



2021

Annual Report

WCBU.org
89.9 FM
Peoria Public Radio





WCBU Year in Review

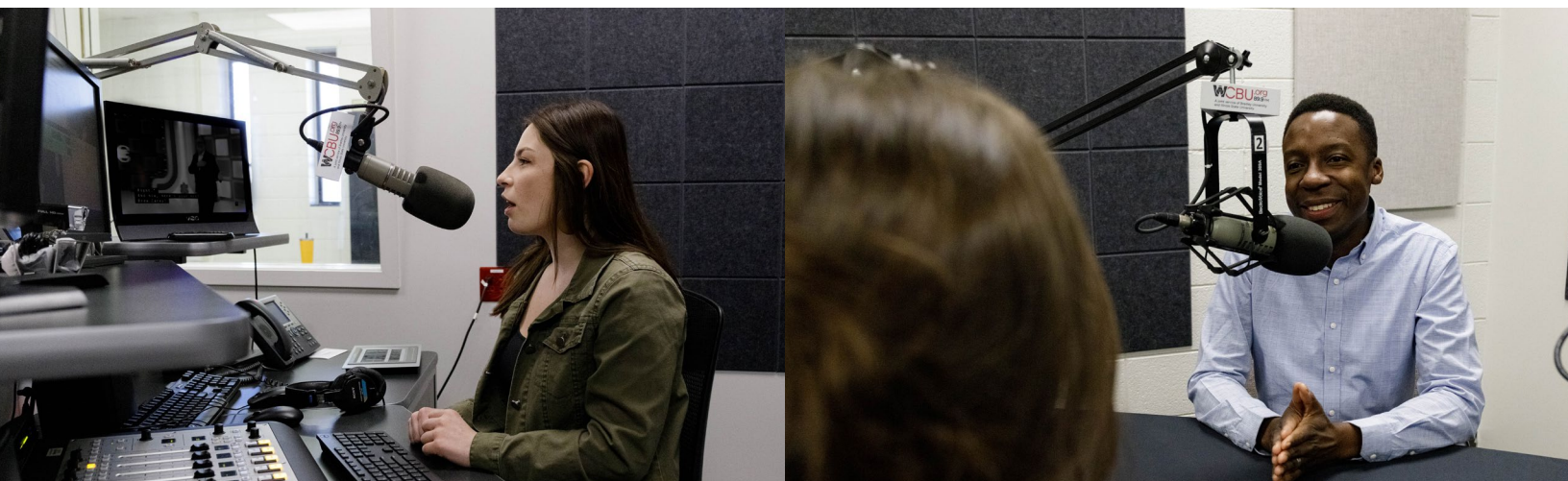
from General Manager R.C. McBride

The past year will be memorable, though maybe not always for good reasons. As we reflect on the year, however, there is plenty to put in the “good” column. I’m happy to report that WCBU continues to bolster its service to the Greater Peoria community. Specifically, we continue to add experienced journalists to our team and add local programming. Among the year’s highlights:

- In February, we hosted a candidate forum featuring all five candidates for Peoria mayor, including the eventual winner, Rita Ali. The news team produced a one-hour special broadcast on Black History in Peoria, and we hosted NPR’s Ayesha Rascoe and Don Gonyea for a virtual fundraiser.
- We made some changes to our local hosting lineup in April, with Ariele Jones taking over duties as *Morning Edition* host and Jon Norton moving to *All Things Considered*. Jody Holtz joined the team as morning news anchor after her May graduation from Bradley University.
- We successfully completed two fund drives, reaching our goal for both. Thank You!
- In the spring, we launched a fully revamped WCBU.org.
- As the COVID vaccine became more widely available, we were finally able to return our staff to work at the WCBU studios in Bradley’s Morgan Hall by late summer. The transition allowed us to welcome more Bradley University interns to the staff.
- We added two NPR shows to our weekend lineup: *Throughline* and *Code Switch*. Following feedback from our listener survey, we added an hour of *Weekend Edition* on both Saturdays and Sundays and added a second airing of *Wait, Wait, Don’t Tell Me*.
- The WCBU newsroom was busy adapting to the times, adopting new or updated policies on corrections, unnamed sources, crime coverage, and more. More information on these is available on the transparency page at WCBU.org.
- Veteran journalist Hannah Alani started at WCBU full time in July. She joined the team of Tim Shelley, Daniel Musisi, Joe Deacon, Kristin McHugh, Jody Holtz, and Nate Martin. We’ve been able to add to our core of Peoria-based correspondents, which includes Tim Alexander, Tory Dahlhoff, Brady Johnson, Mike Rundle, and Steve Tarter. As of this writing, WCBU is employing five Bradley University students—the highest number in years. These students are getting hands-on broadcast and journalism experience and represent the next generation of journalists.



R.C. McBride



- We installed a new satellite dish at Morgan Hall in August, allowing WCBU to take its feeds directly from NPR and other providers.
- WCBU was awarded in September two first-place Crystal Microphone awards in the Small Market Radio category from the Illinois News Broadcasters Association, winning for Best Station and for Best Digital Presence. These are the first major awards WCBU has received since 2015. This kind of recognition speaks to how our colleagues view WCBU's renaissance.
- And last but certainly not least, we launched *All Things Peoria*, WCBU's weekday news magazine, on October 18. The show hosted by Daniel Musisi features newsmaker interviews, arts, culture, and music. It can be heard at 5 p.m. weekdays, or you can subscribe to the podcast. Hannah Alani is now at the helm of our weekday morning news podcast, *On Deck*.

What's on tap for 2022? We hope a lot. We continue to hear overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community, especially for WCBU's local news coverage, but we know we're only scratching the surface of telling local stories. We'll be undertaking some strategic planning with our staff, the WCBU Community Advisory Board, and Bradley University faculty and staff representatives. From there, we hope to get specific feedback on what WCBU needs to become over the next five years.

We're already aware of some of the things we need to be and do. A big part of that is more local journalism, more storytelling, more investigative reporting, and more voices on the air. We believe we can not only maintain the progress we've made together but can build on it. That will require your support. I know we ask a lot, but I also know you and the community at large recognize the value WCBU provides in return. We aim to provide consistent and quality coverage of our community. Thanks to your contributions, we can do that and make it available—for free—for anyone who wishes to access it. I'm so very proud of what our team, coupled with NPR, has done covering elections, the pandemic, the insurrection, ongoing demands for racial justice, and so much more.

Here's to a new normal in 2022!



Hannah Alani

R.C. McBride
General Manager



From the Newsroom

Most-read stories of 2021

1. Peoria's Richard Pryor, Unlike You've Ever Seen Him Before
2. Family of 7 Fights For Better Living Conditions At Taft Homes
3. 50 Years After His Death, Mark Clark's Sister Shares His Story With Peoria And the World
4. Peoria Boy Joins Western Avenue Construction Crew
5. 7 Peoria Mayoral Candidates Slated For February 2021 Ballot
6. New Full-Service Supermarket Planned For Peoria's South Side
7. Why Illinois Car Dealers Are Suing Rivian, Secretary Of State To Stop Direct Sales
8. Three Teenagers Face Murder Charges In Rural Mackinaw Slaying
9. Sankoty Lakes Resort Personifies Hope For Spring Bay
10. Central Illinois Can Resume Indoor Dining With Move To Tier 1 Mitigations

New daily show

WCBU's new newsmagazine program All Things Peoria debuted in October, airing weekdays at 5 p.m. Daniel Musisi hosts the half-hour program, which features newsmaker interviews, colorful features, and arts and culture stories.



Digging deep

The newsroom produced several 30-minute specials throughout 2021:

- Peoria mayoral debate in January featured the five candidates on the primary ballot to become the city's first new mayor in 16 years. The event was moderated by News Director Tim Shelley in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria and Peoria Public Library.
- Black History Month in February highlighted some of our best reporting about the people who brought us to where we are, and what we can learn to better decide where we go next.
- Gun violence trauma in October spotlighted those who lost loved ones to shootings in Peoria and those who are trying to stop such pain from happening again to other families.

Awards

This recognition speaks to how our broadcast colleagues view WCBU's renaissance.

Two first place Crystal Mic awards in the Small Market Radio category from the Illinois News Broadcasters Association for Best Station and for Best Digital Presence. These were the first major awards WCBU has received since 2015.

Community Advisory Board Update

The goal of this note is to fulfill the Community Advisory Board's role to provide advice and recommendations to the governing body of WCBU 89.9 FM. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting requires this input on three subjects: the station's programming; its service; and its significant policy decisions, with the goal of being reasonably representative of the diverse needs and interests of the communities served by the station.

On programming, the board's advice and recommendation for 2022 is to maintain WCBU's robust local news coverage. Described in greater detail within this annual report, the station's award-winning, local reporting produces Peoria-specific news every day. This sets WCBU apart as local journalism struggles in Illinois and across the country.

On service, which we define as the station's activities beyond its broadcast, we recommend leveraging the existing alignment of WCBU to Bradley University's 2021 strategic plan. Student engagement with the station has a long-standing history at Bradley. Co-sponsoring events with student organizations, providing thought leadership, career development, and community service are strategic opportunities in 2022 and beyond.

On significant policy decisions, we can make no more fundamental recommendation than Bradley University continue to be home to WCBU. Bradley is the best and right place for the station. We support strategic partnerships such as the management agreement with ISU, as the current work of the station is enhancing both the Peoria brand and the Peoria experience. We know that the Peoria story told by a Peoria-based newsroom is part of the city's sales pitch heard by future residents, students, and prospective employers of those students. We know from the WCBU audience how much it means to all of us that both Bradley and WCBU are thriving.

These recommendations represent the broad sentiment of the communities served by the station, as we have heard from others and have felt ourselves as Community Advisory Board members. To ensure our continued representation of local sentiment, the Community Advisory Board invites the public (you!) to attend our public meetings, contact us directly, and even apply to join the board at wcbu.org/wcbu-community-advisory-board.

I'll close this annual letter with gratitude to station staff for your demonstrated commitment to quality, diversity/inclusion, and financial responsibility; to my fellow Community Advisory Board members for your time, wisdom, and support of the station; to the WCBU audience and contributors for your engagement, financial support and community; and to Bradley University, for your stewardship of this thriving Peoria voice.

John Lamb, Chair
Community Advisory Board

Community Advisory Board Members

- John Lamb, Chair
- Jennifer Essig, Vice Chair
- Diane Hahn, Recording Secretary
- Becky Doubleday
- Lenora Fisher
- Tom Mellor
- Sara Netzley
- Todd Popham
- Jim Runyon
- Bill Shock
- Jessica Thomas
- Kiran Velpula

Ex Officio/WCBU

- Jennifer Armstrong
- Ryan Denham
- Melissa Libert
- R.C. McBride

2021 WCBU Donor Roll

\$1,500+

Anonymous (2)
Saul and Sue Boast
Barbara Bush
Jennifer Class-Mitchell
Michael Coffman
Timothy Conley
Jananne and Gary Copeland
Richard Cushing
Rita S. Dempsey Trust
Rebecca Rudawitz Gearhart
Barbara Glick
Terry Glynn
Barbara Gurtler
Walter Haas
Matthew Hendrickson
Nathaniel and Rebecca Herz
Peggy Holmes
Gary Jacob
Diane and John Jordan
Jim and Floride Kidder
Kent Koshkarian

Praveen Kumar and Sara Verghese
Donald and Mary Niemi
Stephen Plott
Alicia and Todd Popham
Elizabeth Reed
Michael Rucker
Neal Senti
Angela and Shawn Weck

\$1,000-\$1,499

Anonymous (2)
Christopher Anderson Baird
Robert Bartelt
John and Linda Blossom
Judy Bradford
John Dutton
Edda Entrican
Carey French
Terry Goff
Sue and Terry Grabb
Benjamin Grethey
Ambra Haake
George and Elaine Hopkins
Fredrick and Elizabeth Hoy
Alan Kenworthy

Scott King
Walter Klypchak
Jonathan Lyons
Jacquelyn McCormick
William and Maryann Mellor
Tom Pelger
Donald and Kathleen Penn
Michael Perez
Lawrence Resutko
Douglas Rickard and Diane Lantz-Rickard
Thomas and Carol Romanowski
James Runyon
Matthew and Mary Segebart
Lonnie Stewart
Jenny and John Tripses
Jane Velazquez
William Wendle
Jason White
Patrick Whitten and Bridget Burke
Thomas Wyman
Janice and Michael Zagardo

\$500-\$999

Shay Allen

Bobbie Ashby
John Backlund
Peter Barclay
Patricia Barton
Joyce Blumenshine and David Trachtenbarg
Susan Borcherdig
Michael Brandt
Kristine Bryson
Michael and Joyce Cashman
Lynne and James Copes
Douglas Craw and Vicki Frank
Mary Dill
Connie and Bill Disney
Chris Doscotch
Gene and Becky Doubleday
Nicholas Dunne
Mary Etrick
Curtis and Sara Fenton
Nathaniel Foote
Marjorie Getz
Joseph and Joyce Glawe
Douglas Gray
Cora Green
Eleonore Hansen
Paul and Mary Heintz

Martha Huebner
David and Docia Jackson
Alice Johns
Gary Johnson
Mark and Beth Johnson
Amy and Anthony Jones
Jane Kalmes
Deanna Kennedy
Emily and Sean Kerwin
Beverley Ketel
Gerhard Knothe
John Kolmer
John Lamb
Emily and Frank Landers
Jeff Leman

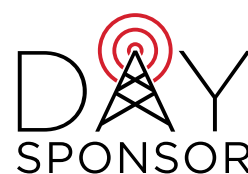
Marilyn and John Leyland
Brenda Macke
Eugene Maison
Eugene Maki
Karen Mattheessen and Tim
Bueter
Linda and Brooks McDaniel
Faye McMullen
Annette and Dale Messmore
Rick Miller
Ronald Mixer
Donna Moore
William More
Gurudutt Nayak
Eugenia and Alexius Olson

Anne Patterson
George and Connie Pogue
Edward Rainville
Michael Render
Gerard and Elizabeth Rickert
Clarence Robinson
Connie Romanus
Heather Rouleau
Donald Schwingel
William Semmens
Mark and Sharon Shipley
Cynthia and Clifford Shoff
Cheryl and Andrew Shull
Greg A. and Stacy E. Smith
Evan Stumpges

Edward Tarbuck
Jill Terry
Scott and Jessica Thompson
Andrea Tognetti
Ann Turner
Julia Veir
Adam Very
Andrea Wackerle
Anne Warth
Rosemary Weber
Sharon Windsor
Marilyn Worley
Michael Yoder
Albert Zeller

Thank you to the nearly 100 contributors who supported WCBU at the Day Sponsor level, giving at least \$365 this year. Celebrate the 2021 Day Sponsors and see their messages at WCBU.org.

Please contact WCBU Contributor Services with additions or corrections at (309) 438-3581 or contributorservices@illinoisstate.edu.



2021 WCBU Underwriters

AAA
Laurie Adams—COUNTRY Financial Representative
Ameren
American Theatre Guild
Art Inc.
Ballet 5:8
Bradley University Theatre Dept.
Broadway Lounge
Busey Bank
CEFCU
Center for Prevention of Abuse
Center for Youth and Family Services
Chillicothe Public Library District
City of Peoria
CityLink
Contemporary Art Center
Corn Stock Theatre
General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport
East Peoria Farmer's Market
Easterseals Central Illinois
Essig Law Office
Festival 56
Five Points Washington
The Frame Works
Levitt Amp Galva Music Series
Jay Goldberg Events

Greater Peoria Economic Development Council
Green Leaf Senior Living
GROWMARK
Heartland Festival Orchestra
IL Prairie District Public Library
Illinois Farm Bureau
Illinois Secretary of State's Office
Illinois Symphony Orchestra
Kidder Music
Aaron Kilgor—State Farm Agent
Mackinaw Valley Vineyard
Nova Singers
Obed and Issacs
OSF Healthcare
Peoria Academy
Peoria Area Civic Chorale
Peoria Art Guild
Peoria Ballet
Peoria City Council
Peoria City/County Health Department
Peoria Fine Arts Society
Peoria Riverfront Museum
Peoria Symphony Orchestra
Springdale Cemetery
Turner Center for Entrepreneurship
Universalist Unitarian Church
Unland Companies
Up Beet Jams & Black Dog Metal Arts
David Vaughan Investments, Inc.
Westminster Presbyterian Church



"Objective journalism is more important today than it has been for a very long time. It's good business to support the people who are trying to keep our public educated and thinking about the big questions."

COUNTRY Financial agent Laurie Adams, CFP®



wcbupeoria@IllinoisState.edu

Main office
(309) 438-2255