

Interlochen Public Radio
Issues/Program narrative – 2024, Q1 (January, February, March)
By Ed Ronco, news director
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Environment reporting remained strong, and political reporting got busier in the first quarter of 2024, ahead of a presidential primary in the state, and looking ahead to the election year as a whole.

Below, find a summary of our coverage grouped by topic. If you have questions, please contact us at jpr@interlochen.org, with the subject line “Attn. News Director.”

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

Our series “Fresh Coast Creatives” made big contributions to arts coverage through a series of profiles of artists here in northern Michigan.

Recreation made news, too, but for all the wrong reasons — a warmer-than-usual winter wreaked havoc on our winter activities economy.

And we spent some time with the combined choirs of Traverse City Central and West high schools.

Environment and Agriculture

Our newsroom has a heavy focus on environmental coverage, including climate change, natural resources and agriculture.

Through our partnership with Grist, we continued ongoing coverage of climate solutions — from restaurants getting into large-scale food composting, to food digesters, to churches adding solar panels to the roof as a way to save money, but also as a way to display one of the central tenets of their faith.

Points North continued its excellence through podcast work on issues like deer sterilization, wolves, and invasive turtles.

We also looked at CAFO farms, the environment’s impact on outdoor recreation, whitefish, research into microplastics and the cherry crop.

Medicine and Health

Intrigue on a local board of health came to a head this quarter. There were also ongoing efforts in Lansing to shore up abortion rights in Michigan.

Education

A new partnership promised to expand nursing education in our region, we looked into spending on an investigation after a scuffle at a local college, and a cybersecurity problem shut down schools in our region's largest district, on April 1 — no joke.

Business and Economy

The governor paid a visit to northern Michigan in January, speaking about childcare and housing at a conference of business leaders.

We also focused a lot on housing — efforts to offer more of it across the region, namely. Plus, we had a couple stories on the impact of a major road construction project on area businesses.

Politics and Government

We continue to receive routine and excellent coverage from the Michigan Public Radio Network's two correspondents in Lansing.

Closer to home a local sheriff announced his retirement and immediately endorsed a successor. Michigan Public provided a series ahead of the presidential primary on issues important to Michiganders, and there was much drama accompanying the presidential primary, especially on the Republican side where one of the key questions was "Who's leading our party?"

Race, Identity and Culture

We heard a solemn story about the Burt Lake Band's 1900 massacre. The story also was shared with National Native News early in the second quarter.

There was an interview about covering a cult, and the journalistic ethics of telling their story.

And Points North even took us into the woods looking for an urban legend of sorts.