



## Another record amount of local TV news

By Bob Papper and Keren Henderson

July 31, 2024 – According to the latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey, there is a record high amount of local news. The median amount is up by six minutes per weekday, and the average is up by half an hour. The medians stayed the same on the weekend. So did the Sunday average, but the Saturday average rose by six minutes. Overall, the average amount of local news per week is up by 36 minutes and the median is up by 150 minutes per week; however, it's another record high.

### LOCAL TV NEWSROOMS SEE A DROP

- Recent survey shows a decline in TV stations airing local news, mainly due to cuts by Sinclair stations.
- The number of news-producing stations dropped below 700 for the first time, breaking a previous stabilization.
- More stations are receiving news from other producers, increasing from 402 to 414.
- Total stations broadcasting local news slightly increased from 1,109 to 1,111.

TV NEWS

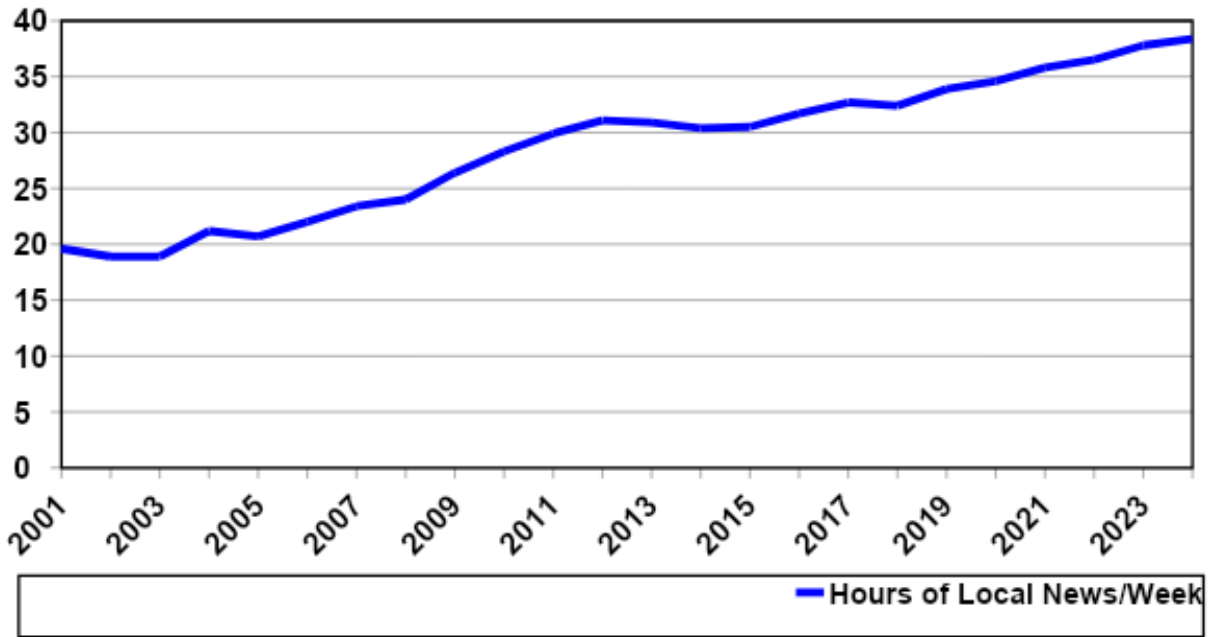


### Hours of local TV news per day - 2024

	Avg. Wkdy	Median Wkdy.	Wkdy. Max.	Avg. Sat.	Median Sat.	Sat. Max.	Avg. Sun.	Median Sunday	Sun. Max.
All TV	6.7	6.5	21.5	2.5	2	10	2.4	2	10
Big four affiliates	7.1	7	21.5	2.6	2	10	2.5	2	10
Other commercial	5	3.5	17	2.3	1	9	2.3	1	10
Market size:									
1-25	8.2	8	17	3.7	4	9	3.6	4	10
26-50	8	8	21.5	3.6	3.8	10	3.5	3.3	10
51-100	7	6.5	14.5	2.7	2	6.5	2.6	2	7.5
101-150	6	5.8	11	1.9	1.5	4.5	1.8	1.3	5.2
151+	5	5	12	1.3	1	4	1.2	1	4
Staff size:									
Staff 51+	8.1	7.5	21.5	3.3	3	10	3.2	3	10
Staff 31-50	5.7	5.5	8.5	1.4	1	3.5	1.3	1	3.5
Staff 21-30	4.2	4.3	5.5	1.2	1	3	1.1	1	2
Staff 11-20	3.2	1.5	12	1.2	0.5	4	1.2	0.5	4
Staff 1-10	0.8	0.5	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Affiliation:									
ABC	6.2	6	11.5	2.1	1.5	5	2	1.5	5.2
CBS	7.4	7	14.5	2.7	2.5	8	2.5	2.5	8
FOX	9.3	10.3	21.5	3.5	3.5	10	3.6	3.3	10
NBC	6.7	7	12	2.6	2.5	6	2.5	2	6
PBS	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0

Unlike past years, there was really no consistent pattern on which markets or staff sizes or geographic areas are up, down or stayed the same. The closest thing we have to a pattern is the cutback of local news on the relatively few public TV stations that run local news. We found no public TV station running more than half an hour of local news per weekday, and all local news on the weekend disappeared.

**Average amount of news per weekday over time: 2001 - 2024**

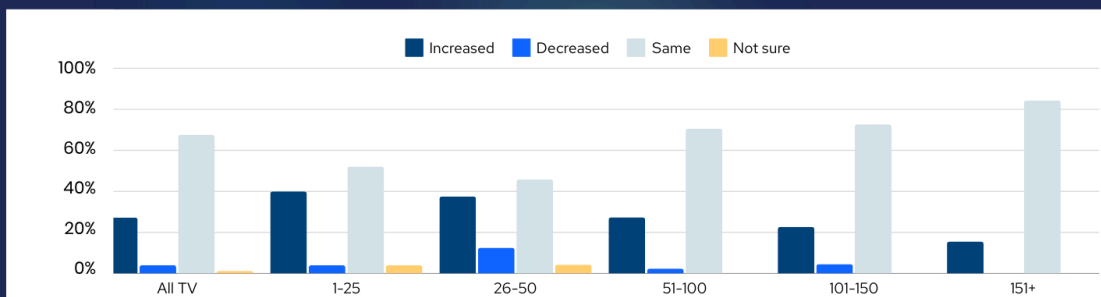


This chart shows the relentless increase in the amount of local news TV stations that have been running since 2001.

**Amount of TV news changes ... the past year (2023)**

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Not sure
All TV	27.2%	4.1%	67.5%	1.2%
Big four affiliates	27.8	2.6	68.9	0.7
Other commercial	30.8	23.1	38.5	7.7
Market size:				
1-25	40	4	52	4
26-50	37.5	12.5	45.8	4.2
51-100	27.3	2.3	70.5	0
101-150	22.7	4.5	72.7	0
151+	15.6	0	84.4	0

# TV STATIONS SLIGHTLY INCREASE NEWS



## INSIGHTS

- Two-thirds of all TV stations say they ran the same amount of local news in 2023 as they did the year before.
- But nearly seven times as many stations increased the amount of news as cut it back, so the overall number edged up.

TV NEWS

RTDNA

Syracuse University  
Newhouse School of  
Public Communications

Two-thirds of all TV stations say they ran the same amount of local news in 2023 as they did the year before. But nearly seven times as many stations increased the amount of news as cut it back, so the overall number edged up.

### Amount of TV news planned ... the next year - 2024

	Increase	Decrease	Same	Not sure
All TV	23.1%	0 %	64.2%	12.7%
Big four affiliates	22.6	0	64.5	12.9
Other commercial	23.1	0	61.5	15.4
Market size:				
1-25	25.9	0	59.3	14.8
26-50	29.2	0	58.3	12.5
51-100	25	0	59.1	15.9
101-150	17.8	0	73.3	8.9
151+	21.2	0	66.7	12.1

The percentage of stations intending to introduce news this year dropped by 11 points compared to the previous year, with most of that difference resulting in "little or no change." The biggest drop in percentage planning to add local news is in the top 25 markets – but all market sizes are down from a year ago.

## **The number of local TV newsrooms drops significantly**

The latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey found a decrease in the number of TV stations broadcasting local news. Sinclair stations accounted for at least half of the decrease. After consolidation cut down the number of newsrooms through the early part of this century, the number had stabilized at over 700. This is the first year we've been below that number, so we'll obviously keep an eye out on exactly where we're headed.

The number of stations receiving local news from 697 news operations increased to 414 from last year's 402. So the total number of stations running local news actually went up from last year's 1,109 to this year's 1,111.

For those keeping score by affiliation, here's how those 697 newsrooms break down:

- 177 NBC affiliates ... down 2 from last year
- 166 CBS affiliates ... down 1
- 161 ABC affiliates ... down 2 from last year
- 77 FOX affiliates ... down 3 from last year
- 34 Univision affiliates ... same
- 28 Telemundo affiliates ... up 1
- 20 Independents (four of which are Hispanic) ... down 1
- 10 PBS affiliates ... down 1
- 8 CW affiliates ... up 2
- 5 Youtoo America ... same
- 3 MyNet ... down 2
- 2 This TV ... same
- 2 EstrellaTV ... same
- 1 FamilyNet ... same
- 1 AMG ... same
- 1 AztecaAmerica ... same
- 1 NewsNet ... same

Other than FOX affiliates moving down by three, no group moved up or down by over two.

And here's how those 414 stations that get news from another station break down:

- 96 FOX affiliates ... up 4
- 67 CW affiliates ... down 4
- 44 CBS affiliates ... same
- 44 MyNet TV affiliates ... up 2
- 43 ABC affiliates ... up 3
- 31 NBC affiliates ... down 1
- 31 Independents (including 1 Hispanic) ... up 5
- 21 Telemundo affiliates ... up 3
- 9 Univision affiliates ...down 1
- 7 UniMás ... same
- 4 MeTV affiliates ... same
- 4 Dabl affiliates ... up 4
- 4 ThisTV ... same
- 1 PBS affiliates ... down 1
- 1 Canal de las Estrellas ... same
- 1 America Teve ...same
- 1 ion ... new this year
- 1 Milenio ... same
- 1 Newschannel Nebraska ... same
- 1 True Crime ... same
- 1 Televisa ... same
- 1 OnTV4U ... new this year
- 1 Spectrum News 1 ... new this year
- 1 TLN ... new this year

Disappearing from this year's list: 1 Cozi, 1 Estrella, 1 Soul of the South and 1 YTA TV.

Without getting into the whole list, we show no daily local news on the following affiliates:

- 166 PBS affiliates ... up 3
- 67 ion stations ... up 1
- 34 MyNet affiliates ... down 6
- 29 MeTV ... down 3
- 24 CW affiliates ... up 8
- 17 UniMás affiliates ... same
- 10 Univision affiliates ... down 2
- 10 Telemundo affiliates ... up 5
- 8 NBC affiliates ... up 4
- 7 FOX affiliates ... up 3
- 4 CBS affiliates ... down 1
- 2 ABC affiliates ... same

### **About the Authors**

***Bob Papper is Research Professor of Broadcast and Digital Journalism at Syracuse University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news.***

***Keren Henderson is Associate Professor of Broadcast and Digital Journalism at Syracuse University.***

***This research was supported by the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and the Radio Television Digital News Association.***

### **About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2023 among all 1,876 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 4,764 radio stations. The television response rate is different for every question, but Valid responses came from as many as 1,387 television stations (73.9%) and 631 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,902 radio stations. Some data sets (e.g. the number of TV stations originating local news, getting news from others and women TV news directors) are based on a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.