

# Missouri Public Affairs Summary

## Introduction

Broadcasters have a mandate to serve the public interest of the communities in which they operate. Given the diversity of communities in the United States, there is a multitude of needs which could be and are addressed over the public airwaves by broadcasters. Indeed, broadcasters are recognizably in a very unique position – every station in the country is a local station and very much a part of the community it is licensed to serve.

Public affairs activities are an integral part of broadcast stations' community involvement. Through public affairs activities, stations help increase awareness of issues that affect their audiences. Radio and television broadcasters invest both programming and non-programming time and efforts to educate and involve their communities. Programming activities include, but are not limited to, public service announcements wherein stations donate valuable commercial time for messages alerting the public about health threats and other issues. Stations also produce public affairs programs featuring in-depth discussions of problems and remedies. In addition to these programming efforts, broadcasters initiate or are involved in many activities and community groups aimed at educating and involving their communities.

While the ways in which broadcasters are involved in their communities may seem similar, every local broadcaster's efforts are different. Public service campaigns undertaken by stations nationwide integrate on-air and off-air efforts. Additionally, since each station cannot address every need of its given community as its top priority, stations each focus on different needs, thus addressing overall the diversity of issues within a community. In any given community, the local broadcasters' unique responses and approaches to the diversity of issues is also supplemented by major national efforts.

Our state association, in partnership with the National Association of Broadcasters, conducted a survey of television and radio stations in Missouri to determine the extent of station participation in public affairs activities. A variety of methodologies were employed to reach stations – with mail, fax, and Internet surveys sent out between January and April 2006. The response rate of Missouri broadcasters was 48%, as 15 of the 29 commercial television stations licensed to the state (52%) are represented in the data, as are 136 of the 286 radio stations (48%).

The census revealed that Missouri radio and television stations contributed approximately 219 million dollars worth of service to their communities during 2005. The data were collected, tabulated and analyzed by Public Opinion Strategies, an Alexandria, Virginia-based opinion research firm.

## **Donating Time, Raising Money, and Responding to Community Needs**

- Y Using mean figures to derive a per-station total, responding Missouri TV stations report running approximately 138 PSAs per week, with radio stations running 148. These figures combine all PSA spot times – from ten seconds or less up to 60 second PSAs. Using the reported rate charged for each of these spot lengths, these PSAs translate into a mean cumulative amount of \$1,362,816 a year per TV station responding, and \$336,808 per radio station responding.

The cumulative statewide totals based on these data show the total PSA value for Missouri TV stations as \$39,521,651 and \$96,327,062 for radio stations.

- Y All responding Missouri TV stations (100%) and nearly all responding radio stations (95%) say they help charities, charitable causes or needy individuals by fund-raising or offering some other support. The mean amount raised by these TV stations was \$360,829, with responding radio stations reporting a mean of \$136,673. The projected cumulative amounts for this charitable giving is \$10,464,041 for TV stations and \$37,134,054 for radio stations who conducted some fundraising during the time period examined.

- Y All responding Missouri TV stations (100%) and more than nine-in-ten responding radio stations (92%) were involved in either on-air campaigns – either through local news broadcasts, PSAs, or public affairs programming – or off-air activities to aid the victims of disasters. This is a sharp increase from the last survey, with considerable focus on this area by stations in light of the recent hurricanes in the southern United States and the tsunami relief efforts in Asia.

As one of the results of these efforts, TV broadcasters in the state reported raising \$27,346,594 in direct contributions or pledges related to disaster relief during 2005, while radio broadcasters reported raising \$7,847,291, for a projected cumulative amount of \$35,193,885.

- Y PSAs also focus largely on local issues. Among responding TV stations, respondents say that an average of 46% of PSA time is devoted to local issues; the percentage of PSAs devoted to local issues among responding radio stations was 63%.

## Broadcasters Addressing Important Topics

Y The following table examines some specific issues and the response by responding stations. As in previous years, broadcasters continue to devote time and resources to addressing important and relevant topics.

Each respondent was asked to respond whether their station aired PSAs, locally produced public affairs programs/segments (not including news broadcasts), or news segments on each of the following topic areas. The numbers here are the percentages of all state TV and radio stations who say they have addressed a particular topic through one of those methods:

Issue	TV			Radio		
	PSA	PA Program	News Segment	PSA	PA Program	News Segment
AIDS	27%	7%	67%	46%	21%	42%
Alcohol abuse	87%	27%	73%	81%	46%	56%
Adult educ./literacy	47%	20%	67%	74%	52%	63%
Anti-crime	87%	27%	87%	67%	51%	74%
Anti-smoking	80%	20%	60%	69%	43%	59%
Anti-violence	73%	27%	80%	69%	51%	70%
Breast cancer/other women's health	93%	47%	87%	79%	58%	73%
Children's issues	93%	60%	87%	79%	63%	74%
Drinking during pregnancy	27%	13%	40%	39%	24%	33%
Drunk driving	87%	20%	80%	80%	52%	70%
Drug use/abuse	87%	33%	80%	81%	54%	65%
Homeland security issues	47%	7%	67%	45%	37%	57%
Hunger/poverty/homelessness	73%	27%	87%	69%	51%	63%
Fund raising drives	93%	73%	93%	93%	79%	73%

## **Promoting Participation**

- Y More than half of responding Missouri TV stations (53%) and nearly two-thirds of responding radio stations (61%) report airing public affairs programs of at least 30 minutes in length.
  
- Y The leading topics of public service campaigns by Missouri broadcasters in 2005 included disaster relief, health and disease issues (such as cancer), national charities (such as Easter Seals, Goodwill, etc.), children's charities (such as Boys & Girls Clubs, Ronald McDonald House, etc.), poverty/hunger/homelessness, drunk driving and drug abuse, armed forces, animal welfare, and supporting local charities such as local schools and urban renewal.

## **Methodology Notes**

Continuing our participation on this project with the National Association of Broadcasters, a number of continued refinements were made from 2003, including questions asking specifically about disaster relief efforts related to the events of the past year. Market size and revenue data for stations was linked to survey data, allowing for more precise weighting and sample procedures.