



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Amanda Smith, Marketing Director

785.483.6990, asmith@shptv.org

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Smoky Hills PBS Receives an Essential Grant from Public Media Bridge Fund

BUNKER HILL, KS – Smoky Hills PBS has received a **stabilization grant** from the **Public Media Bridge Fund**, providing critical financial support following the loss of federal funding last year, which **resulted in a nearly 52% reduction in its operating budget**. This grant will help ensure continued service to rural communities in central and western Kansas.

Smoky Hills PBS is one of 115 public media stations nationwide to receive funding through this initiative. The grants were awarded to stations facing the greatest financial challenges, particularly those serving **rural and underserved areas**. For many of these communities, local public media stations are the **only source of local news, educational programming, and community storytelling**.

“For many of the communities we serve, Smoky Hills PBS is more than a television station - we’re a connection point,” said Betsy Schwien, General Manager of Smoky Hills PBS. “This funding helps us continue showing up for our viewers with reliable service, local stories, and educational programming that reflects and supports rural Kansas.”

How the Funds Will Be Used

- Expenses related to Transmitter repairs and maintenance to ensure reliable access to Smoky Hills PBS across a large rural coverage area.
- Programming costs that allow the station to continue offering trusted PBS content and locally relevant programs.
- Equipment upgrades of productions, helping maintain a high-quality coverage of local events, public affairs, and community-focused programming.

These investments will help stabilize operations and strengthen the station’s ability to serve viewers today while preparing for the future.

“We are deeply grateful for the support of the Public Media Bridge Fund,” said Helen Hands, Smoky Hills PBS Board Member. “This grant is a significant step forward for Smoky Hills PBS, but our work isn’t finished here. The continued support of our viewers is what will help keep Smoky Hills PBS strong for generations to come.”

The Public Media Bridge Fund is a strategic philanthropic initiative of Public Media Company (PMC), a nonpartisan nonprofit organization. For more than 20 years, PMC has helped local public and independent media organizations expand their service and impact, strengthen their communities, and secure their long-term sustainability.

Funds from the Public Media Bridge Fund are intended to stabilize operations and preserve essential services for stations navigating unprecedented financial disruption, allowing them to remain a trusted, local presence for the communities they serve.

For more information about Smoky Hills PBS and how you can support its mission, please visit SmokyHillsPBS.org, call 1-800-337-4788, or follow the station on social media (@SmokyHillsPBS).

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About Smoky Hills PBS

Smoky Hills PBS is a public television station serving central and western Kansas with educational programming, trusted news, local storytelling, and cultural content that informs, inspires, and connects communities.

Smoky Hills PBS is available over the air with an antenna, on many cable systems, DirecTV, DirecTV Stream, and Dish Network, HULU + LIVE TV, YouTube TV, and Amazon Prime. You can also access Smoky Hills PBS via the FREE mobile app for Android and iPhone devices and is also available to stream by clicking here: video.smokyhillstv.org/livestream. More information on Smoky Hills PBS and its programs and projects are available at SmokyHillsPBS.org or by calling 1-800-337-4788.

About Public Media Company

Public Media Company (PMC) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization dedicated to helping public and independent media organizations grow stronger and more sustainable. Through investment, advisory services, and philanthropic initiatives, PMC works to ensure local media can continue serving communities nationwide. Since its founding, Public Media Company has worked with more than 400 public media organizations to advance public service media and ensure that audiences everywhere have access to trusted, independent information. For more information, visit publicmedia.co.