



2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

*"OPB contributes to a more educated,
just, and democratic society."*

– Marilyn, Corvallis



OPB is an independent, nonprofit media organization serving communities all across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. Powered by the generous support of members, OPB provides trusted journalism and programs that are freely accessible to everyone. For more than 100 years, OPB has connected people in our region through the power of a shared story.

Our team of journalists deliver in-depth reporting and storytelling from across the region, from Southwest Washington to Southern Oregon. Our trusted reporting, award-winning stories and insightful programs can be accessed anywhere, at any time on [opb.org](https://www.opb.org), OPB radio and TV, the OPB app, social media, streaming video, podcasts or our email newsletters. It's easy to stay connected to the news and stories that matter.

Guided by a pursuit of truth, a spirit of curiosity, with equity and public service at the center of our work – and made possible by the financial support of our members – we seek diverse voices to help us tell the stories that bring our region together. Stories that define who we are, what we do, where we live and where we're going.



In 2023, delivering reliable and accessible news, information and programs was more critical than ever. OPB expanded its in-depth and insightful storytelling and reporting about the diverse communities that call this region home.

News

OPB delivers local and regional news coverage daily, along with deep investigative reporting. Some of our major news series and initiatives in 2023 include:

- Continued coverage of the region's public school system as part of OPB's "Class of 2025" project, which started in 2012 after the [state set a goal](#) of 100 percent graduation by 2025. This year, we checked in on high school sophomores in "[Class of 2025: Sophomore Year](#)," a video documentary that explores how students are managing their physical and mental health in a post-pandemic world.
- An in-depth reporting and event series (see more on page 5) examining the biggest social and economic challenges facing Oregon today, including Oregon's deepening [drug crisis](#), the state's extreme [housing shortage](#), the urgent need for [mental health care access](#) and more.
- Extensive coverage of the [Portland Public School teachers' strike](#), which lasted more than three weeks and left more than [40,000 students out of school](#).
- Comprehensive reporting and analysis around the critical issue of homelessness in the region, including the newly imposed camping bans in [Portland](#) and [Central Oregon](#), along with how homelessness became a [statewide crisis](#) and [possible solutions](#) to this critical issue.

We also delivered our daily email newsletter "First Look," giving readers convenient access to the most important news and culture stories right in their inbox. The weekly "OPB Politics Now" podcast also continued to deliver to its online and mobile subscribers, taking a deep dive into the region's hottest political topics. Every Friday, OPB reporters and special guests offer in-depth analysis, discussion and insight into local government, legislative activity, events and issues.

In 2023, OPB continued playing a central role in the regional news ecosystem with our Northwest News Partnership, which brings together news coverage from more than 50 news organizations across Oregon and Washington. We also continued work on several national content partnerships, including participation in the ProPublica Local Reporting Network for local and regional investigative journalism.

"**Think Out Loud®**," an engaging OPB original daily radio program and podcast, has established itself as the centerpiece of our region's coverage of politics and civic and cultural life.

The show explores issues, ideas, culture and news and encourages people with different perspectives to discuss various topics with one another.

In 2023, "Think Out Loud":

- Began an ongoing series about people at work in all kinds of professions, including the skills, craft and tools it takes for people to do their work, along with how folks ended up in their jobs and how these positions change others. In 2023, they spent time with Oregon Zoo's head [veterinarian](#) Dr. Carlos Sanchez, an [accordion repair](#) person known as the Squeezebox Surgeon, and master [distiller](#) Molly Troupe of Portland's Freeland Spirits, just to name a few.
- Brought nostalgia to listeners when they met with the [new owner of "The Goonies" house](#) (and superfan), who wants to make sure that the public still has access to the Astoria, Oregon landmark.
- Talked to [Elliott Hinkle](#) and [Mel Jory-Heywood](#) about their efforts to encourage more people to become foster parents with the focus on providing LGBTQIA+ youth loving, affirming and culturally competent homes.
- Connected with creatives from around the region, including: photographer [Matika Wilbur](#), who sold everything in her Seattle apartment in 2012 and set off to document the 562 federally recognized Indigenous tribes in the country; Vietnamese American chef [Richard Văn Lê](#), whose content network makes videos of BIPOC food creators in Portland; and Seattle-based writer, podcaster and YouTuber, [Matt Baume](#), who focuses on how pop culture has shaped the lives of queer people.

Science & Environment

OPB's Science & Environment team unites all of OPB's collective resources — digital, radio and TV — to deliver the most comprehensive science and environment stories unfolding in our own backyards.

Last year, our team of reporters investigated the ways both climate change and the federal government are affecting the vital fish populations around the region, like the continued funding threat facing [Columbia River salmon hatcheries](#); why the [size of salmon](#) might be getting smaller; and how the shortening of the [Ocean Chinook salmon fishing](#) season could help the fish population to rebound from ongoing drought. They also uncovered how the upcoming [removal of four dams](#) along the Klamath River may eliminate recreational opportunities, but will also reopen hundreds of miles of salmon habitat that could be a lifeline for the threatened fish vital to the area's Native American population.

OPB's digital video series "All Science. No Fiction." celebrated the innovative science coming from our region, including how the [3D printing](#) of LEGO-like blocks can reconstruct bone and how the creation of a [bionic eye](#) will help restore people's sight. They learned how the region's most active [deep-sea volcano](#) may predict future volcanic eruptions, along with how testing [soil microbes in space](#) could lead to permanent settlements on the Moon and beyond. They also discovered a [robot](#) that keeps vineyards safe from pests and a new honey-based sustainable [computing technology](#).

OPB producers and photographers also took time to remind viewers of the beauty and wonders of our region through our flagship program "**Oregon Field Guide**." For 35 years, this award-winning OPB original television series has delivered smart and informed coverage of environmental, geological, ecological and outdoor recreation topics, while providing audiences a window into the beauty of the Northwest.

Last year, "Field Guide" producers took viewers on memorable journeys across the region, including to the prairies of Northeast Oregon to meet two sisters taking over their family [bison ranch](#); and to the coast, where one woman facilitates [surfing retreats with tribes](#) to build community and reconnect with the ocean. They visited Gloria Michelle, also known as the "[Colorful Cowgirl](#)," who puts a personal twist into a four-generation family tradition. They also traveled all the way to Alaska to join one Oregon team as they competed in the [World Ice Carving Championships](#).

Arts & Culture

OPB's arts and culture reporting features the latest in visual arts, theater, music, literature, culture and more. In 2023, we chronicled the myriad of cultural events that happen around the state, like the annual [garlic festival](#) in North Plains, Oregon and a [mosquito festival](#) in rural Oregon that has been running for nearly 40 years. The team celebrated the diversity of cultures when they explored stories from [queer individuals across generations](#), learned about a new exhibit that explores [Indigiqueer history](#) in the Pacific Northwest, and visited a Portland garden for [African refugee growers](#) that provides African foods and cultural connection.

We also celebrated one of the region's favorite pastimes: food and drink. We uncovered how the [booze-free movement](#) is thriving in our own backyard; we met Sam Rollins of Cowbell Cheese Shop in Portland, who took home second place in the [world's best cheese monger competition](#) —the highest an American has ever finished; and we shed light on the [steep cost of production for coffee beans](#). Our food series "Superabundant" also launched new episodes and continued delivering its weekly email newsletter, diving into local ingredients and seeking to understand the histories of regional food systems (see more on page 4).

"**Oregon Art Beat**," another of our award-winning original television series, has been profiling artists, musicians and artisans from around the region for 25 years. Show producers and crew have traveled extensively to capture the eclectic mix of creative talent in the Northwest. The program features on-location reporting and thematic episodes.

Last year, "Art Beat" met mother and daughter [LaRhonda and Lauren Steele](#), who have both blazed their own successful paths in the world of music and theater. We traveled to Eastern Oregon to the [Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts](#), a world-class studio located on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation focused on contemporary printmaking, professional artist residencies and Indigenous Arts workshops. "Art Beat" producers also learned how a hula halau based out of Eugene, Oregon is committed to creating a space that teaches [Hawaiian culture through hula dance](#).

The team also studied the region's food culture: they met Gena Renaud, who creates [Japanese confections called wagashi](#). They experienced how [food photographer](#) Isabella Cassini's work took a new creative turn during the pandemic, and they visited Megan Sanchez's Portland restaurant [Güero](#), which draws from her Mexican and Egyptian heritage to create the menu and the ambiance.

"**Oregon Experience**" is OPB's original history series that explores the past while informing our shared future. The multi-platform series reveals the full complexity of the Northwest's ancient past to the modern era. It tells the diverse and rigorously-researched narratives of the people of this region in fresh and authentic ways. Co-produced with the Oregon Historical Society, the series draws upon the Society's skilled researchers and extensive image archive.

Last year, "Oregon Experience" premiered two new documentaries. They profiled [Marie Equi](#), who was among the pioneering female physicians in Oregon during the early 1900s. Equi focused on the health of women and children and championed reproductive rights and civil liberties for all. The team also uncovered Oregon's history with government-funded [poor farms](#), which became a refuge for the elderly, people with disabilities or anyone unable to care for themselves. Some poor farms provided residents with a home, while others operated more like prisons (see more on page 4).

KMHD Jazz Radio is a member-supported radio station showcasing the best of the jazz without boundaries. Operated by OPB and licensed to Mount Hood Community College, KMHD has been a staple of the Portland jazz scene for the last 40 years.

KMHD champions jazz performances and education to ensure that this uniquely American art form continues to thrive in our region and beyond. In 2023, KMHD interviewed local artists, supported various partnerships and sponsored events including the PDX Jazz Festival, Cathedral Park Jazz Festival and Montavilla Jazz Festival.

“Starting a Riot” Podcast

In 2023, OPB launched a new podcast in collaboration with She Shreds media called “Starting a Riot.” It digs into the history of the feminist punk rock movement, riot grrrl, born in the Pacific Northwest thirty years ago. The six-part series explores how this underground music scene combining feminism, punk music, culture and politics created by women was a new form of expression, while also examining the intersections of race, gender, punk music, activism and zines. This podcast highlights untold stories in riot grrrl history, including the often-overlooked contributions of BIPOC and queer musicians, featuring dozens of notable artists, like Tobi Vail from Bikini Kill, Corin Tucker of Heavens to Betsy and Sleater-Kinney; Wendy Yao from Emily’s Sassy Lime, Katherine Paul of Black Belt Eagle Scout and many others.



“Superabundant” Food Series

OPB’s “Superabundant” digital food series returned in 2023 with both weekly email newsletters and new videos. The newsletter dives deeper into the region’s food culture and history, from learning how to start a [vegetable garden](#) and reminiscing about [Oregon’s centennial celebration](#) to all things [holiday eating](#) and much more. Launched in the fall of 2022, the newsletter has proven to be a delight with our audiences around the region. It is delivered to more than 4,800 people. New video episodes highlighted ingredients that sustain the Northwest. In 2023, we followed [Dungeness crab](#) from underwater meadows to the dinner plate. We explored how Oregon’s unique [soils](#) also help give character to [Chardonnay](#). We learned why Oregon is a [strawberry](#) paradise, and why [corn](#) could represent Oregon’s future. And, we examined the complex relationship between humans and [psilocybin mushrooms](#).



“Oregon’s County Poor Farms” Documentary

In November 2023, OPB’s history series “Oregon Experience” released a new documentary called “Oregon’s County Poor Farms.” In 1854, Oregon’s Territorial government required counties to care for their poorest citizens, who were often sent to government-funded relief institutions. These farms provided food, shelter, medical care and sometimes burial services. In addition to the film, OPB hosted a free screening event including a Q&A with the show’s producer. Held in Troutdale, Oregon at former poor farm McMenamin’s Edgefield, there was a full house with nearly 90 people in attendance. Community members had the opportunity to learn about the little-known history of how Oregon once cared for its poor.





Community Engagement: OPB In-person Events Resume in 2023

In 2023, OPB resumed hosting a number of in-person events after a hiatus due to COVID-19.

OPB journalists investigated the region's pressing issues with a series of events called "Oregon Solutions" in partnership with the Oregon Community Foundation. These events focused on the state's biggest social and economic challenges and crises — their origins, impacts and possible solutions.

- In March, OPB traveled to Tigard, Oregon for a live conversation about [youth mental health](#).
- Journalists went to Salem, Oregon in June to talk about the Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde's [Great Circle Recovery program](#).
- In July, OPB went to Beaverton, Oregon to talk about the [state's housing affordability crisis](#).
- In September, OPB heard from a temporary housing development of small cottages for people experiencing homelessness in Eugene, Oregon called [Everyone Village](#).
- In December, OPB held a discussion in Gresham, Oregon about childcare in Multnomah County — and how the voter-passed [Preschool for All program](#) is working.

The OPB Arts & Culture team met influential creatives and local heroes across the Northwest.

- OPB's "Think Out Loud" held live tapings with a variety of influential individuals and local heroes. In January, the team visited students at McDaniel High School for a conversation with author [Lauren Groff](#). In April, they talked to U.S. Poet Laureate [Ada Limón](#), and in May, they had a conversation with German scientist [Peter Wohlleben](#). They also travelled to John Day, Oregon, where they met folks who run [Malheur Lumber Company](#).

- In April, our "Superabundant" team attended the Jazzy Nights event in Portland, Oregon, where the "Chardonnay" episode was screened.
- OPB's "Oregon Art Beat" team showed their work around the state: in May, they attended the Pacific Northwest Ball-Jointed Doll Expo to screen a feature about local doll artist [Allison Wonder](#), and in September, they traveled to Enterprise, Oregon to screen their episode profiling the historic [OK Theater](#).
- In August, OPB staff and volunteers attended the inaugural Vancouver Arts & Music Festival, where they had a booth showcasing OPB's latest "Superabundant" and "Oregon Art Beat" work.
- Our "Oregon Experience" team shed light on the region's important history. In March, they joined the Oregon Statewide Transition Conference for a free, public screening of "[In the Shadow of Fairview](#)." In October, the team screened "[Murder on the Southern Pacific](#)" in honor of the 100th anniversary of the infamous train robbery. And in November, they hosted a free, public screening of their new documentary "[Oregon's County Poor Farms](#)" (see more on page 4).



OPB's Science & Environment team talked about important issues facing the region.

- Science & Environment reporter [Monica Samayoa](#) hosted a conversation at Powell's Books with author Jake Bittle in April to discuss climate migration; and then with climate scientist Michael Mann in October.
- OPB's "All Science. No Fiction" team was part of the "Science on Tap" event in January to offer fans a behind-the-scenes look at the digital series. They also participated in a Q&A at the Science Talk conference in April.
- OPB's documentary "[Wy-Kan-Ush-Pum \(Salmon People\): A Native Fishing Family's Fight to Preserve a Way of Life](#)" also made its way across Oregon. In April, the team hosted a screening event in partnership with ProPublica in The Dalles. And in November, they joined ProPublica, Ecotrust and the Confluence Project to co-host a free, public screening event that explored the connection between Native peoples, places and species unique to the Pacific Northwest. "Salmon People" was one of four featured films of the evening.



OPB Marks 100 Years of Service with New Mission, Vision and Values

In 2023, OPB celebrated 100 years of service in the Northwest. What started as a physics department experiment in AM radio from the campus of Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) has become an essential public service, providing critical, fact-based news, information and inspiring programs to the entire region.

Over the last century, OPB has called the Northwest home and shared stories that have shaped the region's history. Today, because of strong member support, these stories are freely accessible to everyone in more ways – online, on digital streaming platforms, on social media and on the OPB mobile app – in addition to radio and TV.

As OPB embarks on its second century of service, it does so with a new mission, vision and organizational values to steadfastly guide its public service – all driven by the power of a shared story.

“OPB is a great source of news, information, thoughtful programing, laughter, insights, and even more. How could I not support such an excellent source of information and entertainment!”

– Albert, Portland

OPB Mission

Connecting people across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest through the power of a shared story.

OPB Vision

Trusted journalism, accessible to all – enriching lives and strengthening communities.

OPB Values

- Pursuit of Truth
- Public Service
- Equity
- Accessibility
- Curiosity

OPB by the Numbers

OPB reaches an average of more than **1 million people** per week in Oregon and southern Washington on OPB TV and OPB Radio combined; and OPB reaches on average over **229,000 viewers** per month on streaming apps and over **425,000 viewers** per month on YouTube.

OPB.org averages **1.9 million** page views per month, including **1 million** monthly average users; and, across platforms, OPB averages more than **1.9 million** live audio streams from over **185,000 unique users** per month.

OPB is generously supported by more than **159,000 members** who provide nearly two-thirds of our funding.

OPB's weekly e-newsletter "OPB Insider" connects its more than **65,000 active subscribers** to all things related to OPB content and community, while our daily e-newsletter "First Look" serves more than **23,000 subscribers** with an average daily open rate of 60 percent.

OPB has more than **179,000 Facebook** fans, **37,000 Instagram** followers and **90,000 YouTube** subscribers.

OPB resumed in-person volunteer opportunities in 2023 while also continuing remote and virtual opportunities. Last year, **160 volunteers** donated more than **7,800 hours** of service to OPB.