

# BINGO & RAFFLE Success Stories

## Crested Butte Mountain Educational Radio (KBUT)

Not all Coloradoans may be able to point to Crested Butte on a map, but after hearing about the “raucous and rowdy” bingo events hosted by KBUT Community Radio, you may want to do a Google search to locate this magnificent mountain community.



People across the state rely on quality radio broadcasts to meet their daily musical, news, weather and traffic information needs. Those in Gunnison County and across the world via the Internet are tuning in regularly to the established and reliable KBUT Community Radio, broadcasting from Crested Butte since 1986. Since its first day on the airwaves, the radio station has been providing listeners with local, national and international news, weather, and sports reports while also providing an eclectic mix of musical genres.

Josh Elmer, Events and Volunteer Coordinator and host of “The Van Down By the River Show” since 2002, credits a former general manager for starting bingo and raffles as a fundraising strategy to support the radio station’s operations. Simply put, bingo and raffle events make financial sense for KBUT. Proceeds allow the station to purchase equipment and music, and to provide training to their staff and over 90 volunteers who keep the station running. Since bingo and raffle games started in 1997, KBUT has brought in over \$72,000 through charitable giving, benefiting the 90 percent of Gunnison County reached by the station. When Josh inherited bingo and raffle responsibilities, he saw how successful and wildly popular the events had become. It was a simple decision to keep the games going.

You may be asking yourself: “How has KBUT remained a quality resource for Gunnison County residents for such a long time?” It helps to maintain a sincere dedication to having fun. Nowhere is this attitude more evident than in KBUT’s infamous “this-ain’t-your-grandmother’s” bingo games. Here’s how they describe these events on their website: “10 different games of number-calling fun, complete with adult beverages, poorly conceived jokes and puns, ‘socials’, name-calling, and all the getting-daubered-by-your-neighbor you can handle.” The goal of these bingo and raffle events is to have fun, which keeps the community engaged.



Bingo events are scheduled several times throughout the year. KBUT coordinates with local bars and restaurants, which provide space, food, and beverages. Two KBUT volunteers work the door selling cards, daubers, and markers, while two station DJs call the bingo with the assistance of one of three licensed

KBUT games managers. The host venue keeps any money made from food and beverage purchased during the events, which attract anywhere from 40 to 200 people. Financially speaking, it is a win-win situation for KBUT and host venues.

Bars usually play host, making most events 21 years old and over, but the station occasionally holds bingo at more family-friendly venues. In any case, you can always expect a diverse crowd: It's not uncommon to see a young twenty-something guzzling down an ice cold adult beverage while sitting next to a married couple in their 60's, dressed up for the costume contest being held that evening.



And leave it to the DJ bingo callers to get the crowd a little riled up. The ebb and flow of each event depends on the caller and their interaction with the boisterous crowds. It is a relationship of love and hate. If the crowd is unhappy with the pace of play, or even the numbers being called, there is no stopping a player from voicing their disapproval. It is a no-holds-barred event, and the raucous environment keeps players coming back for more.

The frequent resident turnover seen in many resort communities does not cause problems for this infamous bingo gathering. Most importantly, local residents are the main attendees, making this a truly community-based event. The community trusts KBUT as their source of information and entertainment, thus making it easier to garner player support for radio-sponsored events like bingo, raffles and even a Zombie Prom.

Asked for his advice for charities looking to start a bingo and raffle event, Elmer first recommends working with the Secretary of State's office to get licensed, and then to get out and schedule events. This begins the process of building community support. "If you build it, they will come," he says.

You can learn more about and support KBUT Community Radio by checking them out on Facebook, Twitter or their website at [www.kbut.org](http://www.kbut.org). Be on the lookout for announcements for this unique bingo event.



Have a great story about the good work that your organization is doing with bingo/raffle proceeds? Send us a short email with the name of your organization and the work you do. Featured organizations may receive fee waivers. Send emails to [licensing@sos.state.co.us](mailto:licensing@sos.state.co.us)