AM K264CL-FM	Tulare, North Kern, Kings, SE Fresno
KFIG-AM	Fresno, Tulare, Stanislaus, Northern Kern, Madera, Kings, San Benito, Monterey, Eastern Santa Clara
KVEC-AM K243CL-FM	San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Benito, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Kern, Santa Barbara
KYNO-AM	Fresno, Madera, Merced, Kings, Tulare
KYOS-AM	Merced, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Northern and Western Fresno
KXO-AM	Imperial, Riverside, San Diego
KSMA-AM K258CY-FM	San Luis Obispo, Northern and Central Santa Barbara

For more than 60 years, the Nebraska Rural Radio Association has broadcast vital information to farms and ranches, including daily grain and livestock markets, weather and farm reports.<sup>25</sup> Stations in the Rural Radio Network provide these essential updates throughout each work day to farmers and ranchers living in Nebraska, and beyond its borders.<sup>26</sup>

Southeast AgNet produces farm news programs broadcast on more than 65 radio stations in Alabama, Florida and Georgia with reports customized for each state. Southeast AgNet produces approximately 20 news headline programs each day, focusing on various farming industries such as cattle, citrus, cotton, peanuts and soybeans. These news reports also provide individualized weather reports for these diverse agricultural regions.<sup>27</sup> The table below includes examples of some of the stations that carry farm news segments from Southeast AgNet.<sup>28</sup>

State	Market	Station
Alabama	Athens	WKAC-AM
	Cullman	WKUL-FM
	Monroeville	WMFC-FM
Florida	Lakeland	WLKF-AM
	Marianna	WJAQ-FM
Georgia	Albany	WALG-AM
	Calhoun	WJTH-AM
	Calhoun	WJTH-FM
	Commerce	WJJC-AM
	Sandersville	WSNT-FM

*AgriTalk*, hosted by Mike Adams, facilitates a discussion about issues and ideas important to rural America.<sup>29</sup> *AgriTalk* broadcasts each week from rural areas across the country and can be heard on 70 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>30</sup>

## FARMING COMMUNITIES RELIANCE ON RADIO BROADCAST WEATHER REPORTS

Rural radio stations provide farmers and ranchers with essential local weather reports vital to the success of rural businesses. Iowa news/talk radio station KICD-AM delivers weather and farm updates each weekday morning.<sup>31</sup> Entertainment radio stations, such as KUTT-FM in Nebraska, also offer listeners critical farming and weather updates throughout the day.<sup>32</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 the U.S. population is able to access public broadcasting’s over-the-air signals.<sup>33</sup>

National Public Radio (NPR) creates and distributes news, information and music programming to over 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>34</sup>

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), America’s largest public broadcasting network, provides trusted programming through its nearly 350 member television stations serving all 50 states. Over the course of a year, 82 percent of all U.S. television households and 198 million people watch PBS, with over 100 million people watching a local PBS station in a typical month.<sup>35</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>36</sup> Children living in rural areas are able to receive programs that improves their critical skills. PBS children’s programming teaches children valuable life skills, as well as improves performance in school. Research has shown that children who watch PBS’s “Sesame Street” in preschool spend more time reading for fun in high school, which results in higher grades in key subjects such as English, math and science. Additionally, other PBS programs, such as “SUPER WHY,” have been shown to increase children’s literacy skills by 46 percent.<sup>37</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 614 multicast digital television (DTV) channels. Below are examples of such digital multicast channels across the U.S.<sup>38</sup>

Public and Educational DTV Multicast Channels	Number of Channels	Public and Educational DTV Multicast Channels	Number of Channels
Create	204	First Nations Experience	8
World	148	PBS Encore	7
PBS	83	Florida Channel	7
PBS Kids	41	Montana Legislature	5
MHZ Worldview	23	Ohio Channel	5
PBS Plus	17	NJ Audiovision	4
Kentucky Channel	15	PBS Explore	4
MN Channel	14	PBS Life	4
The South Carolina Channel	11	Wisconsin Channel	3

Source: SNL Kagan, TV Station Database. February 2016.

### FAITH-BASED PROGRAMMING IN RURAL AREAS

Religious broadcast station owners are a growing presence among broadcasters with 366 broadcast television stations across the U.S.<sup>39</sup> Many faith-based radio and television stations are located 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>40</sup>

In addition, 201 faith-based multicast networks offer programming to their respective audiences throughout the nation. Below are examples of faith-based multicast channels.<sup>41</sup>

Religious DTV Multicast Channels	Number of Channels
The Church Channel	38
Juce TV (US)	37
TBNSalsa	36
TBN Enlace USA	35
SonLife Broadcasting Network	8
TCT Family	8
CTNi	7
TCT HD	5
Religious	4
Daystar	4

Source: SNL Kagan, TV Station Database. February 2016.

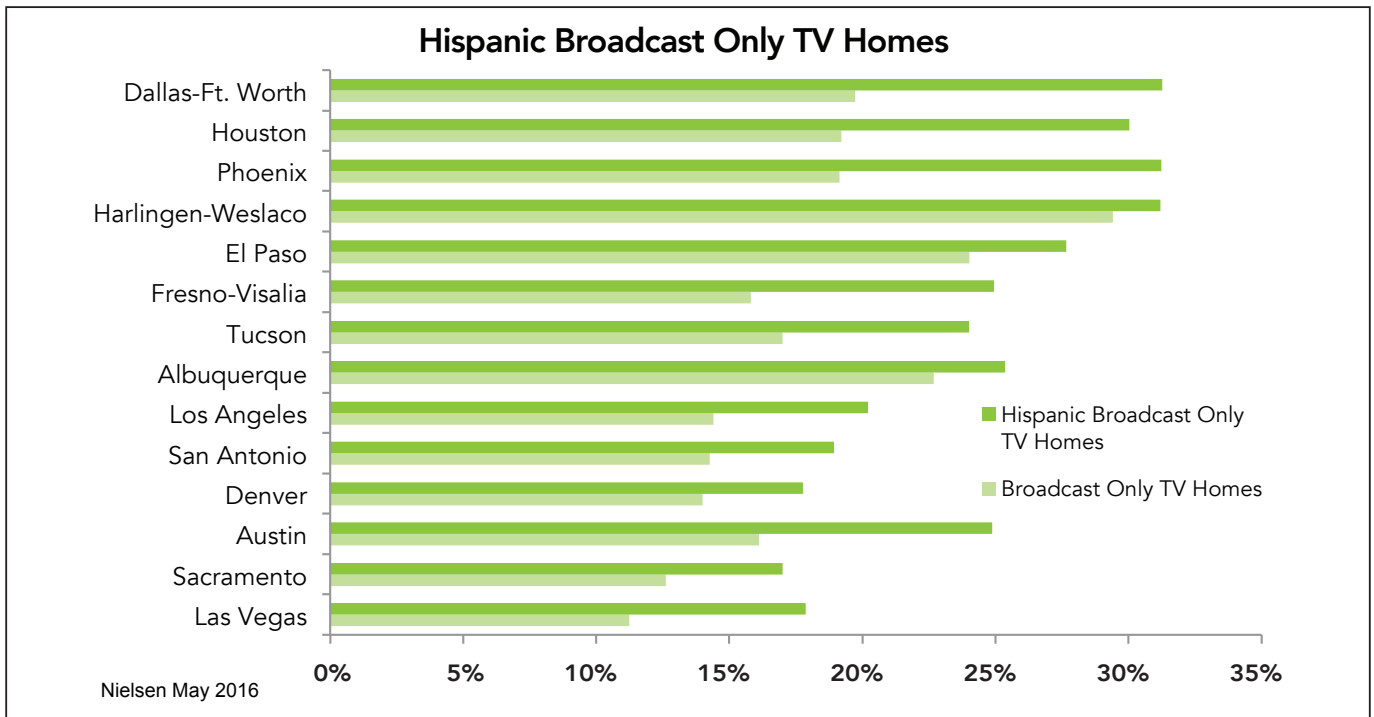
The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) is an association of Christian communicators, including radio and television broadcasters, whose member organizations represent millions of radio listeners and television viewers. NRB provides educational, ministry and fellowship opportunities for its radio and television members located across the U.S.<sup>42</sup>

### HISPANIC POPULATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

In 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated more than 57 million Hispanics in the United States, accounting for 18 percent of the total population.<sup>43</sup> The Hispanic population is expected to increase 110 percent by 2060 to 29 percent of the population.<sup>44</sup> Between 2010 and 2013 Hispanics in rural areas increased 2.1 percent compared to a decrease of 0.2 percent for the non-Hispanic population.<sup>45</sup>

Hispanics continue to rely disproportionately on the over-the-air TV and radio that local broadcasters provide. Reliance by Hispanics on free and local TV and radio, multicast and Spanish-language programming is significant across the American landscape, and broadcasting continues to provide a vital and irreplaceable resource to Hispanic communities.

In the chart below, Hispanic broadcast-only TV homes represent Hispanic homes where free, over-the-air broadcast television is viewed exclusively (and there is no cable or satellite subscription service). Likewise, broadcast-only TV homes represent all homes where free, over-the-air broadcast television is viewed exclusively.<sup>46</sup>



### LOCAL TELEVISION AND RADIO ECONOMIC IMPACT

Local broadcasting generates billions of dollars in annual gross domestic product and thousands of jobs in states with large rural populations.<sup>47</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>48</sup>

Local radio and television stations are a vital and irreplaceable resource to rural communities, providing them with entertainment and 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)
Maine	61%	\$4.5	10.3
Vermont	61%	\$1.9	4.5
West Virginia	51%	\$6.1	13.4
Mississippi	51%	\$8.7	20.1
Montana	44%	\$3.1	7.3
Arkansas	44%	\$9.8	21.6
South Dakota	43%	\$2.9	6.5
Kentucky	42%	\$14.8	32.8
Alabama	41%	\$15.6	34.5
North Dakota	40%	\$3.2	6.8

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