

Imagining

JoAnn Urofsky- WUSF

The WUSF Perspective on Florida

Florida's population grows by about 1,060 people per day accounting for in-migration and out-migration. The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research director reports that this decade will bring the "largest absolute population increase of any decade in Florida's history" which means another 3.6 million residents. In 2010, Florida will pass NY as the third-largest state. While many newcomers will be those who have always migrated to Florida – the rust belt residents seeking warmer climates – the largest growth will come from Cuba, Mexico, Haiti, Colombia and Jamaica.

According to census bureau data trends and information in Florida Trend magazine (Apr 06), by 2030, 25% of Florida's population will be Hispanic and 25% of Floridians will be over age 65.

Two areas in WUSF's broadcast coverage region have been among the top ten markets for fastest-growing Hispanic populations. They are Lakeland and Sarasota/Bradenton.

Church groups have sponsored migrations of Somalis, Bosnians, Sudanese and Vietnamese around Tampa and Orlando and such inflows often lead to chain migrations in which other family members, neighbors and communities also migrate to the region.

African-American migrations are on the upswing. The black population of Tampa increased by 14% in the first part of this decade and Tampa remains among the 10 fastest-growing black populations in the country.

In the very urban counties of Hillsborough (Tampa) and Pinellas (St. Pete, Clearwater) in-migrants tend to earn from a couple hundred dollars to a couple thousand dollars less than those who are migrating out.

Politically, Florida's growth will make it more important in the House of Representatives and more important in presidential elections.

Environmentally, the additional of a projected 8 million more residents will put enormous strain on the ecosystem.

Knowledge of these growth patterns will help WUSF Public Broadcasting determine how to be of the highest services to the region.

Perspective #1: From the Viewer's Living Room:

WUSF has long aspired to be *the* public service media of choice for the Tampa Bay region. It's clear that is happening as I watch this family enjoy watching the many channels WUSF offers and participate with other viewers, interacting through our website.

WUSF's HD channel provides a lively variety of programs, many of them created by WUSF to reflect the needs and interests of residents of the region.

Using the University of South Florida's knowledge resources, WUSF has been able to create channels that bring a wealth of information about health, medicine and healthy lifestyles; political information about being involved in the community and participating in decision-making about transportation, education and community amenities in Spanish and in English.

There are two health, medicine and healthy lifestyle channels – one in English and one in Spanish. They are family-oriented and while the programming is mostly the same on both channels except for the language difference, there are two shows that focus specifically on their target audience on each channel. The one for adults is a weekly medical call-in program with a panel of medical experts specific to the topic. You can call in or email questions on a specific medical topic each week and have your questions answered in your preferred language. The other is a healthy lifestyle program for kids from 10 – 14 in which the panel is composed of kids. The call-in and email questions often revolve around problems at school or home.

The family also has the opportunity to use VOD services of the programs and other medicine related offerings. Because these programs are a great public service, the cable company offers them for free. VOD was particularly helpful after the family's 12 year old daughter had her tonsils out. The hospital had emailed the 5 minute video to Mom's cell phone about how to care for her daughter after the surgery. She watched it on the way home from the hospital on her cell phone then watched a VOD download of it several times and had Grandpop watch it when he came over to take care of his granddaughter for the afternoon. He's much more comfortable with the Spanish version.

The Florida Channel was created in 2003 as the "C-SPAN" for Florida. Fortunately, the legislature has been meeting for only 8 weeks per year for the last several years and the rest of the time, WUSF programs the Florida Channel with public meetings and programs about how to use the political system. One example is the show *The Justice Files* which WUSF produces in English and Spanish. *The Justice Files* tracks a process through the courts. Some of the topics include gaining US citizenship, filing a small business court claim and gaining custody of a child. It really came in handy when the family's 15 year old son fell in with a bad group of kids and was picked up for petty theft. Mom and Dad and their son learned how to make certain he fulfilled his community service obligations and how to file the paperwork to get unfortunate incident off his permanent record. In fact, it was through watching WUSF-HD that the family saw the program on the Hillsborough River RiverKeepers and decided that's the group with which the son would do his 30 hours of community service work.

Through its radio station, WUSF is providing great classical music, a news and information channel and a channel programmed by school children ages 10 – 14. They get to program the channel, deejay and learn about new things by interviewing

community experts. The Radio Reading Service now has program-assisted data which helps people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Perspective #2: From the Board Room of Local Foundation

The local foundation board has just decided to commit a significant amount of annual funding to WUSF. Even though the station best represents the University of South Florida in the region, the foundation sees that WUSF's long-standing commitment to providing significant public service serves its mission best. The region has become a leader in bio- and life sciences and the health, medicine and healthy lifestyle channels are starting to have an effect on the population. Local doctors report that more people seem to be taking advantage of preventive medicine, and more people are using the areas bike paths, tennis courts and parks.

WUSF has been so generous about hosting and broadcasting community meetings in their new auditorium that the region is buzzing with interest in creating an active and diverse community that welcomes every one to share in opportunities for people of all ages. You can get involved in a group that fixes up the home of a needy, elderly person or you can escort a school group to the art museum as a stand-in "classroom mom."

The arts community has also benefited from WUSF. Attendance at music and performance events is at peak capacity thanks to WUSF's beloved announcers hosting and emceeing so many events. Just when you have the radio turned up loudly to hear the final strains of your favorite Mozart opus, you continue listening to hear a new piece of just-discovered information about the late composer.

The board of directors of the foundation know that it's not possible to give WUSF all the money it needs to produce these great programs, but they've decided to encourage all of their supporters to include WUSF in their personal bequests. And, with great ambassadors such as this board, speaking so positively on WUSF's behalf, many others will find and experience and donate to WUSF.

Perspective # 3: From inside the Station

It is 2012 and you walk through the doors of your station. Describe how it looks and feels. What types of activities occur at the station? Who might you see? What is the most effective change you've made to your organizational strategy in the past 5-10 years? How is the station supported, and how has your financial model changed since 2006?

I arrive at 8am for work and enjoy seeing the first morning meetings coming to an end. Staff and community volunteers are huddled over the next great program concept, coffee cups in hand, discussing the other community organizations that should partner in the new program. Staff and volunteers outline the organizations they'll approach and the potential corporate funders, then pair up to make calls.

Later in the day, the President of USF arrives to do her weekly uplink with the University's partner institutions in Korea, Spain, South Africa and Brazil. She's in the small studio, because the large studio is occupied by Home Shopping Network. It's a closed set today; their full crew is recording the fall fashion previews. They'll be finished at the end of the day and the WUSF crew will strike the set and prepare for production on the medical call-in show. It involves a virtual set with a clean studio.

The audio staff is miking the performance studio for a flute and piano duo who will be performing live in 3 hours. The duo is in town to perform at the Sarasota Music Festival later in the week. They'll be lecturing on the USF campus after their performance and WUSF's technician will record the lecture for a podcast. Another technician and the music director will edit the podcast into two versions; one will be the full hour long lecture and the other will be a 4 minute version with the most prescient points.

By lunchtime, the outreach team will have set up the conference room for the workgroup on diabetes outreach. The 12 experts on diabetes are from USF and from the community and represent parish nurses, the migrant worker community, USF's College of Public Health and other health service providers. They're working on developing another call-in program and on taking testing and diabetes lifestyle information to people in areas underserved by traditional medicine. They are funded by a consortium of local hospitals who also loan their outreach staff to help with WUSF's efforts.

It's clear that WUSF has proven itself to be a strong community partner time after time. The staff make the considerable workload seem effortless. They respond quickly to phone calls and emails and have made customer service a top priority. WUSF's resources are tapped for the community time after time. The mega-server at WUSF stores video and audio programs, data, news archives, podcasts, vlogs and enables members of the community to take an active part in creating the kind of community that represents their values, that transmits vibrancy and engagement.

WUSF Public Broadcasting has time to do everything except change its name to more accurately reflect the public service media organization it has become.