



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Radically Rural Summit to Focus on Building Rural Communities and Local Journalism

KEENE, NH — Radically Rural, the annual two-day summit focused on issues and opportunities in small cities and towns, opens Sept. 19 and is expected to attract 800 people from the Monadnock Region, the Northeast and throughout the country.

The Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship and The Keene Sentinel partner to present Radically Rural, which provides a uniquely rural point-of-view for community-building, news coverage, entrepreneurship and economic development. Radically Rural includes program tracks on entrepreneurship, arts and culture, community journalism, Main Streets and downtowns, working lands and renewable energy.

Terrence Williams, president and COO at The Keene Sentinel, said, “Last year’s event exceeded all expectations in attendance and the quality of programs. More is planned this year, and we are delighted with our slate of speakers and panelists.”

He outlined this year’s journalism program:

### **Session One: Collaboration – Competitive barriers drop; journalists work together on rural issues**

September 19 | 10 am. to Noon

Moderator: **Leah Todd**, Regional Manager, New England, Solutions Journalism Network

If you live well outside the city of Bozeman, Montana, there’s a good chance you’re living in a town with a contracting economy, shrinking population and growing opioid and mental health issues. All under the radar. There’s no one to cover the issues. That changed due a group of journalists from western Montana, supported by High Country News and the Solutions Journalism Network. What was produced was an exhaustive, comprehensive look at what many small towns across the country face – and the coverage came with solutions.

Speakers: **Nick Ehli**, managing editor, Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Bozeman, Montana

**Stefanie Murray**, director, Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University

Panel discussion: **Melanie Plenda**, Project Manager, Granite State News Collaborative

**Dawn DeAngelis**, Vice President, Chief Content Officer, NHPBS

### **Session Two: Solutions Journalism – Helping communities take the next steps**

September 19 | 2-4 pm

Moderator: **Leah Todd**, Regional Manager, New England, Solutions Journalism Network

News consumers these days can come away from the experience feeling depressed, disengaged, powerless, hopeless. Solutions journalism envisions a more productive experience, one that builds engagement, trust and a renewed hope in democracy, by reporting rigorously on the responses to social

problems -- in addition to the problems themselves. Find out how this is being done in rural places, the training behind it and the encouraging results from this disruptive approach.

**An interactive session featuring solutions journalists.**

Speakers: **Leah Todd**, Regional Manager, New England, Solutions Journalism Network  
**Amy Maestas**, Digital Editor, Salt Lake Tribune

**Session Three: Crazy Good – 50 ideas that will grow your audience**

September 20 | 9-10:30 am

Moderator and session leader: **Tim Schmitt**, project manager, Gatehouse Media

We've reached far and wide! Here are more than four dozen ways you can build better bridges to your readers – from thought-provoking story ideas, to collaborative ways to tackle big projects, to new newsroom structures. If you only have time to do a few of these, you will be happy you did. A sneak peek: How we built Radically Rural. Leave with a magazine that curates these ideas.

**Bonus session Funding Journalism – Where to look for help**

September 20 | 10:30-11 am

We present the details on the growing number of funding sources for journalism projects and initiatives.

For tickets, go to <https://ticketelf.com/events/radically-rural-summit-2019> Early bird pricing is available through July 5. And for additional information on all tracks, go to [www.radicallyrural.org](http://www.radicallyrural.org)

Mary Ann Kristiansen, executive director at Hannah Grimes said, “Broad shifts in demographics, technology and values are creating opportunity for innovative thinkers, entrepreneurs and community-builders who love their rural communities and know their advantages.”

Kristiansen notes that recent studies indicate that people are increasingly interested in living in rural areas and that technology advances make living and working in rural areas easier than ever. “Radically Rural spotlights and shares new ideas.”

Williams and Kristiansen noted that Radically Rural includes the popular CONNECT event on Sept. 19, a major gathering that attracts local business leaders and event attendees. This year's theme is “What's Next!,” with a focus on the future in each track.

Hannah Grimes, for the second year, is featuring The PitchFork Challenge, a business pitch competition that will award the winning business a \$10,000 cash prize. The summit also includes keynote presentations by Wendy Guillies, executive director and president of the Kaufmann Foundation, a major funder of entrepreneurship, and Art Markman, executive director of IC<sup>2</sup> at the University of Texas Austin, the oldest business incubator in the country.

“Rural communities have distinct challenges and opportunities that are not adequately addressed by conventional economic development conferences,” said Williams. “Radically Rural prioritizes innovative approaches specifically designed for rural places.”

The summit transforms Keene's downtown into a conference center, utilizing small venues. Attendees will pass coffee houses, restaurants, shops, and meeting places to find event locales at The Colonial Theatre, old County Courthouse, the Historical Society of Cheshire County, Keene State College, Keene Public Library and the Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship.