

KSMQ 40 years

2017 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



"Keep up the great programming. Of all the hundreds of TV channels, KSMQ is my fave!"
Mary Burns, Faribault

KSMQ Public Television offers four distinct broadcast channels free over-the-air to viewers in southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa. KSMQ 15.1 features PBS and local programming. KSMQ 15.2 provides *Mhz/Worldview* with international news and opinion from a global perspective. KSMQ 15.3 is Create, with do-it-yourself programs. KSMQ 15.4 is *The Minnesota Channel* and carries unique regional content.



KSMQ-TV is a valuable part of southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. In 2017 a primary objective was to continue service to the largest community in our viewing area, Rochester. The addition of a weekly topical program based in Rochester, *R-Town*, filled a void in the local television landscape. Every week, *R-Town* featured an array of local artisans, musicians, and civic leaders—many of whom are also neighbors. Our region is culturally diverse, and viewers tell us they value the variety of content that flows via our four program streams.

In 2017 KSMQ Public Television performed a “deep dive” into two hot button issues in the viewing area: sex trafficking and rural health care. These stories were broadcast on our KSMQ Public Television programs *On Q* and *R-Town*, as well as in an edited online format for sharing on Twitter. These and our other programs added up to nearly 40 hours of new, locally generated media content. Much of this content was shared with the rest of the state via The Minnesota Channel.

Today, KSMQ serves an estimated 655,000 people from Mankato to Rochester, Faribault to Mason City, Iowa, and every community in between. We partner contractually on programming with Riverland Community College and Rochester Community and Technical College. To add to our impact, KSMQ partners with other public service institutions on individual television programs and initiatives. Partners in 2017 included Austin Public Schools, Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Development Corporation of Austin and Mayo Clinic Health System Austin-Albert Lea.



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In 2017, KSMQ Public Television created television programming and community dialog about a difficult subject to talk about: sex trafficking and young people.

A brief interview segment about sex trafficking on our weekly civic affairs show “R-Town” became the catalyst for a larger discussion. “We just had a 12 year old girl abducted, from the city of Rochester and taken up and trafficked in Minneapolis and farther north,” Mark Ostrem, Olmsted County Attorney told us. “It is happening.”

As a young woman, Joy Friedman was forced into the world of sex trafficking, telling KSMQ, “Rochester is actually a spot that a lot of stuff is going on. It’s been going on. I was in Rochester. My pimp took me there on a number of occasions.”

From our discussions we discovered that many people in our viewing area were not aware of the very real problem of sex trafficking in southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa.

We organized and then convened a community dialog about sex trafficking and young people. Our production team spent two months in the field, meeting with victims of sex trafficking, going on patrol with law enforcement, and catching up with volunteers who attempt to rescue victims and help them regain control of their lives. The result was a 30-minute program entitled “It Happens Here, Too.”

But KSMQ’s work didn’t end there. After the program aired, there were people calling and messaging KSMQ asking more detailed questions and seeking resource information. So we rented a ballroom at the Holiday Inn and invited the people featured in the documentary to engage one on one with the viewers who contacted us. We also invited the general public and over 80 people attended.

We brought together the Olmsted County attorney, Albert Lea Police Department sex crimes investigator, and two representatives of groups that help at-risk teens. The discussion was 90 minutes. Audience members shared stories and asked questions of the panel. Afterwards, discussions between panelists and audience members continued and new connections were made.

The other major project that KSMQ addressed in 2017 was attempting to inform the public about the business of health care services in the area. Primarily, the changes happening in two KSMQ communities, 15 miles apart: Austin and Albert Lea. Both communities have hospitals and are operated by Mayo Clinic Health System (MCHS).

The Mayo Clinic Health System announced it was dropping in-patient and birthing services at the Albert Lea facility and would be sending patients to Austin for care. In response to the changing face of health care, Mayo Clinic Health System said it undertook a detailed review of its operations and identified the need to reorganize the types of services it provides at its Albert Lea and Austin hospital locations. The work was guided, MCHS said, by an unwavering commitment to both communities and a goal of keeping high-quality care affordable and available on two strong campuses that are positioned for long-term viability and growth.



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This caused a good deal of upset and uncertainty for residents of Albert Lea. Local commercial media covered the day-to-day controversy as the changes were being put into place by Mayo Clinic Health System. KSMQ producers met to see if there was an angle about the issue that had not been explored. We spoke with health care researchers and clinic operators, and the result was “The Rural Health Care Crunch.” The KSMQ program brought together a physician from Mayo Clinic Health System; a rural health care researcher from the University of Minnesota; and the dean of nursing at Riverland Community College in Austin. Discussion focused on national trends in the health care industry, primarily in the rural regions of the United States. Top among the problems cited was the difficulty in finding physicians willing to build their careers in rural areas.

During the program, the MCHS physician reiterated that as a member of the community herself, she understood how any changes to hospital services can have an impact – not just on patients and staff, but also on the community’s identity. But MCHS said it also has a responsibility to respond to the changing health care environment, so that it can continue to provide high-quality care, preserve jobs and keep health care costs affordable. The MCHS responded to the community by explaining, “It’s important to note that in making these changes, we are keeping the services that patients use most close at hand, and we are committed to continuing to be an active part of our communities. The vast majority – more than 95 percent – of the care currently provided in Albert Lea and Austin will remain unchanged. You will still come to your local campus for doctor visits, blood draws, pharmacy and medication adjustments, x-rays and scans, immunizations and well-child checks, women’s health care, emergency room and urgent care, and outpatient (same-day) surgeries and procedures. The Albert Lea campus will continue to be the regional hub for dialysis, offer advanced wound care with its hyperbaric chamber and provide state-of-the-art cancer care in a remodeled Cancer Center.”

As part of this transition, MCHS said it will move the inpatient Psychiatric Services Unit (PSU) from Austin to the Albert Lea campus, creating an integrated setting for behavioral health and addiction services. “The Rural Health Care Crunch” was later featured on the Mayo Clinic website.

KSMQ received significant feedback from viewers after the program aired. Among the comments received was one from a woman in Iowa who said her local town, with a population of just 2,500, had its own in-patient hospital. She wondered how her city could support a full service hospital when it seemed that Albert Lea could not.

The subsequent investigation by KSMQ led to a second 30-minute program, “Small Town Hospitals.” KSMQ traveled with its production team to Clarion, Iowa and taped an entire program from the Iowa Specialty Hospital. Guests included the local public health nurse, a hospital physician and hospital management. The second program informed viewers that there are many ways a hospital can be operated in order to be successful financially. The type of community, distance from larger hospitals, and types of care required are all factors that create the framework of operation for a hospital.

Citywide Poverty Initiative

Non-profit groups from throughout Austin worked together to attempt to bring all available services together in one location, for one day. Called “Community Connect,” KSMQ Public Television featured stories and interviews promoting the event, and participated in the event by registering residents who were seeking help. Over 500 people took advantage of the event.



Improving Community Dialog

The KSMQ Public Television Board of Directors (right) held a public “Annual Meeting” attended by members of the public, including legislators, as special guests. KSMQ provided snacks and drinks. Station leadership made presentations highlighting achievements of the past year, and program hosts told stories of their personal growth as a result of working on topics for KSMQ Public Television.



Sex Trafficking Forum Held

As a complement to the television documentary, a forum sponsored by KSMQ brought together the dedicated people who are fighting to eliminate sex trafficking within the KSMQ Public Television viewing area. Subjects not addressed in the television program were raised. The law enforcement agencies represented at the forum picked up new insights from the audience and from each other.



InFocus Newsletter Expanded

KSMQ's monthly newsletter, InFocus, underwent a significant upgrade in 2017. KSMQ added two pages of local feature stories about station events in a more readable, colorful format. Further, the station was able to minimize cost by bringing the printing in house. Soon after publication, InFocus began receiving interest from underwriters and the first sponsor messages appeared, further reducing the costs of production and mailing.



Reach in the Community:

We reach a total estimated population of over 700,000 people from our over-the-air broadcast signal. Our "new" newsletter (story above) is mailed to 2,000 members and delivered to local businesses. Viewers are also able to share KSMQ stories they see over the air via the KSMQ Public Television YouTube page or from the Twitter links we provide.

Partnerships:

In the past year we have worked on broadcast or media projects with Austin High School, Riverland Community College, Neveln Elementary School, Hormel Historic Home, Minnesota State University-Mankato and the Austin Early Morning Kiwanis Club.

"I feel so fortunate that we can receive your station at our location in North Iowa."

Judy Schaper, Britt, IA



"You do so many things very well. We enjoy your station immensely."

Nancy Martin, Lime Springs, IA



KSMQ Public Television brought in experts from Mayo Clinic, Riverland Community College and the University of Minnesota to discuss health care access in rural Minnesota.

“My wife said that this was one of the best programs she has ever seen, and she is no pushover when it comes to quality.”

Thomas McCoy, KSMQ Viewer, Burnsville, MN



R-Town co-host Nicole Asong Nfonoyim-Hara learns about the new “fake news” phenomenon.

“A woman stopped me on the street, recognizing me from KSMQ. She thanked me for having done a program on local drug abuse problems and available resources. She said, ‘I just want you to know that we show your program to addicts when they first come to the 12-step group to show them that there is hope for them. Thank you!’”

Eric Olson, KSMQ President & CEO