



2019 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



“More than ever, I rely on OPB's comprehensive and unbiased reporting to inform me of the day's events and the rich variety of entertainment that renews my spirit.”

– Debra, Cornelius

OPB: giving voice to the community, connecting Oregon and its neighbors, illuminating a wider world.



OPB serves our community with public service journalism that connects us to the rich and important stories of our region—stories that would not be told elsewhere. We provide in-depth, trusted news and award-winning stories that can be accessed anywhere, at any time on OPB TV, OPB Radio, opb.org and on digital and social media.

OPB places special emphasis on creating content that features the people, places and issues of importance to those in the Northwest. Our newsroom expands across the region, from southern Washington to southern Oregon, to deliver in-depth reporting in news, arts and culture; and science and environment.

OPB is a nationally recognized leader in public media, providing news, information and entertainment to the Northwest. With award-winning journalists and original series, we engage with communities across our region to spark conversation, connection and further exploration about what it means to live in this place we call home.



In 2019, we focused our storytelling and reporting in three major areas: news; science and the environment; and arts and culture.

News

Comprised of a seasoned staff of journalists across Oregon and southern Washington, OPB delivers local and regional news coverage daily, along with deep investigative reporting. As public service journalists, our team provides the facts to enable people to make their own informed decisions about their lives and communities. Some of our major news series and initiatives from 2019 include:

- “Booked And Buried”—a deep investigation into county jail deaths across Oregon and Washington. This never-before-done joint reporting from OPB, KUOW and the Northwest News Network revealed that in the past decade, more than 300 people have died while incarcerated. In most cases, the people were still awaiting trial.
- “Out Of State, Out Of Mind,” a monthslong investigation by OPB Reporter Lauren Dake, revealed that Oregon’s child welfare office had no centralized way to monitor and ensure the safety of children who’d been sent out of state. The report detailed a litany of disturbing outcomes: tales of abuse, neglect and vulnerable children left to fend for themselves.
- Several national content partnerships, including: participation in the ProPublica Local Reporting Network for local and regional investigative journalism; the continuation of “Guns in America,” a two-year reporting collaborative; “Sharing America,” a public radio collaborative at the intersection of race, identity and culture; and the second season of the nationally acclaimed podcast series “Bundyville,” a co-production with Longreads (see page 5 for details).

In 2019, OPB continued to deliver our daily email newsletter, “OPB First Look,” giving readers convenient access to important news and culture stories they want right in their inbox. OPB also 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.

The weekly “OPB Politics Now” podcast continued to deliver to its online and mobile subscribers, taking a deep dive into the hottest political topics in the Northwest. Every Friday, OPB’s reporters and special guests offer in-depth analysis, discussion and insight into candidates, events and issues.

“**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 2019, “Think Out Loud”:

- Visited Coffee Creek Correctional Facility—Oregon’s only women’s prison—and spoke with women who are transforming their lives through a special 10-week “Insight into Well-being” program offered by an organization called The Insight Alliance.
- Discussed how to have difficult conversations with children with four experts who regularly deal with difficult topics with kids in different professional contexts. Taped in front of a live audience, the event was coordinated with Children’s Center, which aims to prevent child abuse.
- Sat down with four local leaders to discuss the challenges of being a non-white woman in public office and the impact women of color have on politics in Oregon.

Science & Environment

OPB’s **Science & Environment** team unites all of OPB’s collective resources—online, on OPB Radio and on OPB TV—to deliver the most comprehensive and consequential science and environment stories unfolding in our own backyards.

In 2019, the Science & Environment team produced several enterprising investigations. Their reporting revealed how a Portland petroleum terminal was quietly expanding its capacity to unload rail cars carrying crude oil. Reports also exposed the way flame-retardant spray foam used by firefighters and airfield crews was seeping into the groundwater in Portland, threatening to contaminate the Columbia River and city drinking water. The team explored little-understood ways that plastic is entering our ecosystem, serving as ocean-crossing rafts for invasive creatures and polluting Oregon’s most pristine rivers with microplastics. Throughout the year, our reporters garnered national attention as their stories were carried by NPR, AP and other national and regional reporting outlets.

“**Oregon Field Guide**” is an award-winning OPB original television series delivering 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 a search for the Great Grey Owl, one of the most elusive species in the Northwest woods; an exploration of the Rogue River in home-built wooden dories; and a journey underwater with Dr. Jane Lubchenco for a visual showcase of colorful creatures living in our coastal tide pools.

In February, “Field Guide” dedicated an entire episode to the issue of plastic pollution in our rivers and oceans, and brought awareness to an effort that is effectively ridding our beaches of tons of plastic waste.



Arts & Culture

“State of Wonder,” OPB’s weekly arts and culture radio show, features interviews and reporting on the latest in visual arts, theater, music, literature, culture and more. It brings audiences the week’s show-stopping stories, ideas and must-see happenings; and has frank conversations about the economic, social and political currents shaping the creative economy.

In 2019, “State of Wonder” featured a range of arts topics and voices, including: what it’s like to live with musical anhedonia; the overlooked and intersecting worlds of guns and design and their influence in the debate over gun policy; and the evolving standards of who and what is included in the world of art.

“State of Wonder” has distinguished itself as a leader in arts coverage of statewide, culture-shifting events. In February, producers broke the news on The Oregon College of Art and Craft closing its doors. In the eastern part of the state, they visited Enterprise, Oregon, to cover the OK Theater turning 100.

At Design Week Portland in April, Host April Baer led a panel discussion with Native designers and makers to explore how Native style gets used—and often misused—in graphic design, fashion and other disciplines. It was one of the most-talked-about conversations at the event, and was shared widely online immediately following.

“Oregon Art Beat,” another of our award-winning original television series, profiles artists, musicians and artisans from around the region. Show producers and crew have traveled extensively to capture the eclectic mix of creative talent in the Northwest. The program features on location reporting, thematic episodes and music videos from popular local artists.

Last year, “Art Beat” took viewers into the guitar shop with luthier Jeffrey Elliot, explored the masterful work and process of celebrated Warm Springs weaver Kelli Palmer, and featured the evocative landscapes of abstract painter and recent Guggenheim Fellow Stephen Hayes.

“Art Beat” producers also adapted their 2018 documentary about the life and work of abstract painter Mark Rothko for national TV release. In association with THIRTEEN’s “American Masters” for WNET, they co-produced the one-hour film “Rothko: Pictures Must Be Miraculous.” In October, it was accepted into and screened at the 16th Annual BendFilm Festival in Bend, Oregon. That same month, WNET presented the film’s East Coast premiere at the Museum of Modern Art theatre in New York City before an audience of 200. The New York event featured a panel discussion with producers and Rothko’s children that was recorded and featured by WNET in a special edition of the “American Masters” podcast.

“Oregon Experience” is an OPB original television history series that explores Oregon’s rich past and helps all of us—from natives to newcomers—gain a better understanding of the historical, social and political fabric of our state. Co-produced with the Oregon Historical Society, the series draws upon the Society’s

skilled researchers and extensive photography and moving-image archives. The program also incorporates OPB’s own film and video resources and the expertise of some of Oregon’s finest historians. Each episode features captivating characters—both familiar and forgotten—who have played key roles in building our state.

Last year, “Oregon Experience” chronicled the history of African Americans who helped shape the state in “Oregon’s Black Pioneers” (see page 4 for details), and the complex story of Oregon’s Japanese American community from its early pioneer beginnings to its forced incarceration during World War II. In advance of the TV premiere of “Oregon’s Japanese Americans,” OPB with the Oregon Nikkei Endowment held a public screening event in Portland that included a panel discussion and Q&A.

Also in 2019, “Oregon Experience” explored the little known histories of “Fern Hobbs and the Snake River Showdown” and central Oregon’s role as a NASA astronaut training ground. In December, “Oregon’s Moon Country” premiered at a public screening event at the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon, where the film’s producer and others held a panel discussion and community Q&A for an audience of 120.

At **opbmusic.org**, listeners can stream audio from our 24/7 music channel, join conversations, find interviews, hear new music, read reviews of concerts and albums, and watch video premieres and performances of hundreds of studio and sound-check sessions.

In 2019, opbmusic partnered with venues and studios around Portland to record sessions in the community, with artists that included local acts Y La Bamba, Anna Tivell, bed.; rising indie rock bands Hop Along and Frankie Cosmos; and a video feature about Portland folk artist Marisa Anderson and her creative process, filmed at central Oregon’s pristine Suttle Lake Lodge.

Among its major partnerships, opbmusic joined Oregon City Brewing to host the second annual “Rocktoberfest,” a free, day-long concert in September. opbmusic also continued its ongoing partnerships with community radio station KMUZ-FM, where listeners can hear opbmusic on terrestrial radio overnight, and nonprofit digital music video service VuHaus. Last year, VuHaus became integrated with NPR Music’s website under the “Live Sessions” banner—livesessions.npr.org/happening/portland—where all of opbmusic’s recent sessions and more than 200 other opbmusic videos can be viewed.

KMHD Jazz Radio is a community radio station showcasing the best of the jazz spectrum. Operated by OPB and licensed to Mount Hood Community College, KMHD has been a staple of the Portland jazz scene for the last 36 years. KMHD champions jazz performances and education to ensure that this uniquely American art form continues to thrive in our region.

In 2019, KMHD interviewed local artists, and supported various partner festivals, projects and initiatives including: the PDX Jazz, Cathedral Park, Montavilla Jazz and Soul’d Out music festivals; PDX Jazz’s education initiative “Jazz in the Schools;” and a co-production with YGB Portland.

"Country Music:" A Conversation With Ken Burns & Julie Dunfey

In July, OPB hosted documentary filmmakers Ken Burns and Julie Dunfey for a preview event and live conversation about their documentary film series "Country Music."

The sold-out Portland event drew an audience of nearly 800 people, and featured highlights from the documentary followed by a discussion with both filmmakers led by OPB. The conversation later aired on OPB's arts and culture radio show "State of Wonder" in conjunction with the film's premiere broadcast in September.



"Oregon Experience: Oregon's Black Pioneers"

In February, OPB premiered a new historical documentary that explores the largely unknown history of African Americans who helped shape the state of Oregon. This half-hour "Oregon Experience" film chronicled the many stories of black pioneers, detailing how the earliest black Oregonians lived, worked and built communities despite the racist laws of white settlers who tried to force them out.

That month, OPB partnered with Oregon Black Pioneers, The Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State University and The High Desert Museum to host community screening events for the film across the state. Free and open to the public, the events featured the documentary and a panel Q&A with special guests.



Breaking The Silence: Shining A Light On Oregon's Suicide Crisis

In April, more than 30 news organizations across Oregon joined to highlight the public health crisis of death by suicide, which took the lives of more than 800 Oregonians in 2018. With OPB serving as the editorial coordinator, the "Breaking The Silence" project examined research into how prevention can work, while actively offering readers, listeners and viewers resources to help those in crisis. OPB's coordination helped participating media outlets use a common set of data and avoid duplication.

More than 70 stories, reaching millions of people, appeared in news outlets spanning the urban-rural divide: small-town papers; news websites; television and radio stations; on social media and online at breakingthesilenceor.com. The project was cited by legislators as pivotal in securing millions of dollars for additional suicide prevention work, and a national version is being explored based on this model.





“Bundyville: The Remnant” Podcast

In July, OPB and Longreads launched the second season of their nationally acclaimed podcast “Bundyville.”

Hosted by award-winning journalist Leah Sottile, “Bundyville: The Remnant” explores the world beyond the Bundy family and the armed uprisings they inspired. The series scrutinizes the radical violence that has come out of the anti-government movement and investigates who is inspiring that violence and who stands to benefit.

Coinciding with the podcast’s launch, OPB hosted a public event in Portland, where “Bundyville” co-producers Sottile and OPB’s Ryan Hass sat down with “Think Out Loud” Host Dave Miller for an in-depth conversation about the podcast’s second season, followed by a Q&A with the audience.

“Bundyville” Impact & Community Feedback

Since “Bundyville: The Remnant” was released, an independent investigation by a former FBI agent labeled Washington state Rep. Matt Shea—the subject of episode 5—as a threat for extremist violence due to his links with the Patriot Movement. The reporting from “Bundyville” (and past reporting from OPB) proved foundational to that report and was frequently cited in the footnotes. Washington state Republicans and others have said Shea should be removed from office, though Shea himself denies the allegations and has said he will not willingly step down.

People in the highest halls of power—such as Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison—have praised “Bundyville: The Remnant” as an important piece of journalism that brought a light to the shadowy world of domestic, far right terrorism.

“Bundyville” has garnered 3.6 million downloads since it first debuted in 2018, and listeners from across the country have said they now better understand the need to root out extremism in their own communities, and to talk about the warning signs of radicalization.

“Pulitzer-worthy journalism. This is the best, most-comprehensive investigative reporting I’ve read or listened to about the right-wing extremist movement in the Inland Northwest.”

– Apple Podcasts Review

“Thank you for the exceptional ‘Bundyville’ podcast, which I found to be one of the most illuminating and entertaining things I’ve heard in years. Well done.”

– Christopher T., Northfield, Minnesota

“Bundyville is an amazing piece of journalism.”

– Brian M., Spokane, Washington





Since 1922, OPB has provided an essential and accessible public service to communities across the Northwest. The role we play in providing news, information and educational content to our region is vital.

In 2019, OPB made several investments in staff, infrastructure and technology to help grow our public service for the future, and connected with the communities we serve in a number of ways:

- We continued to expand our team of seasoned journalists and added new reporters covering breaking news and business.
- We made significant upgrades to our headquarters facilities and technology enhancements to ensure the communities we serve have the greatest degree of access to our news and content.
- We enhanced the user experience for our daily email newsletter “First Look.” Subscribers can now receive personalized content based on topics of interest and location; and have the option to provide feedback about the newsletter. By delivering more of the news and culture stories our audience wants, we have grown our subscribers by 26 percent in the last year, and the newsletter has an open rate that is twice the industry average at 30 percent.



Information is everything, and OPB provides insightful, accurate, in-depth journalism.

— Ann, Portland

In a world of increasing polarization and vitriol, we rely on the calm voices at OPB. We love digging deep on news stories, hearing interviews with interesting people, and being entertained along the way.

— Steve, Vancouver

OPB provides one of the few available outlets for comprehensive and reliable information – locally, nationally, and internationally. It opens new avenues for entertainment and learning.

— Dan, Bend

OPB by the Numbers

OPB reaches an average of more than **one million people** per week in Oregon and southern Washington on OPB TV and OPB Radio combined.

OPB.org averages more than **1.6 million** page views per month, including an average of more than **one million** live audio streams per month.

OPB is generously supported by more than **150,000** members who provide nearly **two-thirds** of our funding.

OPB’s weekly e-newsletter “OPB Insider” connects its more than **62,000** active subscribers to all things related to OPB content and community, while our daily e-newsletter “OPB First Look” serves more than **14,000 subscribers**.

OPB has more than **168,000** OPB Facebook fans, **101,000** Twitter followers, **21,000** Instagram followers, and **14,200** YouTube subscribers.

Last year, nearly **300** volunteers donated more than **13,000** hours of service to OPB.