KSMQ Public Television inspires the viewer to discover local connections, build strong communities and become better informed. KSMQ Public Television offers four distinct broadcast channels free over-the-air to viewers in southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa.

KSMQ-TV is a valuable part of the life fabric of southern Minnesota and northern Iowa.

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 locally produced programs. KSMQ 15.2 DW relays international news and opinion from a global perspective. KSMQ 15.3 Create, with do-it-yourself programs. KSMQ 15.4 Minnesota Channel carries unique regional content produced by public television stations across the state.

We made a conscious effort to provide non-traditional information during a non-traditional year.

Some KSMQ local production services were curtailed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, 2020 was a full election year with national, state and local races. To compensate, the KSMQ Public Television staff directed resources toward media it could utilize while keeping its employees safe. KSMQ produced and broadcast state legislative roundtable discussions for every district in its viewing area, as well as coverage of the Rochester City Council election. Segments were created with internet sites like Zoom, then reformatted for television broadcast.

We shifted focus to aid with crucial community information delivery in 2020.

With the COVID-19 pandemic in full swing, KSMQ attempted to provide information that would complement what the local news operations were already providing. We utilized multimedia platforms to engage viewers on a regular basis with healthcare delivery experts at the county level. Each county had unique COVID-19 response procedures for residents. We recorded web segments from each Minnesota county in KSMQ’s viewing area to give residents local information about services being offered. County health departments expressed thanks to KSMQ for providing this vital service.

"I’m impressed with the variety of programs on KSMQ Public Television. It’s always a discovery. With this (COVID-19) virus, as parents we have included lots of your programs as part of their learning, learning.)”
- Susan Lawler, Rochester
KSMQ kept area viewers informed about the developments of the growing coronavirus pandemic in the spring of 2020. The updates included conversations with health officials from every Minnesota county within the KSMQ viewing area. These online programs educated the community about COVID-19 and let them know about local services.

Guests included:
- Mower County Community Health Division Manager Pam Kellogg, PHN
- Freeborn County Public Health Director Sue Yost
- Olmsted County Public Health Director Graham Briggs
- Amy Caron, the Public Health Director of Steele and Dodge Counties
- Tammy M. Fiedler, Public Health Director of Wabasha County
- Chera Sevcik, M.S. Executive Director/ Community Health Services Administrator Human Services of Faribault & Martin Counties
- Sarah Berry, the Public Health Director of Waseca County
- Jessica Erickson, PHN, Director of Nursing, Fillmore County Public Health
- Dr. John O’Horo, a critical care specialist and an infectious disease specialist from the Mayo Clinic

In addition to health officials, On Q COVID-19 Updates also featured other members of the community with valuable insight on how the coronavirus was affecting the local community.

- Topics included:
  - Riverland Community College President Dr. Adenuga Atewologun about how the school is reacting to the pandemic.
  - Larry Jacobs of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the U of M talked about the process of getting the coronavirus stimulus check from the government.
  - Jason Sethre, Publisher of the Fillmore County Journal talked about reporting on COVID-19.

Chera Sevcik, Executive Director of Community Health Services for Faribault and Martin Counties, is interviewed by KSMQ President/CEO Eric Olson for an “On Q: COVID-19” segment. Sevcik let county residents know about local services in place to keep COVID-19 from spreading.
Entering its thirteenth year, “Farm Connections” is one of KSMQ’s longest running series. Host Dan Hoffman brings local stories from the agricultural community to thousands of homes across southern Minnesota. Each 30-minute episode offers a farming ‘Best Practices’ segment as well as a local poet and storyteller. Recent episodes have contained interviews with the new Executive Director of the Minnesota Farm Bureau, Karin Schaefer, Chris Hahn from Community and Economic Development Associates, and local rancher and radio personality Trent Loos.

In 2019, Farm Connections explored rural Minnesota to showcase the future of agriculture. Riverland College hosted their fifth annual Ag Summit in Austin, Minnesota. Dan Hoffman went to Redwood County to check out Minnesota Farm Fest, conducting interviews with the Commissioner of Agriculture Thom Petersen, and Farm Fest Forum Coordinator Kent Thiesse. Dan also traveled to rural Zumbrota to visit Willows Keep Farm to learn all about the past, present, and future of industrial hemp production in Minnesota.

In the spring of 2020, all KSMQ productions, including Farm Connections, started filming remotely. This decision was made to make sure that we were being respectful of the health of our guests, as well as ourselves. COVID-19 has affected many industries in Southern Minnesota, especially local farmers and small businesses, though they are determined to stay in business. It was quite a departure for our “Farm Connections” team members who are used to being in the great outdoors. However, the KSMQ staff was frequently motivated by the positive spirit and “can-do” attitude of those in the agricultural community. Even though we were all stuck indoors, farmers are by nature eternal optimists and assured us that “this too shall pass.” We took great comfort in that enthusiasm.

“And you just have to have some level of inspiration about the optimism of a farmer that you can be generations down the road. And year after year, we walk into the lending institution and we say, you know, this was a tough year. Next year we’re going to make it work cause this all come together. Now, next year is going to be the year. And despite the uncertainty that we have happening today, I still see that happening on farms and ranches all across this country,” stated local rancher Trent Loos.
R-Town Explores Homelessness

The issue of homelessness became a top priority in Rochester in 2020 with an estimated 600 Rochester residents without a place to call home. R-Town producer Nicole Nfonoyim-Hara talked with Dan Fifield (right), founder of The Landing, an organization in Rochester that works directly with the homeless, to help transition them into a better life. It's called The Landing because, “everybody needs a soft place to land.” What makes The Landing different from other organizations is its approach. They go to where the homeless are instead of waiting for the homeless to come to them.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, inclusion are integral parts of any thriving community, and the Diversity Council in Rochester has been on the front lines of that work. R-Town producer Nicole Nfonoyim-Hara talked with Dee Sabol, Executive Director of the Diversity Council, about having frank discussions concerning race in the community. Dee Sabol talked about the Intercultural Cities Initiative. Rochester is the first community in the United States to undertake this endeavor. It started in Europe, and there are about 170 cities around the world participating. The initiative takes a look at how cities are integrating various cultures into a unified body, from multiculturalism to interculturalism.

Watching Out for Fraud

Consumer fraud and identity theft are prevalent problems in our society. Chances are you or someone close to you have been impacted by these issues. On this episode of R-Town, presenter Danielle Teal talked about consumer fraud and identity theft with AARP MN Director of Community Engagement Jay Haapala. Jay talked about how different types of fraud affect people in different age groups, mentioning that research shows young people are victimized more frequently than older people because of how comfortable they are with doing transactions online. They are clicking on links and responding to tech support scams with great frequency. But when older people get scammed, they often lose more money.
“Every 1 Counts” reached every corner of the state.

Reach in the Community: Once people began learning about the census education project, word spread without the benefit of any promotion. KSMQ began receiving calls of interest from citizen groups in Minneapolis, legislators from northern Minnesota and affinity groups associated with communities of color. No one had put so many different languages together for the benefit of residents before.

Partnerships: Minnesota Office of Attorney General, United States Census Bureau, Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association, Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, Mower County Counts Campaign, Minnesota Public Television Association, Austin Public Schools, Rochester Public Schools, Minnesota Department of Education

Impact and Community Feedback: KSMQ was presented with a National Media Award from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Representatives from KSMQ were asked to testify before a state legislative hearing where they received thanks from lawmakers for this unique project. KSMQ was invited to a community meeting in Minneapolis to explain how residents could view the videos and, more importantly, distribute them to non-English speaking communities.

Left: Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison lent his support to KSMQ’s project. Center: Managing Editor Matt Bluhm holds KSMQ’s national Public Media Award for the “Every 1 Counts” program. Right: KSMQ President & CEO Eric Olson (right) gave testimony about the campaign before the Minnesota House Elections Committee. Joining Olson were KSMQ board member Jeff Baldus, U.S. Census Bureau Partnership Coordinator Emmett Morris and Mohamed Sheik Nur, Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association of Rochester, MN.
Our Members Have the Last Word…

“Thank you for providing sane, smart programming!”
– Sharon Niichel, Rochester

“We loved all the local Christmas concerts you carried. They helped set a tone in our home of Good News. Thank you KSMQ!”
– Patricia Funk Orne, North Mankato

– Renata Rislow, Lewiston

“KSMQ brings the world into our lives. Makes it worthwhile having a TV.”
– Lorraine Krausert, Austin

“I am so very grateful for KSMQ and its engagement in Rochester’s community needs.”
– Sywilla Oliver, Rochester

“Thank you for the excellent programming! I totally enjoy your channel.”
– Julie Portwood, Mason City

In 2020 the smallest PBS television station in the country, KSMQ Public Television, provided locally produced content to viewers in southeastern Minnesota that caught the interest of citizens statewide.