



²/₀ Impact ²/₄ Report

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From all of us at the newsroom, Thank You

Zac Hiser Larry B. Phillips Sue McConck Katie Ellington Serrao
 Grant Ritchey Hayden Gray ~~Butler~~ Leah Gesouhas Cheryl Splain
 Brittany Schrock Carl Kell Cutler Mariah Thomas
 Allie Jay



Your Investment at Work: Impact That Matters

Your belief in our mission is driving real, meaningful change. This Impact Report highlights how your support is transforming lives and communities—and what we can achieve together in the future.

Welcome to the Source Media Properties Impact Report! I'm really proud to be part of a local, online news organization that fuels curiosity and helps people make informed decisions about our community. Our team may be small, but we punch above our weight—and this report is proof of that. So here's to what we've built together and what's still to come—not just next year, but for many years ahead.



Leah Gesouras
Head of Community
Investment

By The Numbers: What You've Helped Fund

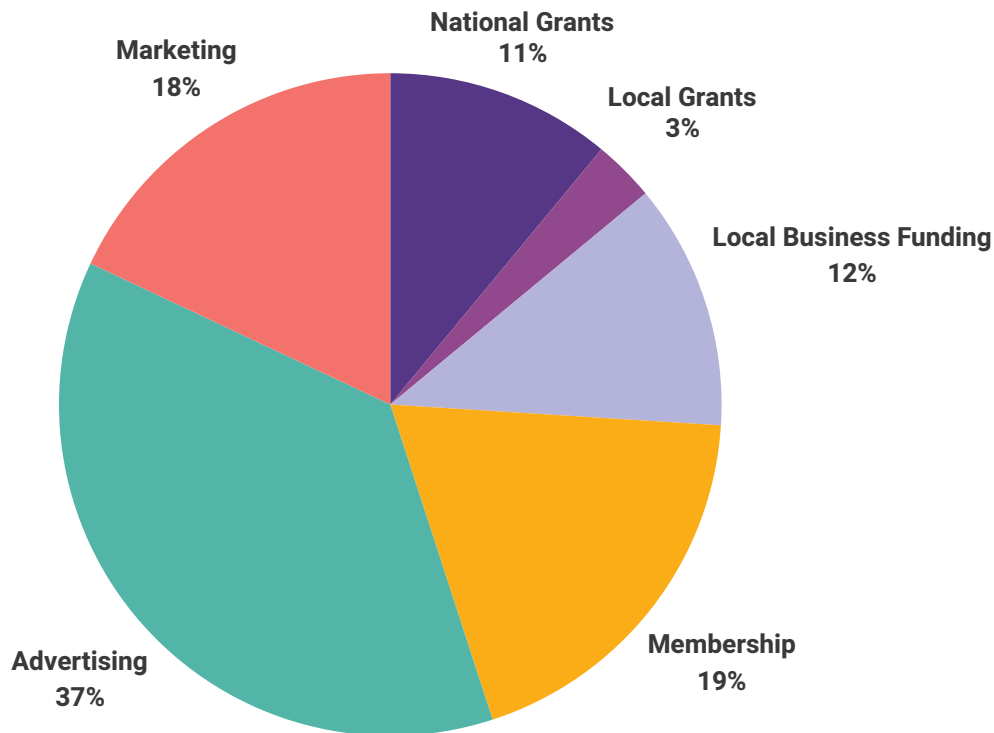
Because of you, independent local journalism thrived in 2024. Your support powered **2,325 stories**, delivered nearly **65,000 newsletters**, and connected with **1.35 million visitors** who turned to us for trusted, independent news. Readers spent **45,000+ hours** engaging with their hometown coverage, while nearly **30 hosted news and community events** turned our journalism into real-world conversations.

The proof of impact? More than **800 readers** became paying members for greater access to local news, growing our community of supporters to over **2,400 strong**.

This work is only possible because of you. **Let's keep building together!**



Dollars and Change: Your Support in Action



The Revenue Pie

We know the path to a sustainable newsroom requires diversified revenue. Your support is an essential piece.

- 7 national grants awarded in support of our journalism
- 46 local organizations helped fund our work

71% Editorial Payroll Funded

We designate 100% of local grants, local organization funding and membership funds to our editorial payroll costs.



Trust is everything

Nearly 95% of readers trust
our journalism

Compare this to trust in the national media
which sits at 31% according to [Gallup](#).



— “ —

Thank you for all you do to be informative
on a variety of topics! I appreciate your
positive nature in your reporting! Keeping
organizations accountable by accurate
reporting is another of your qualities!

[2024 Reader Survey](#) Participant

— ” —



The Power of Your Yes:

What Your Support Made
Possible in 2024



Your Commitment in Action: Partnering for Change

Your support for trusted, independent, local journalism helped us turn questions into answers -- bringing you the important stories and information our community needed.



Ripple Effect: Lessons in Flood Mitigation from Shelby and Beyond

Shelby has faced significant flooding over the years, including a major event in 2007, which spurred efforts to find long-term solutions.

The city has introduced a flood warning system, relocated vulnerable infrastructure, and even demolished homes in high-risk flood areas. In 2017, local farmer John Schroeder also launched a grassroots effort called the Black Fork Clean Up Project, clearing 18 miles of the river to reduce flood risks.

Hayden Gray's Solutions Journalism series, [Ripple Effect](#), took a close look at the city's responses and highlighted successful mitigation strategies from Toledo. Hayden's reporting was republished by the [Ohio Newsroom](#) and distributed across the state.



“We’re not trying to control the river, we’re just trying to make it manageable... We don’t always get everything we want, but we all can agree that we don’t want flooding in Shelby.”

John Schroeder, Shelby area farmer and organizer of Black Fork Clean-Up Project



Your Commitment in Action: Partnering for Change



Tomorrow's Talent

In March 2024, 15 funders and The Source newsroom teamed up on a project. After six months and over 400 hours of work, Grace McCormick, Katie Ellington Serrao, and Mariah Thomas created something valuable for local businesses. Tomorrow's Talent included surveys of over 1,400 high school students and 94 businesses, 55 interviews, and over 20 published stories. It was a journalistic highlight of 2024.



Series Sponsors

Platinum	 				
Gold					
Silver					
Bronze					

Your Commitment in Action



Journalism done together

Financial support in Tomorrow's Talent took Mariah, Katie, and Grace across the country to talk with education experts and policy makers. It connected them with experienced data journalists to help make sense of massive datasets.

Collaboration with local school districts created the largest workforce survey of high school students in recent memory.

Midway through, a small coffee chat improved our reporting by opening the research to feedback and insights from local experts and stakeholders.

The project wrapped with an in-person event at North Central State College's Kehoe Center in Shelby. Around 70 CEO's, HR professionals and educational leaders left with the foundation to make more effective decisions.



Each of you are so talented and truly are community advocates for growth and positive change. Thank you for taking on such a big project. I'm sure it's not easy navigating the feedback from stakeholders and funders, but you all approach it with so much integrity and professionalism.

Jessica Hiser, Spherion Director of Marketing

Partnering for Change



Kaleidoscope Series: Inspiring Community Conversations

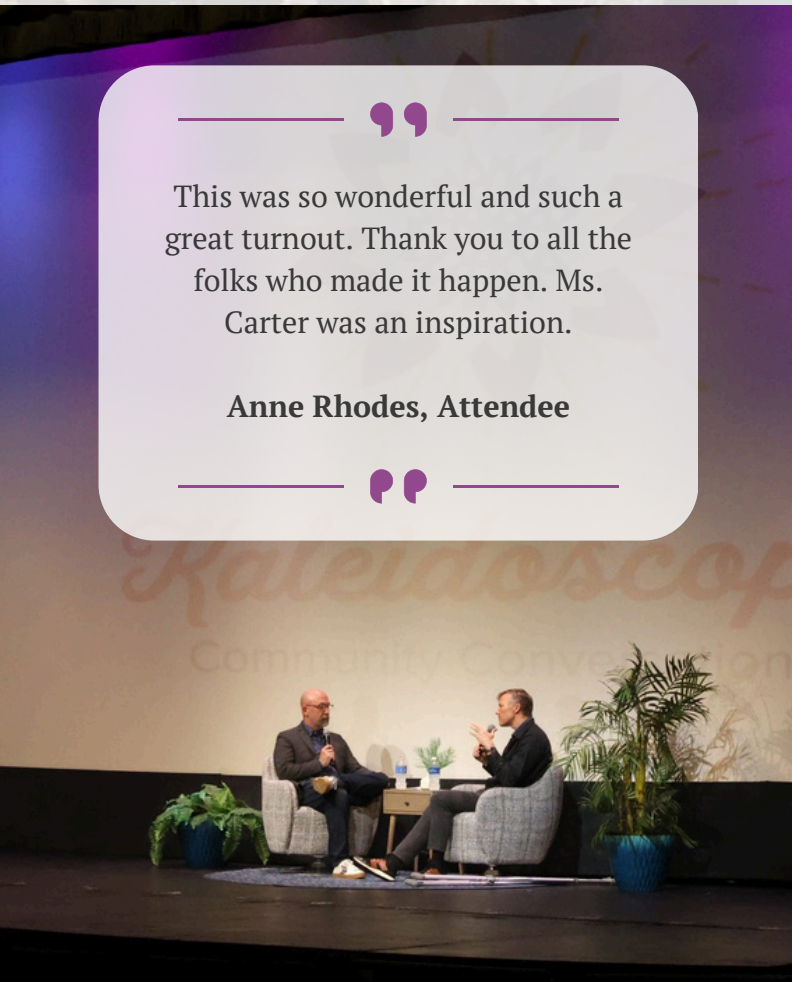
Kaleidoscope Series brought nationally recognized authors to Richland County, sparking vital conversations about the challenges and opportunities in our community. Designed to foster fresh perspectives and collaborative solutions, this speaker series encouraged residents to engage with complex issues—together.

As a proud partner, Richland Source joined the Richland County Foundation, the Mansfield/Richland Public Library, and the Renaissance Theatre in making these conversations accessible to all, with a pay-what-you-can ticket model ensuring inclusivity. Each event explored a unique aspect of our community, inviting attendees to listen, reflect, and take action.

By leaning forward—rather than left or right—we created a space for meaningful dialogue, fresh ideas, and collective progress. The impact of these conversations will continue shaping Richland County for years to come.

“
This was so wonderful and such a great turnout. Thank you to all the folks who made it happen. Ms. Carter was an inspiration.

Anne Rhodes, Attendee



Kaleidoscope
Community Conversations

Your **Commitment** in Action



Sparking Conversations, Inspiring Change

With 100–200 attendees at each event, Kaleidoscope created space for individuals from all backgrounds to listen, learn, and engage in solution-driven discussions. But the impact didn't stop when the events ended.

The conversation continued beyond the series, even as short a distance as the lobby of the Renaissance Theatre with engaged community organizations and an open post-it discussion. Also including a follow-up discussion at the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library that brought attendees back together to reflect and take the dialogue further. This event highlighted the power of Kaleidoscope to ignite lasting discussions that hope to drive real change in our community.



Scan to view the full recap on the Renaissance Theatre's Website



Partnering for Change



From Marshfield to Mansfield: Reducing Housing Barriers



Katie Ellington Serrao's work on the Solutions Journalism series, *Substandard*, dove deep into the challenges of securing housing in communities across the U.S., including here in North Central Ohio.

Her reporting highlighted programs like [Rent Smart](#), developed by the University of Wisconsin–Madison Extension, which helps individuals with limited rental experience or troubled rental histories.

Katie's reporting explained how Rent Smart equips participants with vital renting skills — budgeting, understanding tenant and landlord rights, and navigating the rental process — empowering them to secure and sustain affordable housing.

By exploring how Mansfield and similar communities could adapt these strategies, Katie provides valuable insights, showing how innovative programs can address critical housing challenges in our very own community.



READ MORE

Your **Commitment** in Action: **Partnering** for Change



Amplifying Voices: Creating Space for Community Stories

Because of your support, our reporters uncovered untold stories, fostered dialogue, and provided channels for meaningful conversations that brought people together.



“Richland Source has been a highlight of my mornings for several years, and I am now enjoying listening to your Tuesday podcasts, which are like sitting around a potbelly stove on a cold winter morning in a country store while talking with your neighbors. Keep up the great work!”

Kyle Bierly

Local News, Stories, and Community Connections Every Tuesday



City editor Carl Hunnell started News Man Weekly this summer as a way to deliver the news on an entirely new platform. Carl’s 30+ years of experience covering local news adds depth and humor to the stories we report every day — and local guests almost every week allows our community to get to know each other a little better.

Hunnell is always joined by Producer Zac Hiser and videographer Grant Ritchey to talk about the news of the week.



LISTEN NOW

Amplifying **Voices**: Creating Space for Community **Stories**



A New King Crowned, Great Pizza in Town

The best tales are often about everyday people like Ron Puglisi. Simple beginnings and a commitment to great pizza was more than enough for a delicious story.

At 68, Ron Puglisi has spent 50 years perfecting his pizza. He operates without a storefront, website, or social media. His focus on quality and authenticity takes the form of limited availability, creating a sense of demand and excitement. Though he takes a low-key approach, Ron has built a loyal following and strong reputation in his community, proving the power of passion and word-of-mouth for local business success.



“I just finished reading the wonderful piece you wrote about my brother Ron Puglisi and his pizza business. It was so great that I would love to be able to have it printed and framed as a Christmas present for Ron... I think you [Dillon] have great instincts on how to convey a person’s true self to your readers!

- Pat Poling



PIZZA TIME!

Amplifying **Voices**: Creating Space for Community Stories



Bringing New Life to Lamb Park

It can be hard to see a diamond unless you look very closely. That's what Knox Pages reporter Cheryl Splain did with her coverage of the reclamation of a historic baseball field in Mount Vernon.

Lamb Park was revitalized thanks to the efforts of New Life Church of the Nazarene and community volunteers. After nearly two decades of disuse, the park now hosts youth baseball games once again.

Volunteers worked to improve the infield, repaint fences, dugouts, and the concession stand, while Clinton Township helped with lawn maintenance. The park, which has been a part of the community since 1954, is now a symbol of local pride and a gathering place for families.

“ This park is a part of Mount Vernon's history, and it's great to see it come back to life for these kids.

-Ronan Steinmetz



Amplifying **Voices**: Creating Space for Community Stories



Ontario quarterback Bodpegn Miller's journey from Ethiopia to Ohio has been nothing short of extraordinary. Adopted at age five by Alan and Deanna Miller, Bodpegn navigated language barriers and cultural changes with the love and patience of his adoptive family. A natural athlete, he became a standout on the football field, leading Ontario High School to multiple playoff appearances and earning a scholarship to Ohio State as a four-star recruit.

Off the field, Bodpegn excels academically, maintaining a 4.2 GPA, and shares his inspiring story with younger students. Despite his success, he remains grounded, driven by faith and a desire to make an impact both locally and in his birth country, Ethiopia. As he prepares to start his college journey, Bodpegn's story highlights resilience, humility, and the transformative power of family.

Bound by Family, Built for Greatness



GO BODPEGN!

”

Any time you have a guy like that who does his job and works hard and wants other people around him to be successful, that mentality rubs off on everybody else. We're pretty thankful to have a guy who is as talented as he is and is as humble as him.

-Aaron Eckert, Ontario coach

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Amplifying **Voices**: Creating Space for Community **Stories**



Measurable Impact: The Results You Helped Us Achieve

Community investment in trusted local journalism helped the Source newsroom grow our reach, engage more readers, inspire action, and drive measurable change across all the communities we are privileged to serve.

Mushing from Mansfield to Alaska

The 11-article series garnered nearly 50,000 viewers, highlighting the strong engagement and excitement from the community.

I just wanted to tell you how much I love your articles about Matt. You really capture what he is all about. Just wanted to thank you for bringing awareness of his and this great event to our area.

Mary Louise Herman



At the sold-out "An Evening with Matthew Failor," Carl Hunnell led a dynamic conversation with the 13-time Iditarod competitor, exploring his journey from Mansfield to Alaska's sled dog races.

The event raised \$1,030 for the Richland County Humane Society, highlighting Mansfield's and Failor's puppy love.



MUSH!

Measurable Impact: The Results You Helped Us Achieve

Democracy in Your Backyard

In 2024, we engaged the community in the democratic process by hosting events that connected voters with candidates and critical election information.

In February, we organized a “Meet the Candidates” Q&A at The Woodward Opera House in Mount Vernon ahead of an important March primary election.

Later, in October, we hosted the only debate between Knox County Commissioner candidates Chuck Rogers and Barry Lester ahead of the general election.

We live-streamed both events to ensure access for all.

We’re reimagining election reporting into a space open for curiosity and designed to put the voters first. By fostering in-person engagement, we not only bring the community together but also place vital information directly in front of voters.



“I wanted to tell you how helpful your coverage was on the elections. I always take my daughter (age 9) with me to vote. We used your articles as a large part of our research on the candidates.

Thanks and well done!

MVPD Lt. Andy Burns



Measurable Impact

Informed Voters Make Better Decisions

The non-partisan local journalists in the Source newsrooms published a whopping 46 profiles, election guides and “how to vote” stories in the two weeks leading up to the 2024 election.

These weren’t stories about the presidential race. They profiled county commissioners, council members and other local officials, and they informed over 20,000 readers about the people and issues closest to them.

We kept the community informed on election night with a different kind of livestream. Our team was joined by historians, local civics teachers, and amateur mixologists. We ditched cable news formula of conflict and certainty for a conversation focused on curiosity and perspective.



I wasn’t sure if I should come tonight because it’s a long drive and so close to the election, but the local party officials told me that this was the one “must attend” event in Richland County.

-State Senate candidate Kathy Salem



LET'S VOTE!

The Results You Helped Us Achieve

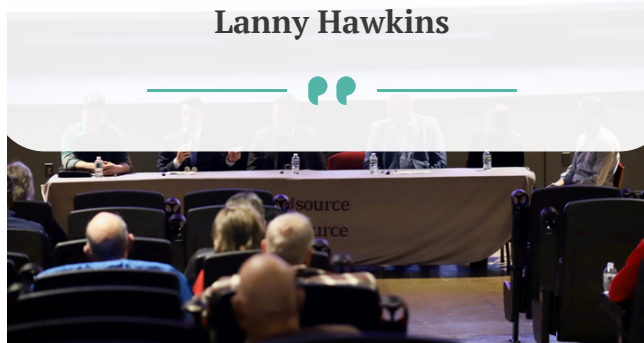
Follow the (ARPA) Money

BROUGHT TO YOU BY ASHLAND SOURCE, WITH SUPPORT
FROM THE POYNTER INSTITUTE



“ You provide an important public service to us the public when you ask questions to local governments and their agencies about how they spend our tax dollars and run our community.

Lanny Hawkins



Ashland Source reporters Dillon Carr and Mariah Thomas conducted an in-depth investigation into the allocation of \$46.6 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds within Ashland County, supported by a grant from the Poynter Institute.

We followed
the money...

To engage the community and promote transparency, Dillon and Mariah hosted a public event at the Ashland Theatre. This gathering featured a panel of local officials who addressed audience questions regarding ARPA spending, fostering an open dialogue about the impact of these funds on the county.

The dedication to uncover and share this information not only informed residents but also bridged the relationship between the community and its leaders. Their work exemplified the vital role of local journalism in promoting accountability and civic engagement.

Measurable Impact: The Results You Helped Us Achieve



Building Momentum: **Strengthening the Future Together**

Your support fuels our passion and focus for the future. At Source Media Properties, we're dedicated to providing meaningful local journalism, strengthening community connections, and highlighting the stories that truly matter. Together, we'll shape a brighter, more informed tomorrow.

As we move into 2025, we're not slowing down -- **We're doubling down.**

Intel: Beyond the Chip

With Intel's arrival near Knox County, our communities are filled with questions: Will it boost the local economy? Change our way of life? Strain our resources? Thanks to our funders, we're leading in-depth, on-the-ground reporting that examines these impacts, including lessons learned from Sherwood, Oregon. We're committed to delivering clear, fact-based journalism to help our region navigate this future.

A Deep Dive into Child Care

It isn't just a family issue. It's a workforce issue, a community issue—an *everybody* issue. In spring, we'll take an all-hands-on-deck approach to this multi-platform project, delivering solutions-driven journalism that empowers our region to tackle this challenge head-on.

Kaleidoscope 2.0

The next chapter of Kaleidoscope is coming in 2025. We're extending our role in this groundbreaking speaker series, continuing to inspire the community to engage in important conversations, and maybe even make a change.

Outpacing the Competition

The reality? Our biggest competitors aren't doing what we're doing. Our reader survey confirms it: people trust us, value us, and are invested in keeping local dollars right here, where they belong.

Matt Failor's Journey

When we covered Matt Failor's inspiring 2024 coverage, we saw firsthand how storytelling can spark passion and action. We're not done yet—this story, and the people behind it, still have so much more to share.

Building Momentum: Strengthening the Future Together



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The Source is our most important source of local news!

The demise of local newspapers all over our nation is a tragedy.

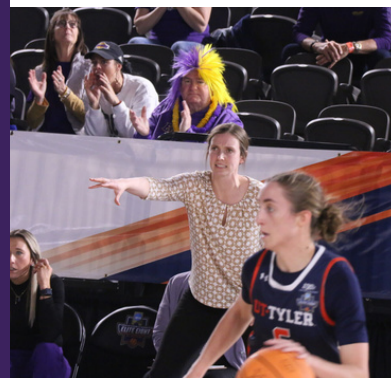
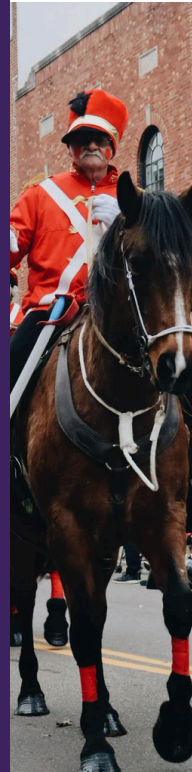
If citizens do not know the facts of issues on the local level, how do we know how to make our voices heard, how to vote on local issues, how to use our resources to make changes for the greater good?

We need the team of local journalists, and you are part of a wonderful team.

Thank you for your contributions to our community and making the democratic process work by keeping citizens informed.

We NEED journalists - every one of you! Keep up this important work.

-- Susan Shafer, to Report for America corps member, Mariah Thomas --



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PROPERTIES