



Another Record Year For Local TV News

By Bob Papper and Keren Henderson

JULY 19, 2023 – It seems like every year, and it pretty much is, the latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey shows another record-high amount of local news.

The median amount remained the same, but the average rose by 18 minutes per weekday. The medians for Saturday and Sunday also stayed the same, but the average amount fell by 6 minutes Saturday and 6 minutes on Sunday. Overall, that means an extra 78 minutes of local news per week.

Hours of local TV news per day – 2023

	Average weekday	Median weekday	Weekday maximum	Average Saturday	Median Saturday	Saturday maximum	Average Sunday	Median Sunday	Sunday maximum
All TV	6.6	6	20	2.4	2	9.5	2.4	2	10
Big four affiliates	6.7	6.5	16	2.4	2	8	2.4	2	8
Other commercial	7.2	4	20	2.4	1	9.5	2.3	1	10
Market size:									
1-25	8.3	8	20	3.6	3.8	9	3.7	4	10
26-50	7.9	7.5	12	3.7	4	9.5	3.7	4	9.5
51-100	7	7	20	2.6	2.8	7	2.6	3	7
101-150	6.1	6	16	1.7	1.5	4.5	1.7	1.5	4.5
151+	4.5	5	8	1.3	1	3	1.2	1	3
Staff size:									
Staff 51+	8.9	8.8	16	4.1	4	9.5	3.9	4	9.5
Staff 31-50	6.6	6.5	11	2.3	2	4.5	2.4	2.5	4.5
Staff 21-30	5.7	5.5	20	1.5	1	4	1.4	1	3.5
Staff 11-20	4.8	4	20	1.1	1	2	1	1	2
Staff 1-10	2.1	1.5	7	0.6	0	3	0.5	0	2
Affiliation:									
ABC	6	6	11	2.1	2	5	2.1	2	5.5
CBS	6.9	6.5	16	2.5	2	8	2.5	2	8
Fox	7.6	8.8	14	2.4	1.8	5.5	2.6	2	6
NBC	6.7	7	14	2.6	2.5	7	2.6	2.5	7
PBS	2.5	1	6	0.5	0.5	1	0.3	0	1

Every market size except the smallest went up in local news. Every staff size except the smallest either went up or stayed the same.

Amount of TV news changes ... the past year (2022)

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Not sure
All TV	37.4%	2.1%	59.6%	0.9%
Big four affiliates	39.8	0.5	58.8	0.9
Other commercial	23.5	17.6	58.8	0
Market size:				
1-25	35.3	2.9	61.8	0
26-50	40.6	6.2	53.1	0
51-100	45.5	1.5	50	3
101-150	37.9	0	62.1	0
151+	24.4	2.2	73.3	0

Overall, the percentage of stations increasing news rose by nearly 11 points compared to a year ago. "Decrease" edged up by just over half a point. The big winner was "same," but it was down by 11. All market sizes went up, with the biggest jumps in markets 101 to 150 and 26 to 50.

Amount of TV news planned ... the next year - 2023

	Increase	Decrease	Same	Not sure
All TV	32.2%	0	56.4%	11.4%
Big four affiliates	31.4	0	57.1	11.5
Other commercial	46.2	0	38.5	15.4
Market size:				
1-25	44.8	0	34.5	20.7
26-50	35.7	0	46.4	17.9
51-100	37.9	0	56.9	5.2
101-150	29.8	0	63.2	7
151+	15.4	0	69.2	15.4

Last year, a surprising amount of TV news directors in top 100 markets expected to add news. And they did. That situation is repeating itself, so it'll be interesting in a year to see if it happens again. Note that no news directors expect to cut news in 2023, although, as this is written, there are reports that at least some Sinclair stations plan to cut newscasts (and staffing).

The number of local TV newsrooms holds steady

The latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey found that the number of TV stations originating local news rose from last year's 707 to this year's 711. That follows the previous year's drop from 710 to 705. After a decade of industry consolidation and an average

annual loss of seven newsrooms a year, the number seems to be settling into a small variable range – just over 700.

Of course, those were the numbers before Sinclair eliminated local news at five of its stations. We didn't view MyNet KPTH as a separate local newsroom, so that brings the total number of local newsrooms back down to 707.

Those 707 TV stations run news on those and another 402 stations. That last number is down 11 from a year ago.

That puts the total number of stations running local news at 1,109. So we're down 11 overall from last year's all-time high. An unusual down year.

For those keeping score by affiliation, here's how those 707 newsrooms break down:

- 179 NBC affiliates ... same as last year
- 167 CBS affiliates ... down 2 from last year
- 163 ABC affiliates ... down 2 from last year
- 80 Fox affiliates ... down 1 from last year
- 34 Univision affiliates ... same
- 27 Telemundo affiliates ... up 1
- 21 Independents (four of which are Hispanic) ... up 3
- 11 PBS affiliates ... up 1
- 6 CW affiliates ... down 1
- 5 YouToo America ... same
- 5 MyNet ... up 1
- 2 This TV ... same
- 2 EstrellaTV ... same
- 1 FamilyNet ... same
- 1 AMG ... same
- 1 Antenna ... same
- 1 AztecaAmerica ... same
- 1 NewsNet ... same

Only independents – at 3 -- moved up or down more than 2 from a year ago.

And here's how those 402 stations that get news from another station break down:

- 92 Fox affiliates ... down 2
- 71 CW affiliates ... down 4 (following last year's up 4)
- 44 CBS affiliates ... same
- 42 MyNet TV affiliates ... down 4
- 40 ABC affiliates ... same
- 32 NBC affiliates ... down 1
- 26 Independents (including 1 Hispanic) ... same
- 18 Telemundo affiliates ... up 4

- 10 Univision affiliates ...up 1
- 7 UniMás ... same
- 4 MeTV affiliates ... down 2
- 4 ThisTV ... up 1
- 2 PBS affiliates ... up 1
- 1 Canal de las Estrellas ... same
- 1 America Teve ...same
- 1 CoziTV ... same
- 1 Milenio ... same
- 1 Newschannel Nebraska ... same
- 1 True Crime ... same
- 1 Televisa ... same
- 1 Estrella ... new this year
- 1 Soul of the South ... new this year
- 1 YTA TV ... new this year

Disappearing from this year's list: one Family Net, one Heroes & Icons, one NewsNet, one AntennaTV, one get TV and one Local Now.

The biggest changes were CW and MyNet, each down 4, and Telemundo, up 4.

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

- 163 PBS affiliates ... up 4
- 66 ion stations ... down 2
- 40 MyNet affiliates ... up 4 (after up 2 last year)
- 32 MeTV ... up 1
- 16 CW affiliates ... up 3
- 17 UniMás affiliates ... down 1
- 12 Univision affiliates ... same
- 5 Telemundo affiliates ... down 2
- 4 Fox affiliates ... same
- 4 NBC affiliates ... up 1
- 5 CBS affiliates ... up 3
- 2 ABC affiliates ... same

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About the Survey

The RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2022 among all 1,812 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 4,819 radio stations. Valid responses came from as many as 1,365 television stations (75.3%) and 777 radio news directors and general managers representing 2,514 radio stations. Some data sets (e.g. the number of TV stations originating local news, getting it from others and women TV news directors) are based on a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.