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## 2015 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



### **Mattoon: This is Our Story**

Aired: March 5, 2015

32 Storytellers

Total Dollars Raised: \$28,540

### **Charleston: This is Our Story**

Aired: September 16, 2015

43 Storytellers

Total Dollars Raised: \$24,982

**WEIU's Mission is to use its human and technological resources in partnership with others to benefit EIU, and help make Charleston and the surrounding area a better place to live, learn, work and play.**



**WEIU demonstrates local value** by providing integrative learning experiences to those we serve in the WEIU broadcast area by utilizing station related resources, and by cultivating relationships within the university, local schools and the community. WEIU links resources to engage citizens across multiple platforms (on air, online, and in person), and builds sustainable community relationships, and stimulates citizen participation.

**In 2015, WEIU** emphasized educational growth among pre-school children through adulthood by connecting local and national programs and PBS Educational Media in an integrative learning environment. The connection of skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences engaged WEIU viewers, listeners and learners of all ages to become members and supporters of their local public broadcasting station.

**WEIU demonstrates Local Impact** through the number of station supporters and participants at station events and activities. Testimonials, evaluation forms, memberships and financial support from viewers, listeners, and community partners share and communicate impact.

Series like *Being Well* and *The Paw Report* continue to be produced with new topics and guests from the region. In May the 500 series of Paw Report kicked off with a one-hour live, call-in special.



Susan Hays, Director of Nursing for Douglas County Public Health talking about vaccinations.



Heartland Mini Hoofs to the studio today! What a fun interview with "Bailey and Jasper"!

WEIU continued to showcase Eastern Illinois University faculty in the one-hour special “Connect” which aired in May.

# CONNECT

Two additional local programs were added to the lineup in 2015, City Spotlight and Money In Your Pocket.



City Spotlight features area community leaders from government and education. Each program is focused on one town. Viewer and guest response has been positive. City Spotlight has worked well as a resource for future editions of “Our Story”.



Money In Your Pocket is a 13-week series that started in April. This program was created to help viewers gain a better understanding of money related topics such as retirement, investments, insurance and more. Guests for the program come from area banks, insurance agencies, investment companies and faculty from Eastern Illinois University School of Business.

**Award Winning Newscast...**

WEIU TV is a PBS affiliated station owned by Eastern Illinois University. WEIU serves sixteen counties in East Central Illinois on digital channel 50, analog channel 51 and various cable systems. Our news programs include *News Watch*, which airs Monday thru Friday at 5:30 p.m., *News Watch Night Cap* at 9:57 p.m., and *News Watch This Morning* at 5:59 and 6:30 a.m.

A team of more than thirty journalists cover stories that are of community importance.

**Illinois News Broadcasters State Collegiate News Awards**

2015 – Outstanding T.V. Newscast – 1<sup>st</sup> Place  
2015 – Outstanding T.V. Videography – 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Kole Rushmore  
2015 – Outstanding T.V. Reporting – 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Nathan Page

**Illinois Broadcaster's Association Student Silver Dome Awards**

Best T.V. Weathercast  
1st Place - Derrick Jackson  
2nd Place - Braden Harp  
3rd Place - Lacey Clifton



**Programming Broadcast Hours on WEIU...**

Tot. Hours of Programming Broadcast: 8248

Tot. Hours of Children's Programming: 2879

Tot. Hours Other Educational Programming: Nature/Science and  
Technology/History: 827

Tot. Hours How-To and Other Instructional Programming: 1625

Tot. Hours of Children's and Other Educational and Instructional Programming:  
5331

Tot. Hours of Local Productions: 484

**Community Impact goes beyond the broadcast signal through****WEIU Educational Services**

raising  
readers

Each week, WEIU-TV broadcasts more than 40 hours of quality PBS Kids programming. These programs not only entertain, but also focus on literacy development, healthy lifestyles, and positive social skills. WEIU has engaged in a collaborative effort with Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) to provide training and resources for teachers, parents and child care providers to extend the learning power of the children's programming we broadcast. Our services include:



- Community-based projects such as child care provider literacy visits.
- Health and literacy outreach.
- Book and literacy kit distribution programs, events, and more.

**Goals of the Program**

- Increase children's emergent literacy skills.
- Increase parents' frequency of reading with their children.
- Increase parent/educator use of the Learning Triangle with children.

**Our Partners**

Literacy visits are offered to the following counties:

- Coles, Cumberland, Clark, Edgar, Shelby, Moultrie

Many organizations have benefited from our services, such as:

**Head Start**, serving the following communities:

- Altamont, Pana, Sullivan, Charleston, Mattoon, Tuscola, Neoga, Casey, Pana, Westfield, Effingham, Cumberland Home Base, Robinson, Toledo, Effingham, Vandalia, Chrisman, Cowden

**Project Help**, serving the following communities:

- Charleston, Kansas and Ashmore

### Child Care Centers and Community Organizations

- Building Blocks Play and Learn Center, Child Care Resource and Referral (EIU), Coles County Health Department, Charleston Parks & Recreation, Eastern Illinois University Student Association for the Education of Young Children, Eastern Illinois.

### Number of resources developed to enhance family and/or caregiver use and practice around WEIU Educational Services learning goal:

August 2015 Kids Day Activity Bags = 300

Literacy Kit Activity bags for Literacy Visits = 84

PBS Kids Writer's Contest Activity bags = 27

Mattoon Head Start Family Literacy Night = over 100 books distributed

### Number of capacity-building outreach activities directed at families or caregiver:

August 2015 Kids Day event with over 2000 attendees (1000 being children)

(84) Literacy Visits



Kids Day  
at the  
Castle

**Number of capacity-building outreach activities directed at educators:**

(15) WEIU Station Tours, over 530 people, WEIU Educational events/activities discussed.

(3) PBS Learning Media and/or Educational presentations

**PBS LearningMedia™****Number of educators who participate in or receive RTL professional development in 2015:**

150 educators participated

**Number of families or caregivers who participated in literacy visits in 2015:**

Caregivers attending Literacy Visits = 85

**Number of children who participated in outreach activities:**

2015 Kids Day = 2000

2015 Literacy Visits = 650

2015 PBS Kids Writer's Contest = 27

2015 WEIU Station Tours (RTL events/activities discussed) = 527





**Number of national and community based organizations that collaborate with WEIU Educational Services:**

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), IAEYC, Healthy Families 4 Life, United Way of Coles County, Paris Community Hospital, Team High Maintenance Bicycle Club, Douglas-Hart Nature Center, Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center, I Sing the Body Electric, Girls on the Run, EIU Health Resource Center, U of I Extension, Charleston Public Library, American Red Cross of Coles County, Charleston Fire Department, Central Illinois Big Brothers/Big Sisters, (60) Family Child Care Homes, Cornerstone Christian Academy, Prototykes, Kermit's Kove, Small Blessings, Mattoon Head Start (2), Building Blocks, Bright Start, Casey Head Start, Charleston Head Start, Little School House, Grace Lutheran CDC, Paris Head Start, City of Charleston Tourism, 1st Federal Savings & Loan Association of Central Illinois, Eastern Illinois University, ROE #11, ROE #12

**Membership Matters...**

WEIU has 1067 total members

307 became new members in 2015

The average donation per member is \$126.

**Viewer comments...**

I support WEIU on a monthly basis through EFT at my bank. What a wonderful and easy way to support MY local television station!  
Sandra, Charleston

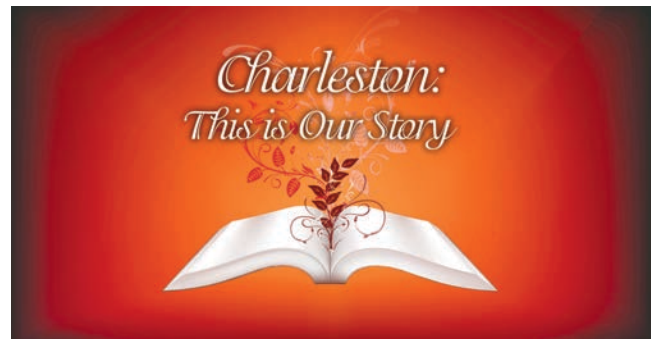
I really enjoyed working with the WEIU staff during my interview for Paris: This is Our Story and am looking forward to the LIVE program.  
Paul  
Effingham

One of the things that I like about your station is that you have a great variety and educational programs that I can only find on WEIU.  
Tami  
Westfield

WEIU is local. This is very important to my family. Having a TV station in my town is a gem! My family has visited the station many times for tours with our home school group. The staff is wonderful and very welcoming.  
Matt, Charleston

## Helping You Tell the Story of Your Community!

*This is Our Story* project is a way for us to connect with the communities we serve as well as a way to allow those communities to tell their stories!



Be it known that the Staff of WEIU-TV is duly recognized with this Award of Merit by the Coles County Regional Planning and Development Commission's Historic Preservation Advisory Council for furthering the objectives of county-wide historic preservation through the planning, production and broadcast of the video presentation entitled *Mattoon: This is Our Story* which featured segments on historic Mattoon landmarks.



**Comments shared from “Our Story” Storytellers...**

I felt it could not have went any better. The people from WEIU, no matter what position they were working make me feel so comfortable I didn't realize how fast time went by. Made me feel like I was part of the team ,thank you everybody it was great.

**Brian Gates, Paris: This is Our Story**

I would like to take a minute to share what a wonderful experience I had sharing the Special Olympic Family Festival story. The WEIU staff were friendly yet professional putting me at ease in front of the camera. Special Olympics has a special place in my heart so I was happy to share the SOFF experience and get the word out to our community. I loved the finished product and even learned something new about my hometown. Thank you for supporting this worthwhile project. I would love to see more stories in the future.

**Sincerely, Celeste Webb , Mattoon: This is Our Story**

The two sessions with the WEIU crew were informative and useful in telling our stories. We met first at the new Paris High School where Jana, Lori, and Ke'an explained the process, showed clips from the Effingham and Mattoon segments from the past, and role played for us. Afterwards was a questions and answer session which further enlightened the group. I supplied a list I compiled about possible stories to be told by the group. Several audience members already had an idea of their topics. My wife Jeri encouraged me to join the group to tell the story of Reservoir Park, which became Twin Lakes. My interview went very well after much rehearsing. Jana and Lori couldn't have been nicer and helpful. I saw several local, familiar faces coming in and leaving the Ernie Eveland gym. My overall experience was wonderful. Keep up the good work, WEIU staff! We love the local community stories.

The next day I went to EIU to meet with a current Historical Administration student for an interview about my museum experiences since graduating from EIU in 1986. That went well in the student union. Afterwards I went to the WEIU studios in Buzzard Hall and met the WEIU staff again. They were welcoming and friendly. It was a very good day.

Thanks,

**Phil Lewis**

**Paris: This is Our Story**

It was my pleasure to work with the staff at WEIU-TV on the production of Charleston's 'Our Story'...the Charleston public schools and Eastern Illinois University have been fortunate to produce more than our fair share of successful athletes who have excelled in professional sports competition so it was fun to be able to relate their successes to the folks in the WEIU viewing area...the 'Our Story' productions have showcased the many positive 'stories' that makes east central Illinois a great place to live, work and raise a family, and these shows that come into our living rooms illustrate just that...WEIU-TV fulfills a wonderful mission by providing 'hands on' educational experiences for students interested in a broadcasting career while also serving as a public relations vehicle to showcase these talents to the audience in the east central Illinois area that Eastern most directly serves...kudos to all involved!

**David Kidwell, Charleston: This is Our Story**

The entire WEIU staff was very encouraging and helpful during all phases of, Paris, This Is Our Story production. They helped each storyteller relax during the actual interview. Fred Peralta, WEIU Producer was very good with me when discussing the actual photos to be used with my interview. Long story short, I'd do it again for the WEIU team.

**David W. Dick, Paris: This is Our Story**

Working with the staff of WEIU-TV to prepare for the Charleston "Our Town" production was a delight. From the outset, they made every attempt to facilitate our part: Helpful written and verbal directions, putting us at ease and having infinite patience during the taping, then editing it skillfully to make us look good.

Prior to the airing, they staged a red-carpet preview party. During the airing and pledge program, there was an upbeat party atmosphere (with yummy food) and the opportunity to serve as a telephone answerer, if one so desired.

We can't say enough about how personable and professional the staff was. We'd do it all over again in a heartbeat! We've received dozens of positive comments about the production, about how well-done it was and how much people learned about the community. Charleston is fortunate to have WEIU as a resource.

**Kathy and Dick Hummel, Charleston: This is Our Story**



Being a part of the Mattoon This is your story was an absolute honor. What an incredible gift to our community this project is. To be able to capture the history, the stories, and the impact of various programs that have shaped our community is truly remarkable. We are so lucky that WEIU was willing to lead us through this process and captured the amazing spirit that makes our city such a special place to call home.

**Beth Gillespie, Mattoon: This is Our Story**

I was skeptical, then curious, then interested, finally intrigued enough to participate. Now I am excited to see the result – and looking forward to how it can be used!

Thanks for a good experience, WEIU!

**Rev. Michael C. Dixon**  
**Paris: This is Our Story**

I wanted to drop this note to you to let you and the powers that be at EIU know how much your programming mean to myself and out community.

It is refreshing to know that there is good clean TV entertainment out there that is family friendly and related to local community and ideals.

I have been on WEIU programming in the past with Duska Cornwell's program and was honored to be a part of Charleston: This is Our Story.

I cannot tell you how many people recognize me throughout the community from being a Charleston Story Teller. I learned so much about Charleston that I did not know through this programming.

It is so important that WEIU continue to promote this type of programming so people in our community will have the opportunity to learn the roots of this town.

I have lived here all of my life (52 years), I went to Buzzard Lab School; 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade (when they closed it down in 1974), worked with the town and the city, and attended EIU for my college education as a teacher. Having grown up here in a family business, I have seen how Eastern Illinois University has been an integral part of this towns livelihood, heritage and history.

### **Gena Bunch-Epperson, Charleston: This is Our Story**

I would like to THANK everyone at WEIU again for the awesome experience with the "Charleston Our Story" project. I was a bit nervous to record my story on John Daum, but Jana & Rameen did an outstanding job with my interview, recording & editing of my story! Then when we aired the stories live on WEIU, I had a great time answering the phones & seeing that whole process from behind the scenes. Ke'an & Jana are so energetic, and do a fantastic job. Everyone at WEIU was so nice to work with and they are such a huge blessing to our Charleston community!

Sincerely,

**Ginger Stanfield, Charleston: This is Our Story**

I am a writer; more specifically an historian. Over the years because of that fact I have been asked to address various audiences. The core of my speeches is the importance for individuals to pass on the stories of their pasts not only conversationally but by the written word as well.

The WEIU production staff has fortified my beliefs, indeed passed on my thoughts to thousands of viewers, more folks than I could possibly address in my lifetime, by putting together and airing the "This Is Our Town" series. Each story told in that series is historically important; more importantly is the fact that each story is recorded and is a permanent record established.

The folks at WEIU responsible for this wonderful, important project should be recognized and highly commended for their idea and work.

### **Heck Parrish, Paris: This is Our Story**

Thanks to WEIU for allowing me to be a part of the Charleston Stories Collection, this past June, 2015. The experience was very pleasant, and they helped me in telling my story. I provided them with a collection of video and pictures, and they produced a montage that worked well. The theme of this story was "Where are you going? Nowhere," Nowhere was a teen club in the mid and later 1960's that held weekend dance and music events for a large area in Central Illinois. It had great bands and Chicago WLD DJ's to hold sock hops. Louise Taylor, my mom, myself, my dad, and brother Red Taylor were the main characters in the story. Red Taylor was bass player for Rhythm's Children band and was very popular. I felt the story was successfully done, and provides a video history of the Nowhere for prosperity. I have received lots of comments online about the program. Thanks again to WEIU.

**Howard Taylor, Southaven, MS. , Charleston: This is Our Story**

I am stopped at least once a month, by someone who saw the Mattoon-Our Story program. They comment on how well it was done, that they could watch it over and over, and also, by how much they learned. Your staff did an outstanding job in building community relations with those programs. All of the story tellers were given an opportunity for education, and a voice for our shared love of community.

As a participant in a Heartland Highways segment (The quilters of Gees Bend) and the Mattoon Story, I am proud of those final segments produced by WEIU. There was not an error or glitch from beginning to end. All of the story tellers involved in the Mattoon Story felt like we were an integral part of the process and each story was important. And when the WEIU crew followed the Alabama quilters during their visits at various venues in 2012 and 2014, they in turn became our voice for sharing these talented quilters with the larger east central Illinois region.

WEIU-TV educates, entertains, enlightens, and enriches our lives. As a life-long art educator, graduate of EIU ('75 and '86), I am proud of the warm and approachable staff, quality programs, and original productions. I am proud to support WEIU and most importantly.....WEIU supports our voices here in East Central Illinois. You are the BEST!!

Sincerely,

**Jamie S Willis, Mattoon: This is Our Story**

I am so proud to have been a part of WEIU's "Charleston, This is Our Story." I have been amazed at the number of people, both good friends and people I hardly knew, who have come up to me and said, "I saw you on TV on the Charleston Story, you did a nice job," and then went on to say how much they enjoyed the whole program. I think the program brought this community together in a way that I cannot remember before.

I enjoyed everything about my participation, though I didn't expect to when I started out. I didn't volunteer for the job but was drafted by a fellow Reading Circle member who said, "We should go to that meeting and make sure the Reading Circle is represented." I agreed to go with her and then she didn't show up. At that first meeting I was impressed with how committed all the WEIU people were to the project and how much interest they showed in my tiny piece of Charleston history. But I still tried to pass the job off to two other people with no success before I finally said, Okay, I'll do it.

I was alarmed at how much visual material they wanted. I knew I could tell the story of the history and activities of the Charleston Reading Circle and maybe even make it a little interesting, but I also knew I had no video with little chance of getting any, and while our group has lots of old programs, clippings and photographs, most of them were in the archives at the Charleston Public Library, not available to bring to the station. Jana Johnson came to my rescue and offered to go to the library with me and take photographs, which she did. I got to know Jana a little and came to think of her as my friend and supporter in this project.

When I went to the studio the day of the filming, she and Rameen put me at ease and made the whole thing seem simple and fun. I hope the rest of the participants enjoyed their time on camera as much as I enjoyed mine. I was delighted with their editing of my ramblings and the skill with which they used the pictures I supplied. I mentioned Mrs. Livingston Lord in my talk but had no picture of her. I learned later that they had asked the EIU Archives for a picture and when none was available reached out to another university to find one. That careful attention to detail was evident all the way through the program and is one of the reasons why it was such a success. I have shown my copy to family and friends with great pride and will continue to do so for a long time.

### **Jane Gilbert , Charleston: This is Our Story**

Happy to share about my experience in helping with Effingham: Our Story through WEIU.

Due to a family emergency, our library director wasn't able to attend the taping session scheduled so she asked me if I'd be willing to step in for her. I am so glad that I said 'yes!' The staff and interviewer were fantastic at creating the quiet corner setting - it really felt like I was sharing a story with a friend. The process was smooth and staff were efficient and respectful of the time of all the participants.

Of course, our library purchased a copy of the DVD and it continues to circulate well.

### **Johnna Schultz, Effingham: This is Our Story**



WEIU's series "This is Our Story" provides the opportunity for community members to share unique and often unrecognized assets in our towns. From local history to stories about various individuals, businesses and events that shape the character of our small towns, "This is Our Story" was a great experience of which to be a part. The crew at WEIU was a pleasure to work with and the production was top-notch. And the red-carpet opening night was a blast! Thanks to this series, I and other viewers of the programs learned much about the featured east central Illinois communities.

**Kit Morice, Charleston: This is Our Story**

First I enjoyed the entire process. You, Jana, and the entire staff were very professional.

Second, I was totally amazed by the large number of people who told me that they had seen me on the "Our Town" program. It is no exaggeration to say that at least 50 people made positive comments to me. Most of the people I knew but several I did not know. For example I was at County Market when a couple told me that they enjoyed the information on Old Main and a checker at Wal-Mart asked if I was the person who did the story about Old Main. It was a great experience.

**Lou Hencken, Charleston: This is Our Story**

I was honored to tell my story, as it relates to the local community. WEIU staff were very supportive in helping to outline the story, determine what made sense to include, and how to prepare for the taping. I very much appreciated the professionalism of the videographer, and the tips on how to dress. It was fun, despite being uncertain about the process and outcome. Excellent job with the final project.

**Marita Metzke, Charleston: This is Our Story**

I loved working with you and the entire WEIU staff on the "Our Story - Charleston" project. I was grateful for the way you made me feel comfortable being on camera. The editors were amazing as they made me look like I had done this a 100 times before. The evening we worked the phones, while the program debuted, was a very memorable experience. The level of enthusiasm for Charleston was palpable. The connections between generations was impactful - from Mr. Inyart and his stories about his shoe business, to the young man with his grandfather's classic hand tool collection. Thanks for facilitating this important project which gave our community an opportunity to learn more about its history and become more connected.

**Mark Hudson, Charleston: This is Our Story**

It was an educational and fun time for me. I am definitely of the older generation ; it was a pleasure to talk with and learn from the young people at the station.

Everyone was most professional. Their commitment was obvious. When the program was aired I was told my many here in Effingham how much it was enjoyed and what a good job had been done!

**Maxine Dehn, Effingham: This is Our Story**

Thank you for doing the Our Story Paris, and for the other towns as well. I hope you continue doing communities in the area. I have seen the show about Charleston and parts of Mattoon and Effingham, and can't wait for Paris! You do a great job with the shows and a great service to the community. These stories are important and I know of no other way to get them presented this well. I would tell anyone (and have told a few already) how much fun it is being a storyteller and how great everyone from EIU is to work with. I know its a lot of work so thank you all the more.

Keep up the great work!

**Nels Kasey, Paris: This is Our Story**

I very much enjoyed my time with WEIU while they were filming the story on Paris, Illinois.

Everyone seemed quite knowledgeable and professional.

They have kept me in the loop while planning schedules, and let me know ahead of the dates that the program will premier and when it will air on Channel 51.

If given the opportunity, I would be happy to work with them again. And if any friends had concerns, I would tell them of the great work that WEIU does today, as well as more than a decade ago, when they requested to use some of my photos, and included them in a 2004 story that they did about the 1544th Transportation Company that is still online today.

Thank you for all of your efforts! I anxiously await the opportunity to see the program.

**Patrick Twigg, Paris: This is Our Story**

What a delight to work with such professional people who photographed and interviewed stories about our town, Paris. We were especially proud that "our" university was taking on this project to highlight the stories of surrounding communities! Great job, Eastern!

**Patti McHenry, Paris: This is Our Story**

I had the privilege of working with the WEIU staff on both “Mattoon: This is Our Story” and “Charleston: This is Our Story.”

I thoroughly enjoyed the experiences. The staff was kind, courteous and highly professional. We were notified ahead of time of what we needed to provide for the programs. All the information was provided in great detail, and the staff was readily available if we had questions.

WEIU’s staffers made it comfortable and easy to be on television for those of us not accustomed to doing so. It was a fun experience, and the enthusiasm exuded by the staff was contagious. I had many people from many area communities remark, for many weeks afterward, that they saw me on WEIU and enjoyed the programs.

I’d be happy to talk to anyone about my positive experience with WEIU. It truly was a pleasure to be involved with WEIU programming.

**Penny Weaver, Mattoon: This is Our Story**

WEIU Our story was an opportunity for the Charleston community and beyond to have insight to the services provided by CTF ILLINOIS and the importance people with disabilities have within the community. The people who receive services appreciated and were excited to see themselves on television.

**Reagan Carey, Charleston: This is Our Story**

In my opinion, the “Our Story” programs give a valuable historical look at communities in our area. Focusing on important but sometimes little-known aspects of the communities involved, the collected stories provide insights into the cities’ life, people, activities, institutions and history. If not for the “Our Story” programs, some of these memories would not have been recorded, broadcast or preserved. The production of the program I was involved with concerning Paris, Illinois was well-planned, professionally executed, and conducted in a friendly and efficient manner. Congratulations to the project staff.

**Bob Hillman, Paris: This is Our Story**

My experiences in doing with the staff of WEIU was excellent. They performed in a professional manner and made the attempt to feel all participants feel he ease in front of the camera. The outcome of the production was of extreme high quality and contained many unknown aspects of the history of the community.

**Dr. Robert Good, Charleston: This is Our Story**

It was an interesting experience, but probably not quite as scary as facing a class of unknown students in a new setting. Somehow I managed to survive your experience. The people that I worked with in Ernie’s Gym were very kind to me and were pretty good at filling me in to what was both your part of the screening process and what was expected of me. I believe that I was a little concerned that I would not be seen as dedicated to my story to the point that viewers will understand how important that teaching kids and what the school has to offer, at least from my way of thinking. I believe it was a little hard to relate my story to the pictures as I am not sure how they will be used. I will leave that to the able hands of your producers and staff. I was very poor at reading your prompts and I apologize as I know that you have to get your word out as well. Thanks for the opportunity and I will remember the experience and hope that your productions go well. A side note, I really enjoyed my four years at Eastern and was glad that most of my classes were take with the traditional students. It gives me some insight about a great Institution and some pretty good teachers, and a very good adult education system. Thank you Ke’an, Jana, and to WEIU TV.

**Roger Stanley, Paris: This is Our Story**



Thank you Jana and Ke'an for the opportunity to be on My Story:Effingham! I've received many kind encouragement from the different airings of the event and I've enjoyed it all! I feel this story really helps build community by letting individuals talk about what in their community makes them passionate! Thank you!

**Rosemary Gibbons, Effingham: This is Our Story**

I recently participated in Charleston, Our Story. The staff at WEIU really impressed me. This place seemed to have only employees that truly seemed to love their job and were so enthusiastic. I have never entered an office where every single person had a genuine smile and were eager to meet you. They were anxious to please you and make you feel at ease. It was a very pleasant experience. As far as the "Our Story" shows, I know of four, there may have been more, but they are very interesting and well put together. Very impressive. These stories are historical keepsakes. I hope there are more. Once they have completed stories on the surrounding areas, I am sure they can go back to each town and do more. Such a good idea to do this. Love, Love, Love it! Keep up the good work!

**Deborah Sanders, Charleston: This is Our Story**

I cannot tell you enough how wonderful you and your staff was during the filming of Our Story Mattoon. I was so nervous but your staff made me feel at ease and worked so well. WEIU did an amazing job and should be proud of the final product. This will be something that our youth can remember as a history to our town.

WEIU has been a stable part of this community and cannot imagine surviving without it.

**Sandra Graven, Mattoon: This is Our Story**

Thank you for all your hard work on the project. We are excited to see it.

**Scott Barrett, Paris: This is Our Story**

The experience I had in the production of the “Mattoon & Charleston: This Is Our Story” features was entirely favorable. These productions not only boosted local/regional morale, but featured little known resources and programs that would have otherwise been lost to history or remained un-noticed. This positive enhancement of the subject communities and the region would not have been accomplished without the exemplary performance demonstrated by the WEIU-TV administrative and production staffs. Continued fiscal support for the “Our Story” productions is essential for the cultural refinement of viewers within the coverage area.

**Steve Thompson**  
**Mattoon: This is Our Story**

Like Talking to your Best Friend... Jana and Ke'An, and even with the Camera Man, Rameen, rolling the film, the experience, felt as if the lights and camera's were gone..and it was just friends talking about Life in Charleston. There is so many moments, I was able to tell them, and for them to edit my story, I knew they would use the utmost professionalism, in putting together My unique tale of a couple who immigrated from India, and ended up raising their children, in this Small University Town Illinois!! To open up to a Person, you have only met and conversed with via e-mails and FB msg, These Women, really brought together so many of us, and our Stories.

I have learned so much more about my Home Town, through the photos and Story Tellers!! these Stories would have been Lost, if it wasn't for this Series and the insight of Ke'an and Jana, to tell these stories about the Small towns surrounding us, in Illinois!! This is a project, which, every person, in Small towns need to collect and preserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to express to the impact, WEIU-TV, has in our Lives, and the appreciation towards all the people who dedicated themselves to collect so many of our stories!! and bring them to the attention of our Community.

The Pleasure was All of Ours...

**Sujata Dey-Koontz, Charleston: This is Our Story**

The WEIU "Our Story" was priceless. Numerous individuals stopped in to tell our staff how fantastic of a job was done featuring our town of Effingham. Thank you for choosing The Thomas Shop. The entire experience was surreal.

**Stacia Thomas Bloemer, Effingham: This is Our Story**

My experience with the “Charleston Our Story” was one of enjoyment, education and feeling like I was part of something truly unique and special. First of all, it was great to get the story of the Five Mile House recorded and sent out to so many people. The Five Mile House is such an important part of our local history. Secondly, in watching all the stories being told, I learned so much about the Charleston community in an enjoyable way and from so many people, many of whom I know. All of the stories were fascinating and each one helped to fill in a piece of our local cultural and historic landscape. Third, it was fun and inspiring being part of such an important and far reaching project. Thank you both so much for doing this and allowing me to be part of it.

**Tom Vance, Charleston: This is Our Story**

Thanks for all you have done. As a three time graduate of EIU, I am so very pleased. It was a wonderful experience to have WEIU in Paris. The staff was warm, personable, knowledgeable, and easy to share thoughts and ideas. Many will now be lifelong friends. Most importantly, their work in featuring Paris on film, actually brought the people here closer to one another. Through their efforts and facilitation to produce a document about us, it actually made us realize who we were and what a positive community we live. Refreshing.....

Above all, it was FUN!!!!

Highest regards,

**Warren L. Sperry, Paris: This is Our Story**

I had a great time telling the story of U of I Extension—thank you so much for the opportunity! I saw the snippets that were on FaceBook yesterday—awesome work! I can’t wait to see the completed project!

**Mary Liz Wright, Paris: This is Our Story**

I was so impressed at the quality and professionalism of the WEIU staff during production of the "Our Story" program. They were helpful in arranging the interview and insuring that we were well-prepared and had gathered the kinds of video and photography that would be helpful to share with the wider community. They did an awesome job of editing the interview. I also found them supportive, friendly, and extremely hospitable on the night of the program's viewing by the community.

**Thomas Hawkins, Charleston: This is Our Story**

