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.

**LOCAL VALUE**

KSMQ Public Television is a valuable part of southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. In 2018 a primary objective was to provide practical programming about health. The Mayo Clinic is the largest health facility and employer in our viewing area. Partnering with Mayo Clinic Health System, KSMQ produced 13 episodes of Health Connections. Viewers phoned in questions live and doctors responded. Calls were taken by nursing graduates of Riverland Community College. We also produced another new series, Let’s Go Minnesota, an outdoor activity show highlighting exercise opportunities in scenic settings of the KSMQ viewing area.

**2018 KEY SERVICES**

In 2018, KSMQ Public Television provided these vital local services:

--Brought 5,000 people together for the premiere showing of the Ken Burns’ film “The Mayo Clinic: Faith-Hope-Science.”

--Held 16 screenings of the Ken Burns film in outlying communities in our viewing area, reaching approximately 1,000 people.

--Partnered with Austin public and parochial schools on an in-service and performance featuring PBS teen Ethan Bortnick.

**LOCAL IMPACT**

KSMQ Public Television 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 the City of Austin. To add to our impact, KSMQ partners with other public service institutions on individual television programs and initiatives. Partners in 2018 included Austin Public Schools, Rochester Symphony Orchestra, The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Development Corporation of Austin and Mayo Clinic Health System Austin-Albert Lea.

“Thank you so much for thinking of us!! We had a wonderful time at the reception meeting Ken Burns and fellow KSMQ supporters.”
- Bonnie Rietz (center), of Austin
This year, KSMQ Public Television is interested in building a new television station facility in order to better serve regional viewers for the next 25 years and beyond. Until now, KSMQ has rented space from Riverland Community College. We expect a new facility—built specifically for media productions—will cost about $5.7 million. We are asking the Minnesota state legislature for $2.8 million for the project, or roughly half the cost. The State of Minnesota has assisted other public television stations in Minnesota with their facility construction costs in years past. The Hormel Foundation of Austin has generously pledged $2.3 million to KSMQ, should the facility be built in Austin. The balance of the project cost would be paid by KSMQ Public Television member contributions, individual contributions, and the host community.

Since 1972, KSMQ Public Television has provided vital national, regional and local media content to our region’s citizens. As a non-profit public broadcaster, KSMQ exists outside the commercial for-profit television model and its media content is created only to serve the public good, not to attract the largest audience. It is for this reason that elected officials have always felt it prudent to invest in public television operations across the country. KSMQ Public Television has served southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa for the past 46 years thanks to the ongoing financial support of viewers, local businesses—and government agencies both state and federal. We are the regions only locally owned and operated television station.

KSMQ Public Television is the Public Broadcasting Service4 (PBS) television station in our region, serving 22 counties. Our full power over-the-air signal reaches a potential daily audience of 709,850 people stretching well beyond our regulated service territory. Through its federal broadcast license, KSMQ Public Television provides high quality local and national programming free over-the-air to the resident of many communities including Austin, Albert Lea, Rochester, Owatonna, Mason City, Mankato and Winona. KSMQ Public Television produces a variety of topical local television programs, provides three additional broadcast channels of unique content, maintains a regional program website, www.ksmq.org, and operates several other multimedia portals.

KSMQ Public Television has always been located in the west building of Riverland Community College in Austin. KSMQ has a great working relationship with Riverland and we appreciate being given to opportunity to rent space from the college.

The space we are in, however, was never built for television/media use. KSMQ rents space in what was, among other things, a carpentry education program. There is no Class A office space and the studio is a former garage. The building HVAC system creates unwanted noise and productions sometimes need to be stopped and redone because of the noise. There is no location to properly meet with citizens or potential corporate supporters. There are no staff restroom facilities in our building or conference rooms—and no windows. We are not able to utilize our robotic cameras properly, due to a lack of “Superflat” foundation floor in the studio.

In 2016, the KSMQ Board of Directors created a visioning statement for the station. Among the directives was to improve KSMQ’s capacity and visibility for long-term sustainability. KSMQ must
be better equipped to adapt to changing technologies and viewer needs. A new facility, built for media production, will give KSMQ a better opportunity to remain competitive as broadcast platforms change, funding sources change, in future years.

As KSMQ examined its studio and office needs as part of the visioning statement exercise, we started talking with community leaders about the future of KSMQ’s facilities. From those discussions it became clear that KSMQ would be better served by having a standalone facility built for the specific purpose of operating a television station. As a non-profit, non-commercial entity, inter KSMQ resources would not be sufficient to undertake a project of this size.

Austin, where we are currently located, is not the largest population center in KSMQ’s viewing area. Since KSMQ expressed interest in relocating to a permanent facility, we have received interest from other communities who want us to move our facilities to their town. But Austin has many visionary leaders who see future potential and growth possibilities for KSMQ and Austin. The Hormel Foundation has pledged $2.3 million to build in Austin, and the City of Austin has agreed to serve as our fiscal agent for the funds coming from the State, should we be successful. We are appreciative and honored for this interest in KSMQ’s future by the people of Austin.

One important feature of any new facility is the ability to serve viewers quickly and efficiently with content generated “live” in the television studio. At present the ability to broadcast “live” is cumbersome at best. The possibility of on-air camera miscues or missing content while broadcasting “live” is greater than at modern television facilities. This, along with the lack of proper studio space, limits KSMQ from broadcasting “town hall” or community type events at its present location.

It is KSMQ’s vision that a new facility has the potential to greatly enhance KSMQ’s productions, building a kind of educational and media hub for serving Austin and environs. We would also hope to become a destination where musicians, artists, and thought leaders could share their creative work to viewers across Minnesota in a wonderful, state-of-the-art performance space that is a treasured centerpiece of the community.

We have educated, entertained and informed viewers in southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa since 1972. Now we are asking for financial support from viewers and supporters of the ethic of public television as we begin our first building campaign in KSMQ history. We are confident that with a new facility, KSMQ will be better positioned to serve the needs of our region while making itself more nimble to adapt to changing media formats that may be required in future years.

Whatever changes come our way, future generations in our region will always benefit from have a locally-based communications “gathering point” for dissemination of local visual public affairs, educational and entertainment media content. With public and community financial support, KSMQ Public Television will be the entity uniquely able to provide that service to citizens for years to come.

Eric Olson
KSMQ Public Television President & CEO
Important State Legislature Elections

In what was an all-station effort, KSMQ Public Television produced and broadcast state legislative roundtable discussions for 12 districts within its viewing area. With the governor not running for re-election, state legislative races received renewed focus due to the uncertainty of the governor’s race. KSMQ’s Eric Olson (center) here moderates a discussion between incumbent Duane Sauke (DFL-Rochester) and Republican challenger Kenneth Bush (right). KSMQ also produced and aired a live debate for the First District in the United States Congress.

5,000 attend KSMQ’s Ken Burns Event

KSMQ’s Nicole Nfonoyim-Hara (right) welcomes movie director Ken Burns to the stage of the Rochester Civic Center on September 10, 2018. Burns came to Rochester for the premier of The Mayo Clinic: Faith-Hope-Science. The nearly 5,000 people who attended watched the film and a panel discussion moderated by Nfonoyim-Hara. Burns and his crew spent three years in Rochester documenting activities at the world-renowned Mayo Clinic. Besides the Civic Center event, KSMQ hosted 16 screenings throughout the viewing area.

KSMQ Heads to the Great Outdoors

Seventy percent of southern Minnesota residents participate in outdoor recreation each year. They come from across the income, age, and gender spectrum. Minnesotans love getting outside and KSMQ’s newest program, Let’s Go, Minnesotal! provides inspiration for activities in our state. Let’s Go, Minnesotal! takes viewers on weekly adventures across multiple outdoor disciplines such as biking, hiking, paddling, rock climbing, and snow shoeing. Outdoor enthusiast Brenda Piekarski is the host of the program.
Minnesota Remembers: The Vietnam War

Reach in the Community:

KSMQ showed its documentary during a special presentation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall that took place in Austin, MN during Memorial Day, 2018. KSMQ built a tent for veterans to get out of the sun. We had a screen set up showing veterans stories. Many of the veterans watching the KSMQ stories could be seen weeping as they left the tent. During the weekend, 8,000 people attended and most spent some time in the KSMQ viewing tent. Beside the documentary, KSMQ set up an interactive computer page connected to a statewide database. Veterans could enter their stories, ask to be contacted by a service agency, or look up the name of a fellow service member from their Vietnam service.

Partnerships:

Beyond The Yellow Ribbon
Mower County American Legion Post 91
Mower County Historical Society
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
Minnesota Public Television Association

Impact and Community Feedback:

KSMQ Public Television received a commendation letter from Beyond the Yellow Ribbon. Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is a comprehensive program that creates awareness for the purpose of connecting Service members and their families with community support, training, services and resources. Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is a service organization overseen by the Minnesota National Guard.

“The inclusion of KSMQ Public Television at our event added an important element to the overall experience for the veterans and their families. On behalf of all veterans and the Austin support team, please accept our heartfelt thanks.”

Ann Kasel
Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
“Until a student has a special experience, they don’t know how much they can achieve. Thank you KSMQ for bringing Ethan Bortnick to Austin.”
Brian Johnson, Choir Director, Austin High School

“KSMQ Health Connections is marked down on our calendar and is required viewing in our household. We enjoy the variety of health topics. And as senior citizens, this information is vitally important as we make our health care decisions. Thank you KSMQ Public Television!”
Jerry Mohrfeld
Austin Resident

Above: Mayo Clinic Health System executives and KSMQ staff celebrate the first episode of Health Connections.
Below: Dr. Sumit Bhagra answers a question during the live call-in show. “I hope we can continue to participate in this program for many years,” said Bhagra, who also serves as Medical Director for Mayo Clinic Health System Austin/Albert Lea.

“KSMQ Public Television is such a vital resource to not only Austin but our entire region. We should be thankful that they are serving us so well.”
Steve King – Mower County Corrections Director