

ABOUT PUBLIC MEDIA COMPANY

Public Media Company is a nonprofit consulting firm dedicated to serving public media. We leverage our business expertise to increase public media's impact across the country.



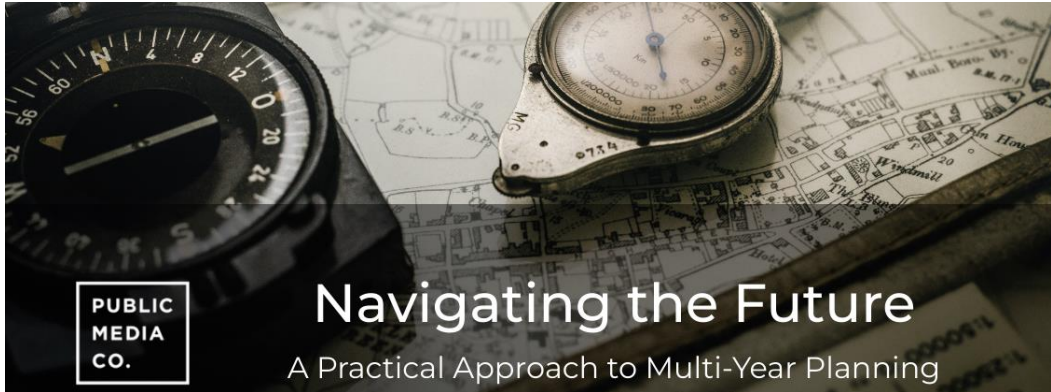
Public Media Company works in partnership with stations in urban and rural communities to find innovative solutions and grow local impact. We have worked with **over 375 public media organizations in all 50 states**

www.publicmedia.co

PUBLIC
MEDIA
CO.

Breaking the Mix

Navigating the Move to Single-
Format Radio



PUBLIC
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Navigating the Future

A Practical Approach to Multi-Year Planning



Broadband & \$42 Billion

What it Means for Public Media

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PMC WEBINARS



All Public Media Company webinars are
available for free. Check them out at:

www.publicmedia.co/webinars

ABOUT PUBLIC MEDIA CONTENT COLLECTIVE



The Public Media Content Collective is a membership organization that empowers public media content leaders, managers, and professionals to understand, serve, and grow their audiences within an increasingly complex and competitive multi-platform media landscape.

Their membership includes mission-driven media outlets and local radio stations in communities large and small, national networks, researchers, and professional content producers.

www.pmcc.org

WEBINAR LOGISTICS

1. All microphones are muted and cameras off
2. We welcome conversation – please use chat function to share questions and thoughts
3. Webinar being recorded and posted on PMC website:
www.publicmedia.co/webinars

Breaking the Mix:
Navigating the
Move to Single-
Format Radio

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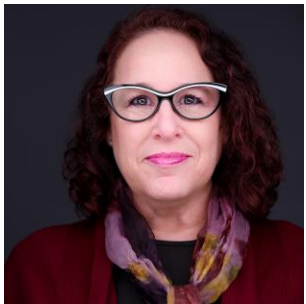
Breaking the Mix

Navigating the Move to Single-Format Radio

April 25, 2024

A Public Media Company webinar | www.publicmedia.co

WEBINAR PRESENTERS



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AGENDA

Mixed Format Stations Trends and Transitions

Public Media Content Collaborative & Public Media Company

Station Presentations

WVIK/Quad Cities NPR

New England Public Media

Q & A

PUBLIC RADIO SIGNALS BY FORMAT

997 SIGNALS
(excludes
translators)

Pop/Eclectic/Other Music
3 Percent of Total
35 Stations

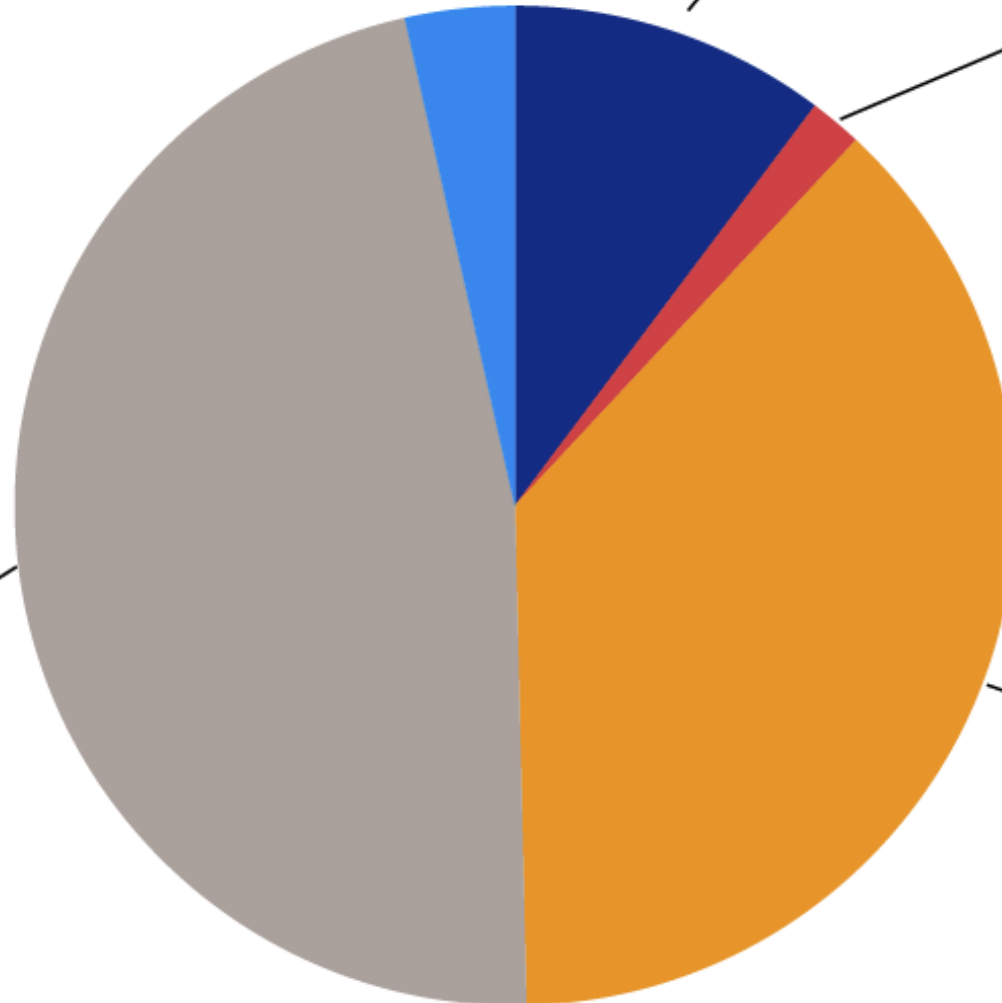
Classical
10 Percent of Total
102 Stations

Jazz
2 Percent of Total
17 Stations

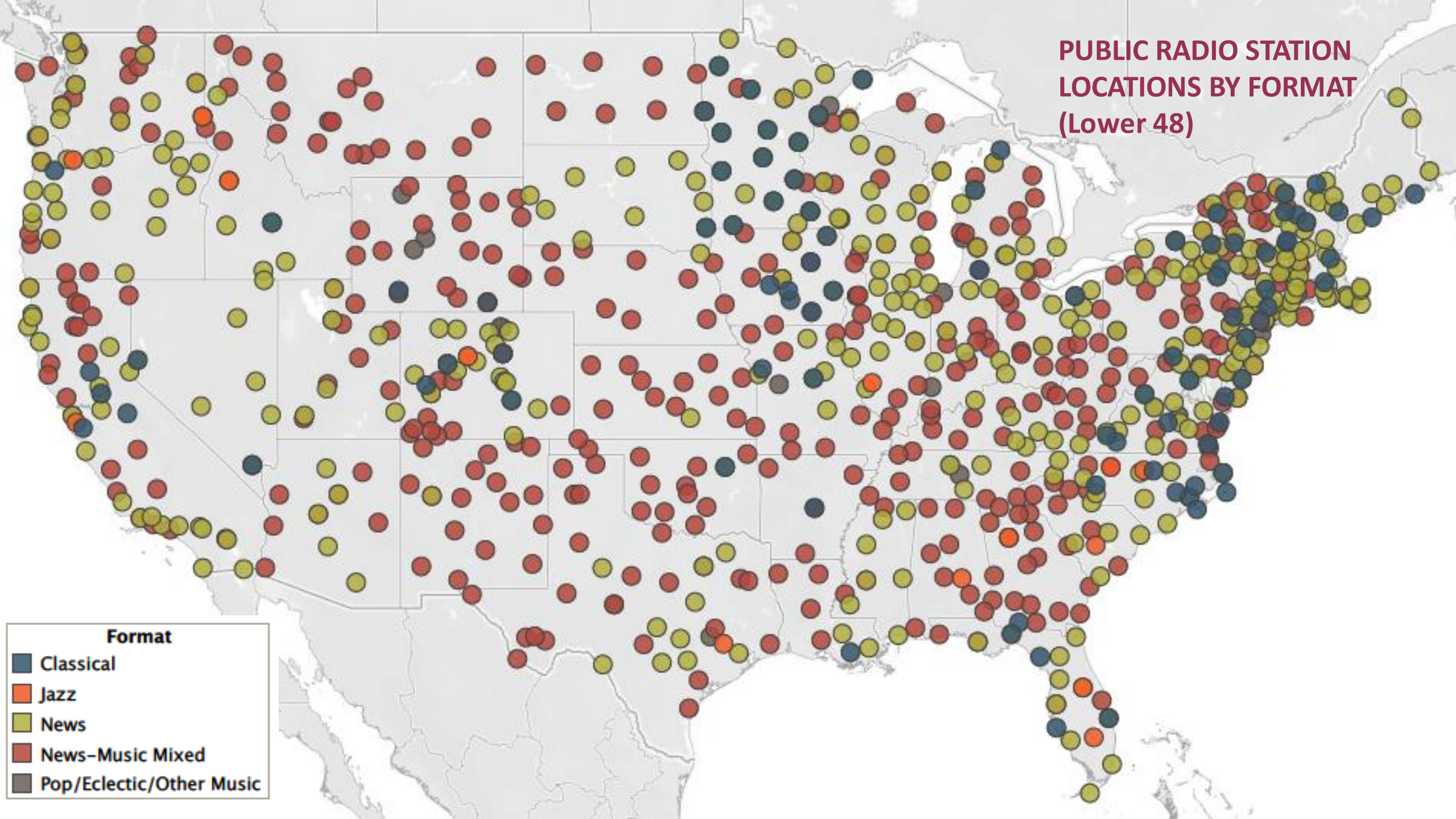
News-Music Mixed
47 Percent of Total
467 Stations

News
38 Percent of Total
376 Stations

Note: 70% of the schedule
containing news makes it a
news station

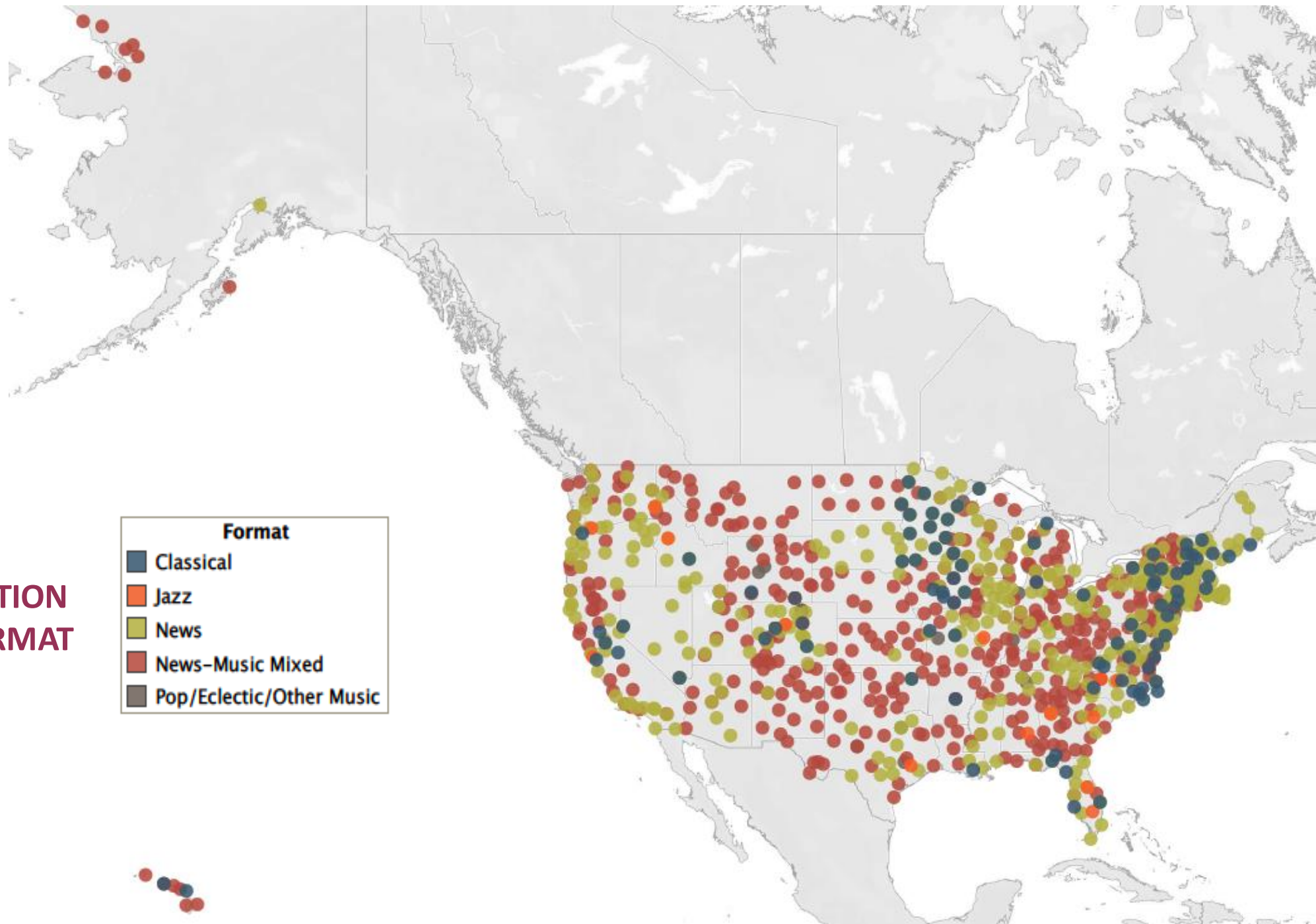


**PUBLIC RADIO STATION
LOCATIONS BY FORMAT
(Lower 48)**



- Format**
- Classical
 - Jazz
 - News
 - News-Music Mixed
 - Pop/Eclectic/Other Music

PUBLIC RADIO STATION LOCATIONS BY FORMAT



A 20+ YEAR TREND

Stations began moving away from mixed formats in 2000s, to grow audience and revenue.

- Many well-known stations had mixed formats:
Michigan Radio ('96) **WUNC** ('01) **WFAE** ('96) **OPB** ('97)
WNPR ('06) **WGBH** ('09) **WMUK** ('20)
- *Via More Channels, More Service*, an initiative run by Public Radio Capital (what we used to be called) stations learned to acquire signals to carry news and music programming on separate signals
- Early on, there was little advance messaging; loyal listeners were shocked that their listening habits were disrupted and objected loudly
- Overtime, best practices emerged: A second signal would be acquired for the music format, and the community would be told of the benefit in advance



A New Year, A New WMUK!



WMUK / Conan Venus Co.

<https://www.wmuk.org/a-new-year-a-new-wmuk>

WHY A SINGLE FORMAT WORKS BETTER

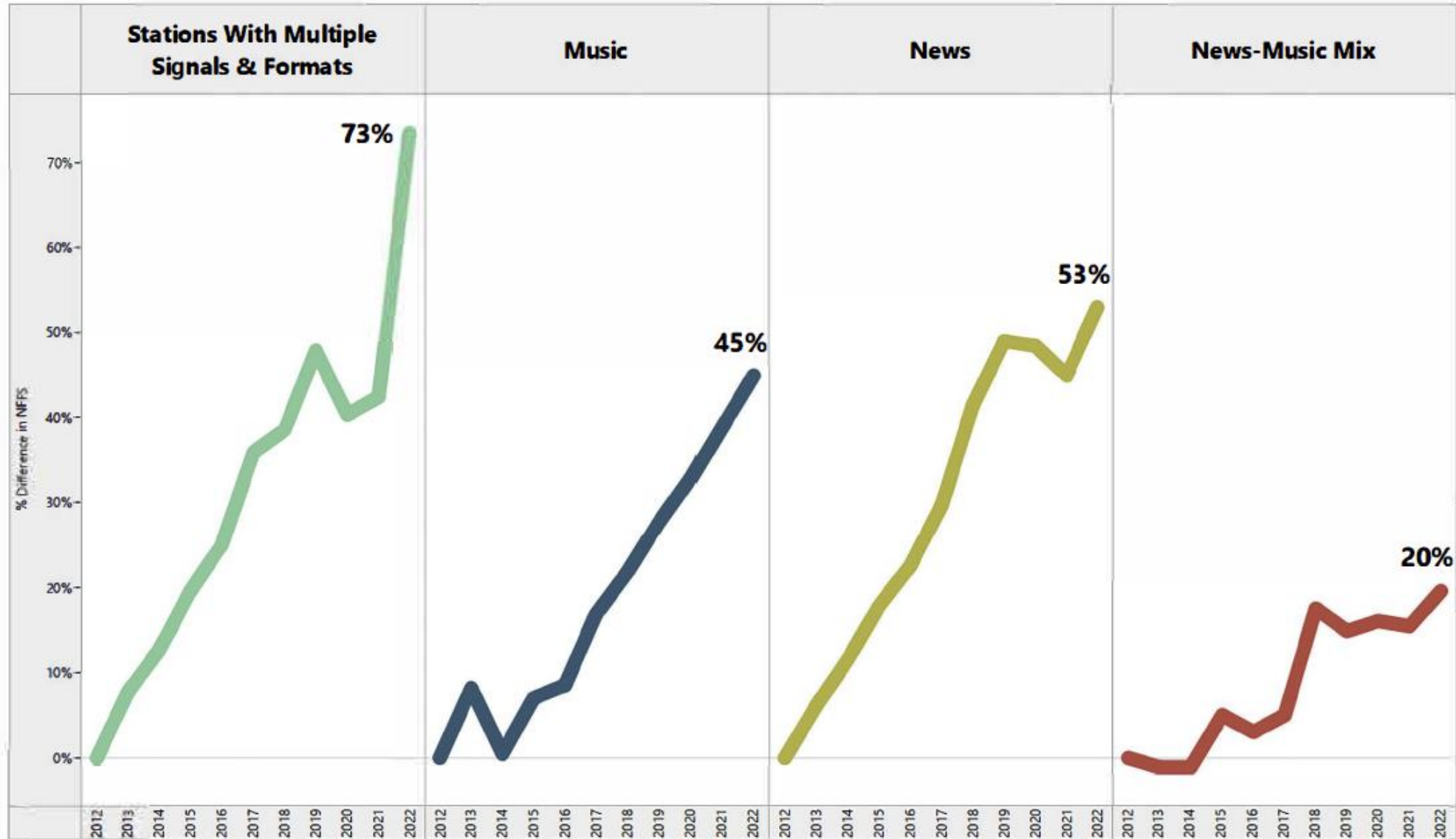
- Maintains a consistent programming stream
- Listeners know what to expect throughout the day
- Within that programming stream, stations should still think about how to diversity their audiences
- Don't just focus on core; strategize how to build new audiences within that format

Public Media Company trend analysis:

Dedicated news format stations were able to grow revenues much faster than mixed format between 2012 and 2022 (**53%** vs. **20%**)

Non-Federal Financial Support (NFFS) % Growth by Public Radio Format

**10-YEAR
REVENUE
GROWTH
TREND**



WVIK, QUAD CITIES NPR
Jared Johnson

WVIK, QUAD CITIES NPR



- Metro Area: 450,000 ppl
- Total Service Area: 800,000 ppl
- Quad Cities is the largest metro area for 150 miles in each direction
- Border town: Neither an Iowa- nor an Illinois-centric news sounds like a "hometown" station
- FM/HD signal covers a 60-mile radius; FM repeater covers the Quad Cities metro area, but not the outlying area

LISTENER SURVEY RESULTS

At the time, our broadcast was 60% classical music

| WVIK currently invests the majority of its broadcast time in two formats - News/Talk and Classical Music. Which of these two formats do you prefer? | | |
|--|----------|--------------|
| Answer Options | % | Count |
| Classical Music | 11.0% | 46 |
| Mostly Classical Music, but News/Talk as well | 21.0% | 88 |
| Both formats equally | 19.5% | 82 |
| Mostly News/Talk, but Classical Music as well | 24.5% | 103 |
| News/Talk | 24.1% | 101 |
| Total | 100.0% | 420 |

FIRST PUBLIC IMPRESSIONS (one year out)



PRESS CONFERENCE (two months out)

Engaged local arts partners to perform and speak on our behalf



MARKETING CAMPAIGN



**more news
more music**

wvik
90.3 FM News
wvik
98.3 FM *Classical*

more WVIK

“HAND HOLDING”

- Heavy on air messaging for three weeks prior
- Talking points for staff on the phone and email
- Detailed instructions on digital delivery on our website
- Offered to sit and share business modeling with anyone
- Distributed 70 HD Radios

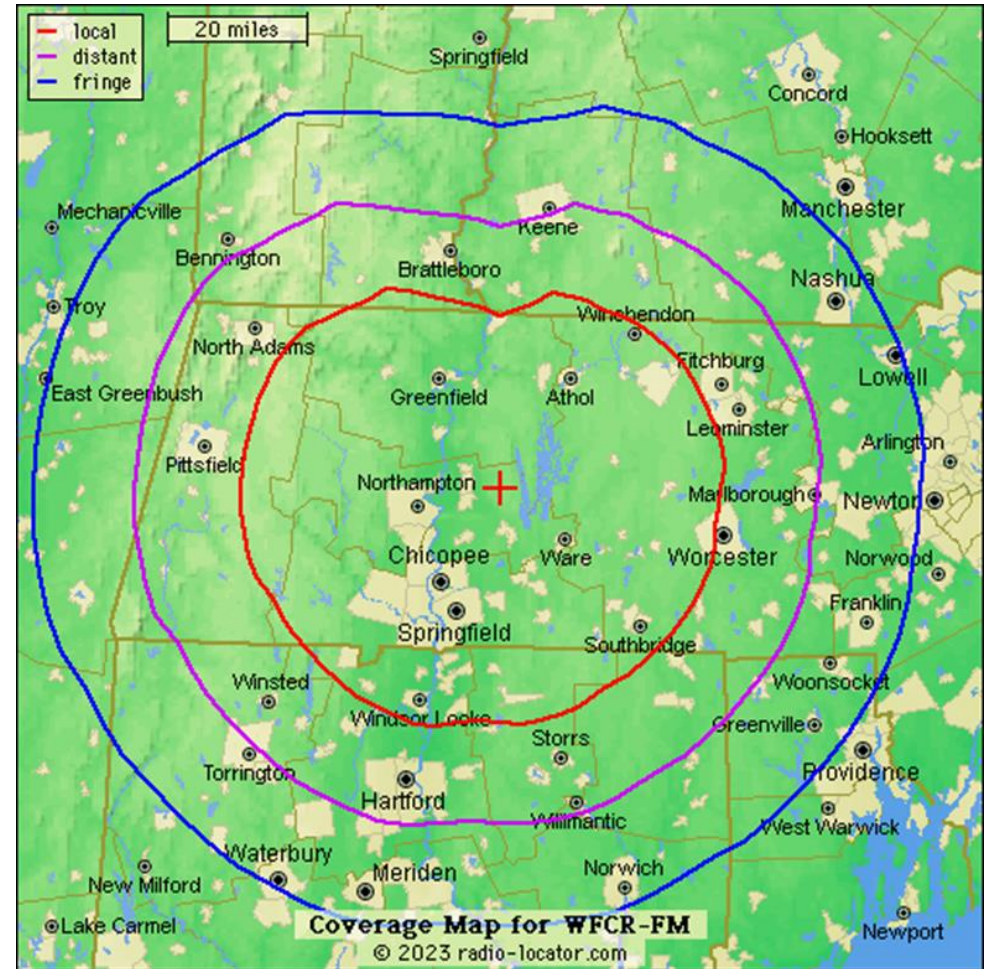
RESULTS

- Membership continues steady growth
- Corporate Support finally rebounding after COVID, largely due to new Classical station
- First ratings book showed flat on News (HD1), growth on Classical (HD2); streams showed same story

NEW ENGLAND PUBLIC MEDIA
Matt Abramovitz and John Sutton

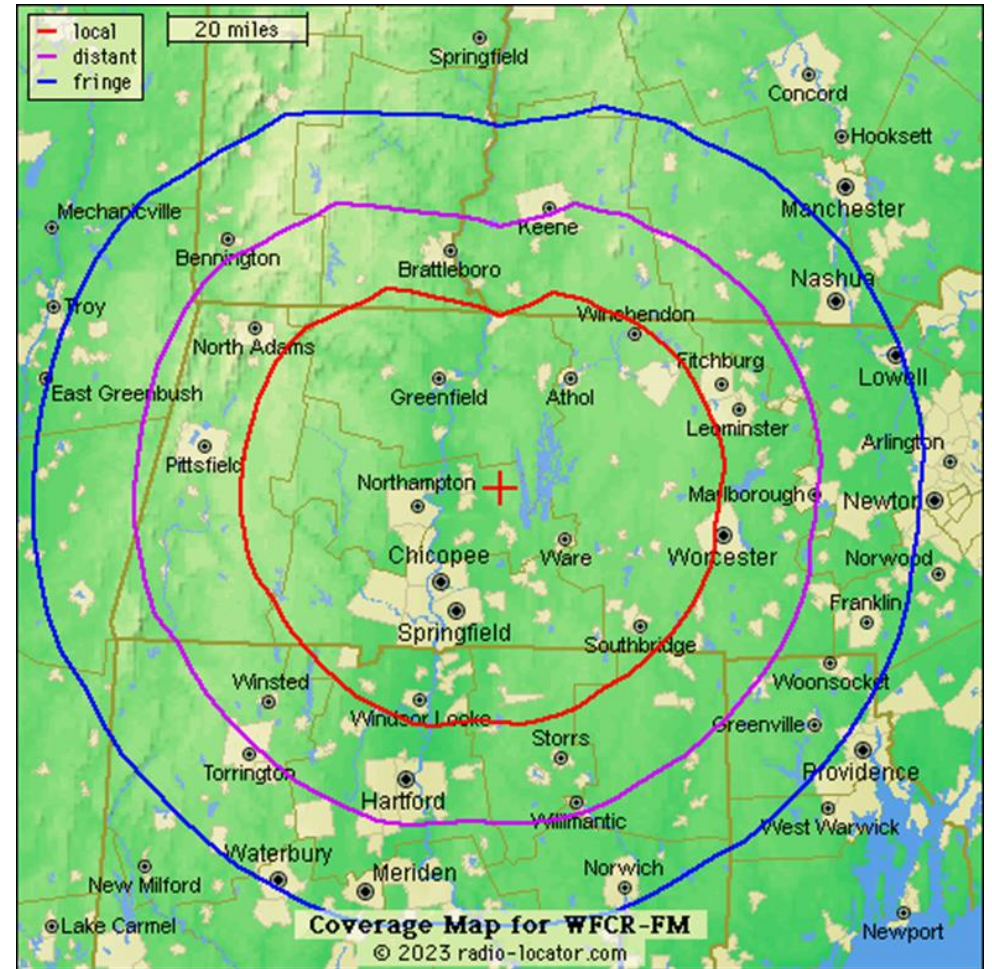
NEPM OVERVIEW

- Joint licensee in western Mass
- Operating classical/news/jazz on its main FM
- Also: separate news network
- Declining audience and revenue
- Conducted market research & stakeholder outreach
- Built new strategic plan including putting news/talk on main FM and classical on smaller network of stations
- Executed format change on Labor Day 2023



NEPM OVERVIEW

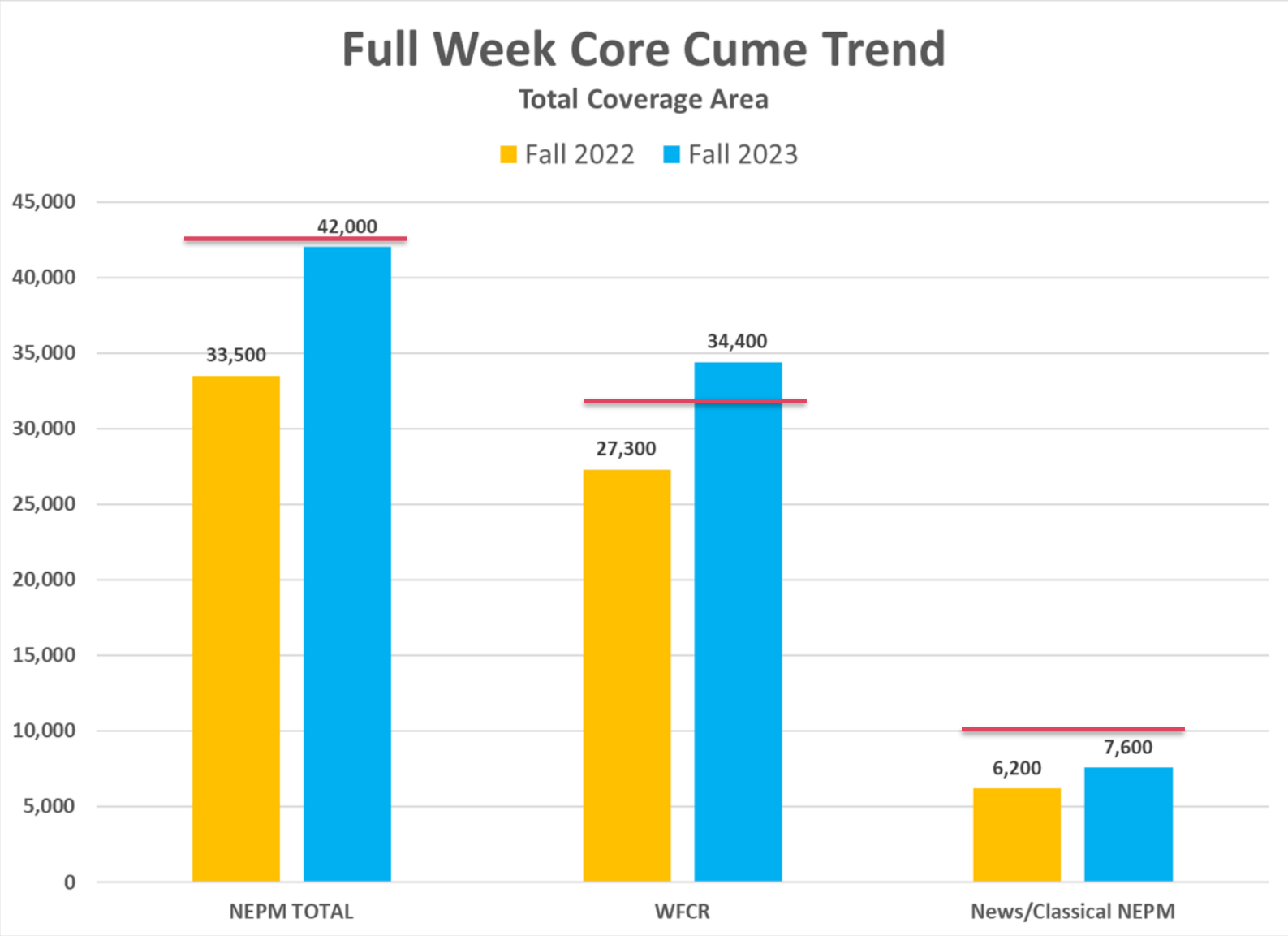
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NEPM THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

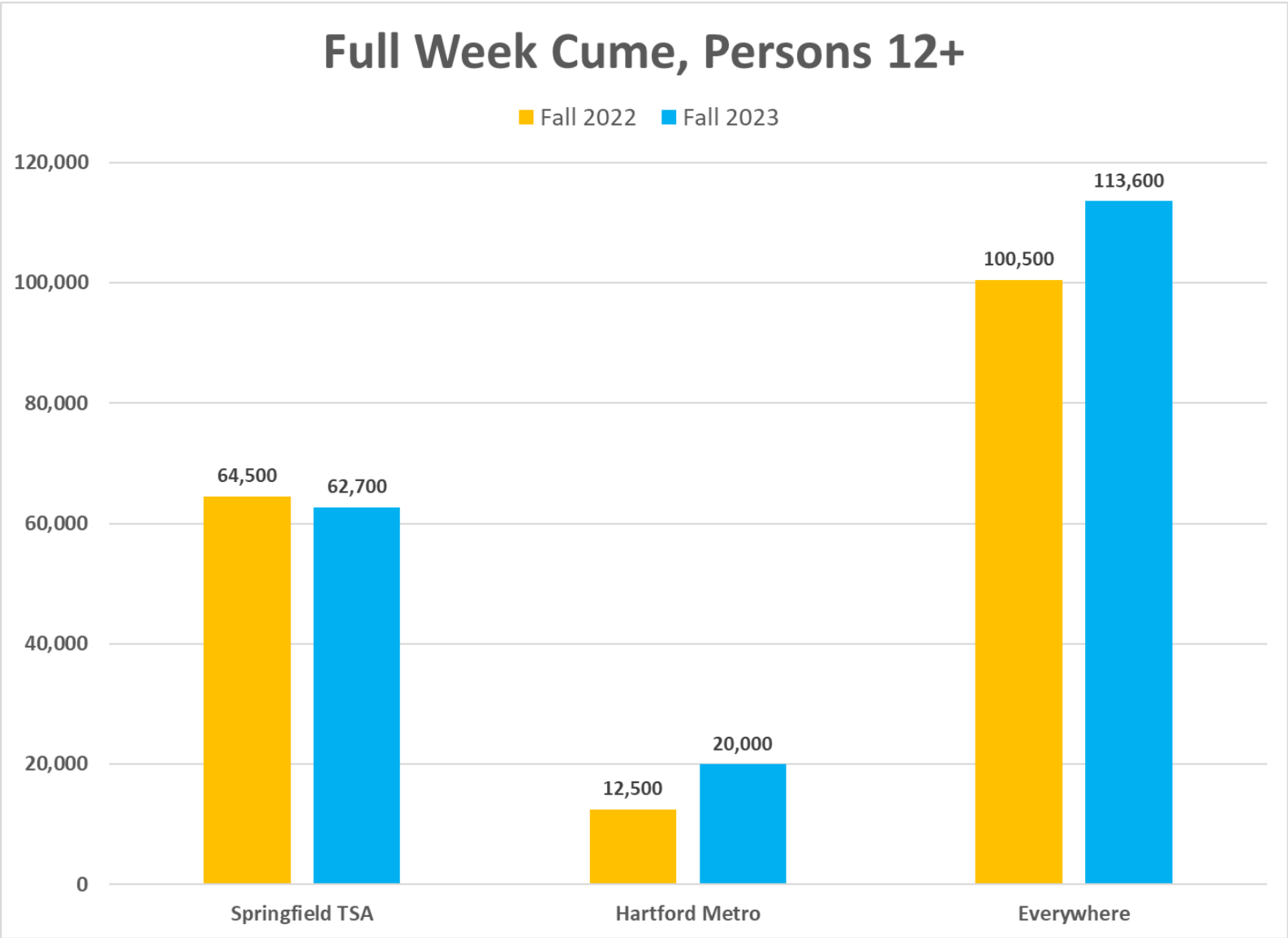
- It Works!
- Know What You Stand For
- We're in the Relationship Business

NEPM IT WORKS!



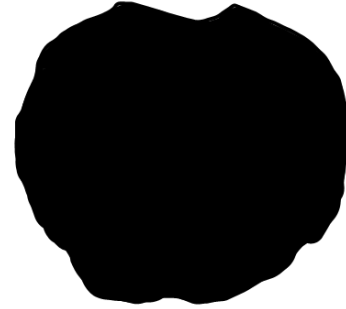
Spring 25 Goal

NEPM IT WORKS!



Source: Nielsen, Mon-Sun 6a-12m, P12+

NEPM KNOW WHAT YOU STAND FOR



- A coverage map is not a brand
- Audiences told us that they cared deeply about **western Mass**
- Embracing our local identity helped us focus (and save money)
- It also resonated with staff and board members
- Investing time and attention to the narrative helps internal and external communications, morale

NEPM IS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BUSINESS

- Broadcasting is a means to an end
- Our Development team became a customer service squad
 - Daily check-ins and comparing notes on listener queries
 - We fielded 650 calls and returned each one within 24 hrs
 - Even classical and radio diehards know how to listen online
 - We were prepared with a new app and website, didn't need HD Radios
- Membership +6% against YTD budget

GETTING STARTED

1. Start talking about it: To staff, university, board, key constituents
 - Expect that everyone will have *big feelings*
2. Look at your data
3. Conduct a listener survey
4. Do a business model to understand the true costs and impact of the change
 - Find a second signal, if possible
5. Prepare messaging to the community
6. Walkthrough the change with everyone; tell the story of why it needs to happen early...and often

THANK YOU!



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