

'24

Pioneer  PBS

WE ARE

yours.

local



CONTENT & SERVICE REPORT
to the community

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A Note from Shari Lamke

PIONEER PBS PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER



Fiscal year 2024 (July 2023 – June 2024) was a good year for Pioneer PBS. Chief Technology Officer and Director of Engineering Jennie Reedquist continued the rebuild of our broadcast infrastructure with her team in order to ensure our ability to serve our community well into the future.

WHAT PIONEER PBS HAS TO OFFER IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

At Pioneer PBS, we are proud to bring the world to our community and lift the voices of this community to the world. ***We are yours.*** Pioneer PBS is ***your*** station, telling ***your*** stories! As always, we will continue to remain true to our rural values. We will continue to pair the best in PBS programming with regional content. We will continue to raise up the rural voices and represent the people of our region. We are committed to showcasing this area's strengths. We will continue to use multiple methods of collecting story ideas and feedback from the community we serve.

Pioneer PBS is headquartered in Granite Falls, Minnesota, with towers in Appleton, Worthington, and Fergus Falls. We reach over a million people in rural areas and small towns in western Minnesota, eastern Dakota and northern Iowa.

We are honored to reflect our region and the richness of its people.

Shari Lamke

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Lamke".

President and General Manager
Pioneer PBS



Pioneer PBS

Local Value

OUR MISSION. OUR VISION. OUR VALUES.

MISSION STATEMENT

Pioneer PBS fosters civil discourse and improved quality of life through thought-provoking and inspiring media productions that connect people to rural stories and shared values. Pioneer PBS's services and programs facilitate educational growth, support cultural opportunities, and promote economic development for western Minnesota, eastern South Dakota, northern Iowa, and beyond.

VISION

Our vision is to be a forward-thinking media and technology leader whose viewers are engaged and inspired to advance rural values of cooperation, resilience, and innovation.

LOCAL VALUE

Pioneer PBS's programming and services are focused on the needs of our viewers. We tell stories about our region and the richness of its people. We value family as a cornerstone of our work. We engage and tell the stories of the diverse rural region we serve. We believe in fairness and justice for all people. We aspire to provide provocative inspiration and technological innovation. We help viewers of all ages learn and grow. We strive to keep Pioneer PBS a balanced and independent media voice. We provide excellent programming of enduring value.

Key Services

AT A GLANCE

During fiscal year 2024, Pioneer PBS continued to release episodes from regional series **Postcards**, **Prairie Sportsman**, **Prairie Yard & Garden**, **Compass**, **Landmarks** and **Your Legislators**—all local productions produced from its studio in Granite Falls.

The station also released additional broadcast specials for **COMPASS** and **WHEELS** as well as documentaries called **Eight Woman Together Alone**, **Luck & Love: A Rodeo Story**, **Night Wings: OSS Carpetbagger**, **Thanks a Billion Minnesota** and **Frozen In Time: The Vietnam War**. This was a banner year of output for the station. The production teams crisscrossed the region, the state and the world to tell your stories.

Pioneer PBS provides free over-the-air broadcast and live streaming from its website to the rural areas and small towns of western Minnesota, eastern South Dakota and northern Iowa. In FY '24, Pioneer PBS reached 206,743 streams across pbs.org, video.pioneer.org and the PBS app on multiple devices as well as 8,634 over our [local livestream](#). We also [stream PBS Kids](#) and hit record highs at 3,385,542 for the year.

Pioneer PBS added educational materials to [PBS LearningMedia](#)—with a total of 15 lesson plans available to teachers nationwide. In FY '24 Pioneer PBS also displayed an educational booth at a conference for hundreds of educators from multiple rural school districts, showing teachers how to utilize the content on the Pioneer PBS website and PBS LearningMedia to localize history for their students.

Pioneer PBS engaged with the community through many events in FY '24. These events ranged from screenings of Pioneer PBS works to showcases for regional artists and participation in various regional events.

Pioneer PBS is showcasing our regional voices on an international stage, raising this region's voices to the world. See highlights from our community events starting on page 6, highlights from regional stories starting on page 11, cultural learning highlights starting on page 15 and veteran story highlights starting on page 16.

“**The programming on Pioneer PBS focuses on the stories about our region and rural area. It educates viewers of all ages.**”

- Diane of Montevideo



Special event and screening of *Remembering WWII: Heroes & History* at Fagen Fighters WWII Museum

In the Community

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Pioneer PBS conducted several events in FY 24, engaging with over 1,600 individuals. Below is a full list of events, as well as highlights from our most notable FY 24 events:

- '23** • Participated in “Hort Night” in Morris, Minnesota, where we promoted *Prairie Yard & Garden*; met with over 80 attendees // [July 27](#) **P**
- Attended Minnesota Farmfest 2023 in Morgan, Minnesota // [August 2](#)
- Traveled to Hutchinson, Minnesota, for the Minnesota Garlic Festival // [August 12](#) **P**
- Held a screening event for the *Postcards* film “Playing Haydn for the Angels of Death” in Minnesota, Minnesota // [September 8](#)
- Traveled to Kerkhoven, Minnesota for the Swift County Welcoming Week event, featured a PBS KIDS exhibit booth; engaged with over 50 attendees // [September 10](#) **P**
- Attended Prairie Harvest Fest in Morris, Minnesota, featured a *Prairie Yard & Garden* exhibit booth; visited with more than 80 people // [September 23](#) **P**
- Held a *Postcards* mini screening at the Norsefest Scandinavian Film Festival in Madison, Minnesota // [September 10](#)

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- Hosted a screening event for the *Postcards* film “Eight Women Together Alone” in Willmar, Minnesota; more than 200 people attended // [January 10](#)
- Attended the MELT Conference (Minnesota River Valley Education District) in Madison, Minnesota, where we featured a PBS KIDS Exhibit Booth // [January 15](#) **P**
- Held a *Prairie Yard & Garden* watch party in Morris, Minnesota; visited with over 50 people // [January 18](#) **P**
- Attended the Morris Chamber annual meeting and dinner in Morris, Minnesota, where we promoted *Prairie Yard & Garden* // [January 31](#) **P**
- Featured a *Prairie Yard & Garden* exhibit booth at the College of Saint Benedict’s Sustainable Farming Association Annual Conference // [February 10](#) **P**
- Held a screening event for the *Postcards* film “Luck & Love: A Rodeo Story” at the Pioneer PBS studio in Granite Falls, Minnesota; received over 240 RSVPs // [February 13](#)
- Attended Greater Minnesota Ag Day in Dawson, Minnesota, with a membership exhibit booth // [March 13](#) **P**
- Held a *Prairie Yard & Garden* Season 37 Screening Event in Barrett, Minnesota; over 75 people attended // [March 17](#)
- Displayed a membership exhibit booth at Madison Ag Day in Madison, Minnesota // [March 19](#) **P**
- Attended the West Central Initiative Foundation Networking Dinner in Morris, Minnesota // [March 19](#) **P**
- Featured a *Prairie Yard & Garden* exhibit booth at Todd County Garden Day in Long Prairie, Minnesota // [March 23](#) **P**
- Attended the Life Connections Conference in Willmar, Minnesota, displayed a membership exhibit booth and sponsored a keynote speaker (Mary Holm of *Prairie Yard & Garden*); visited with nearly 200 attendees // [April 26](#) **P**
- Attended the Garden Palooza Conference in Fargo, North Dakota, and featured a *Prairie Yard & Garden* exhibit booth // [April 27](#) **P**
- Hosted a screening of the documentary “Night Wings: OSS Carpetbagger” at the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum in Granite Falls, Minnesota; more than 300 attendees // [May 27](#) **P**
- Attended the West Central Initiative Foundation’s 17 Rooms Workshop event in Morris, Minnesota // [June 12](#) **P**
- Took part in the Western Fest Parade in Granite Falls, Minnesota, and promoted membership and PBS Kids // [June 22](#) **P**
- Held a screening event for the *Compass* documentary “Minnesota’s Alt-Meat Revolution” at the Riverfest Celebration Opening Ceremony; more 125 attendees // [June 28](#)

P Event Participated In



Robert, his daughter Jenny, along with Tracy Hanson, Diane Fagen, and Tyler Gasteck, on Memorial Day.

MAJOR EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

NIGHT WINGS: OSS CARPETBAGGER OPS MEMORIAL DAY EVENT

Pioneer PBS, Ron and Diane Fagen and the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum staff co-hosted a screening event for “Night Wings: OSS Carpetbagger Ops” on Memorial Day. Over 320 people came out to view the documentary and celebrate WWII veteran Robert Holmstrom. Robert was able to attend the screening with his daughter Jenny who said she had no idea growing up what her Dad had done during the war and is thankful that he could talk about it now and that it is recorded for posterity.

FROZEN IN TIME: THE VIETNAM WAR MALL OF AMERICA EVENT

A three-day commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War took place at the Mall of America. The Minnesota Military Museum asked to include Pioneer PBS’ documentary “Frozen in Time: The Vietnam War.” More than 10,000 people attended the event, viewing the museum exhibits and related displays.



The capacity crowd at Mall of America, and the screening area for Frozen in Time.

“ I’ve had some major victories over the course of my career. Sometimes I am blinded in the pursuit, and when I get a big win or cross a goal off my list, it takes some time for the gravity to set in. That’s how I feel today. What you did for my family feels big and permanent and important.”

- Tanner Aus

LUCK & LOVE: A RODEO STORY EVENT

Pioneer PBS hosted an event at our studios to showcase the half-hour standalone broadcast documentary about Tanner Aus, a pro rodeo athlete balancing his grueling schedule on the road in pursuit of his dream of making 10 national finals with family life in small-town Minnesota. The event sold out with 280 people viewing Tanner’s story at the Pioneer PBS studios. With viewers from the 18 film festivals where the documentary has aired, more than 1,000 people have come together to view this story.



Attendees waited to meet and greet with Tanner Aus after the Luck & Love viewing at Pioneer PBS. Pioneer PBS was at capacity for the screening of Luck & Love: A Rodeo Story February 13, 2024.



From left: Sylvia Koll, Sandi Tremel, Teren Novotny and Irene Wallin

The crowd at the event giving the women of the Willmar 8 a standing ovation.

Photo courtesy of Macy Moore / West Central Tribune

Photo courtesy of Macy Moore / West Central Tribune

EIGHT WOMEN TOGETHER ALONE EVENT

Pioneer PBS and Kandiyohi County Historical Society co-hosted a screening of “Eight Women Together Alone” January 10, 2024, at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society in Willmar, MN. The half-hour broadcast standalone documentary follows the story of the Willmar 8 and how they walked off their jobs in America’s first bank strike ever in 1977.

The event drew more than 275 RSVPs. Some of the surviving women of the Willmar 8 reflected on the impact of their bravery in standing up to inequality. The story was also front page news in Granite Falls and Willmar.

“ Watching the documentary made me want to cry because I and fellow employees were going through the same thing at our bank but we would have lost our jobs if we had joined the strike. The community needs to know we did support you.”

- Linda Mickelson

Linda attended at the Willmar 8 event, but is also a former employee of First National Bank in Willmar at the time of the strike

Pioneer PBS

BY THE NUMBERS

YOUTUBE

Pioneer PBS:
1,181,012 views
14,963 subscribers

Postcards:
473,559 views
4,777 subscribers

Prairie Yard & Garden:
233,862 views
1,713 subscribers

Prairie Sportsman:
199,050 views
1,189 subscribers

Compass:
24,812 views
563 subscribers

Your Legislators:
1,220 views
93 subscribers

PIONEER PBS VIDEO APP

206,743 streams

PIONEER PBS KIDS LIVESTREAM

3,330,629 streams

TIKTOK

123,390 views
21,900 followers

FACEBOOK

348,830 views
20,098 followers

INSTAGRAM

38,442 views
1,469 subscribers
Pioneer  PBS

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Pioneer PBS KIDS Educational Resources

Looking for ways to keep your kids engaged during summer and winter breaks? Look no further than Pioneer PBS KIDS! Our collection of free and kid-tested programs, games, and hands-on activities are perfect for children of all ages and available wherever you are - at home, at school, or on the go.



- In an effort to enhance the image of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), enrich the public's experience, and promote a sense of place through arts and culture, numerous episodes of Pioneer PBS's *Postcards* aired in the See18 film screening room at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) during FY '24 as part of the airport's Arts @ MSP program. The first state-of-the-art cinema in any major U.S. airport, the See18 film screening room features around-the-clock short films and award-winning documentaries by filmmakers from the Upper Midwest. Travelers are able to sit down and relax with engaging films and experience our culture, history and people. Thousands upon thousands of people passing through our international airport get a chance to experience the uniqueness of western Minnesota's small town and rural culture and learn more about the featured artists on the aired *Postcards* episodes.
- In January 2024 Pioneer PBS was invited to participate in the MELT conference at Lac qui Parle Valley Schools, bringing hundreds of educators from multiple rural school districts together for learning opportunities. We were a booth exhibitor and spoke about how to use PBS' LearningMedia as well as the free teaching resources PBS provides, which was met with great enthusiasm from teachers who planned to put it in action immediately.
- Pioneer PBS stays in touch with regional schools, offering occasional internships, job shadowing, etc., for students, helping the youth of this region see the potential of growing with us in the community.

Local Stories

YOUR STATION, YOUR STORIES

Pioneer PBS is honored to lift the voices of this region into the media landscape. We hear from viewers regularly about the value they place on this service.

“*We watch Pioneer PBS because we enjoy the **local and personal approach to television.**”*

- Tim & April, Appleton

An indicator of the excellence of Pioneer PBS’ efforts is seen in our 23 nominations for Upper Midwest Regional Emmy® awards for work in FY 24. Three statues were awarded. It is the 12th consecutive year that Pioneer PBS has received Upper Midwest Emmys® for its local programming. The Pioneer PBS [Postcards](#) team received two Emmys for “[The 1968 Presidential Election Campaign](#)” (Mary Beth McCarthy Yarrow) and “[Eight Women Together Alone.](#)” The [Prairie Sportsman](#) team received an Emmy for their story on “[Deep Crappie Research.](#)”

IMPORTANT TO OUR COMMUNITIES



Last year, our Chief Technology Officer/Director of Engineering Jennie Reedquist went to the Community Center. She was wearing her PBS Nerd sweatshirt. As she was leaving, a woman said, “I have to say, I love your shirt!” Jennie replied that it was an apt shirt for her. When the woman asked why, Jennie replied, “Well, it is what I do all day instead of retiring here - being the tech geek over at Pioneer.” The woman grabbed her arm and said, “Really what do you do there?” Jennie told her about her job, and the woman’s jaw dropped. Before Jennie could finish replying the woman started gushing thank yous. She and her husband only have antenna TV, and they live by the six channels Pioneer PBS provides. Jennie thanked her and acknowledged there is a lot of technology still to rebuild for the station. The woman replied that our stories and programs fill her days, and it’s so huge for her and the people she knows. Jennie thanked her again and let her know we are thrilled to be her tv station. The woman’s last shout out was “We couldn’t get through our days without you. Thank you for coming here for us...”

It is our honor to be your TV!



The Upper Midwest Regional Emmy Award-winning teams from Pioneer PBS

PIONEER PBS REGIONAL STORY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST YEAR

Pioneer PBS is honored to lift the voices of this region into the media landscape. Here are some highlights of the regional stories Pioneer PBS has shared over the last year.

PRAIRIE YARD & GARDEN: CHERRYWOOD

In this [half-hour special of *Prairie Yard & Garden*](#), we travel to Baxter, Minnesota, to visit the unique fabric store called Cherrywood. A haven for quilters and those who sew alike. Owner Karla Overland specializes in hand-dyed fabric that is perfect for creating stunning and unique works of art. One of Cherrywood's annual events is the Cherrywood Challenge, where participants are given a specific theme to create a quilt using only Cherrywood fabrics.



Prairie Yard & Garden host Mary Holm marvels at the results of Cherrywood's Monarch Challenge with owner Karla Overland.

IMPACT
After the show aired, host Mary Holm had numerous people tell her they learned several things from the show, namely what it takes to use natural dyes to produce quilting material; that monarchs have been added to the endangered species list; and that a group of butterflies and monarchs are called a kaleidoscope.



Doug Ohman admires a collection of Ernie Wollack's tractors

LANDMARKS: MINNESOTA COLLECTIONS

Passion. Obsession. Nostalgia. Curiosity. Education. Whether preserving history or just enjoying the thrill of the hunt, these are some of the reasons people collect. We invite you to travel with Minnesota storyteller Doug Ohman as he meets people in Minnesota that have a passion for collecting in this hour-long stand-alone broadcast documentary. Along with sharing their treasured collections, they will tell the stories of how they started collecting. We will see everything from vintage tractors to the world's largest collection of cow knickknacks. From old toys to movie posters, this program will be sure to entertain.

IMPACT

As host Doug Ohman notes, "It's not really hoarding if you have cool stuff." It became clear to him as he researched the latest installment of *LANDMARKS* that there are many interesting collections in the hands of Minnesotans that are worth exploring.

WHEELS: CLASSICS AND COLLECTIONS 3RD GEAR

Released as a digital first series of nine episodes then assembled for a one-hour broadcast documentary, viewers explore the special connection between owners and their vehicles in [WHEELS "Classics and Collections" 3rd Gear](#).

IMPACT

The Wheels Facebook page has grown to 121 followers. Throughout the year producer Tim Bakken would attend car shows and post clips and videos from the show, bringing car enthusiasts who may not be able to travel to car shows the opportunity to live vicariously through social media.



Jacqueline Hadrath and her daughter show off the award for their 1969 Plymouth GTX, passed down to Jacqueline from her father.

“Looks like it was an awesome event! Great video. Thanks for posting it.”

- Kevin Wharem



Tanner Aus

LUCK & LOVE: A RODEO STORY

A [half-hour standalone broadcast documentary](#) about Tanner Aus, a pro rodeo athlete, who balances his grueling schedule on the road with family life in small-town Minnesota.

IMPACT

See the Impact story of heroes past and present for the full impact of Tanner's story. It resonates with audiences within Minnesota and beyond. Displayed in 18 film festivals, winning best documentary in 2 of them. The film led to Tanner gaining sponsorships that support his dream.

“*Thank you for educating me to the bravery and determination of these women. These are the pioneers who have forged a path for all of us as we struggle and strive toward recognition and equality. Blessings on you.*”

– Suzann Jarvis

EIGHT WOMEN TOGETHER ALONE

This half-hour standalone broadcast documentary follows the story of Willmar 8, who walked off their jobs during America's first ever bank strike in 1977. Nearly five decades later, they reconsider their legacy and the state of women's rights.

IMPACT

See the [Impact story of heroes past and present](#) for the full impact of the women of the Willmar 8's story.



Three of the Willmar 8: Sandi Tremel, Teren Novotny and Sylvia Erickson Koll

Pioneer PBS illuminates

CULTURAL LEARNING



Mai Tran beside one of her large prints

POSTCARDS

Using the Oldest Form of Printmaking to Tell New Stories

Mankato, Minnesota, graduate [Mai Tran creates prints](#) that remind her of Vietnam in this *Postcards* mini-documentary.

IMPACT

“I shared it (the segment) with my friends, and they said it was awesome. They learned a lot about me that they didn’t know before. Thank you and your crew for all the work!!!” - Mai Tran



Antonio and Paulaine Jean Louis at their

From Haiti to Minnesota

In this *Postcards* mini-documentary, [Antonio and Paulaine Jean Louis](#) have not had a smooth transition to make it to the United States, facing visa issues and language barriers along the way. But now tgeur family has made their home in Minnesota.

IMPACT

“Everyone at work keep telling me they saw me on PBS. All my family and friends like it. I posted it on Facebook. A lot of my Facebook friends shared it. I love it, really professional” - Paulaine Jean Louis



Angela Two Stars amid the Arctic Highways exhibit at the American Swedish Institute home in rural Minnesota.

Finnish Musician and Artists

In [season 15, episode 12](#) of *Postcards*, Steve Solkela from Duluth shares his passion for music and being Finnish, while two folk artists from Finland create beautiful textiles.

Community Café, Artist, Art Exhibit

[Season 15, episode 5](#) of *Postcards* features a joint art exhibition between the American Swedish Institute and All My Relations Arts that celebrates indigenous culture.



Top row, second from left Robert Holmstrom during WWII. Robert Holmstrom in 2023.

Pioneer PBS illuminates VETERANS STORIES

NIGHT WINGS: OSS CARPETBAGGER OPS

[Embark on secret WWII missions with veteran Robert Holmstrom](#) in this standalone 30-minute broadcast documentary as he reveals his personal experiences and uncovers the history of the pre-CIA organization, the Office of Strategic Services.

IMPACT

As we lose a generation of WWII veterans—current projections indicate fewer than 30,000 WWII vets will be alive by 2027 in America—capturing their stories now is critical. At Pioneer PBS we understand how important it is to help these veterans and their stories live on and for students in this region to have access to regional stories to help localize history for teachers. Robert’s full interview is also available online in our veterans’ playlist on YouTube with 1,201 views in this fiscal year. The story has been viewed 1,460 views during FY ‘24 on other platforms.

“*What an amazing story! Thank you for your service to our great country and your efforts to help the French people. God bless you.*”

“As a daughter of a USMC Pacific theater veteran, I see you, sir. Thank you for your willing service.”



Gary Bipes holding his book of Vietnam photos

PROJECT TITLE: FROZEN IN TIME: THE VIETNAM WAR
[Meet Vietnam War photographer Gary Bipes](#) in this standalone 30-minute broadcast documentary. Gary's lens captured the soul of the Vietnamese nation, revealing the poignant stories of its people and the haunting beauty amidst the chaos of war.

IMPACT

After seeing the documentary, the Minnesota Military Museum asked to air it at their Vietnam 50th anniversary event at the Mall of America in June 2024. Pioneer PBS agreed, which led to the Minnesota Military Museum using Gary's documentary at the museum and a contract with Gary to display his one-of-a-kind photos of the war within their museum, ensuring Gary's story and those he captured with his camera will never be lost.

Gary's special has been viewed 11,417 online.

The impact of these veteran stories is apparent by the continued interest in their stories long after broadcast. We've compiled a [Veterans Stories playlist](#) on YouTube, and during FY '24 it was viewed nearly 404,035 times. These videos are also linked on a [playlist page](#) on [pioneer.org](#) that has garnered over 1,052 views. It is Pioneer PBS's greatest honor to meet with and share the unique stories of every veteran we possibly can, capturing their stories to add to this distinguished list. It is our duty to preserve the stories of these brave men and women for the teachers, students and people around the world to see their stories of service.

“Think about it! One hundred years from now, these bios will still be available all because of your efforts.”

- **Bonnie Kottschade**
 Honorary State DAR Regent & Project Leader

Pioneer  PBS

WE ARE

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