

NEWS RELEASE



Maryland Public Television

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For immediate release

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NOTE: Program images and graphics are available to download from MPT's Dropbox [HERE](#).

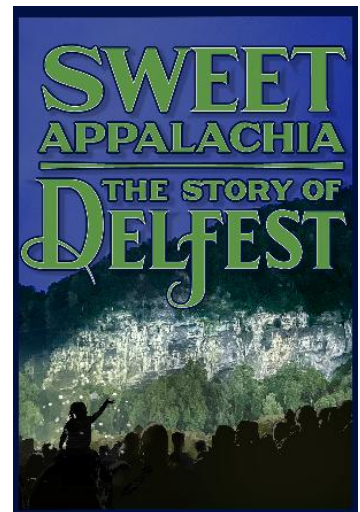
Maryland Public Television presents *Sweet Appalachia: The Story of DelFest on August 2*

60-minute documentary explores how legendary musician Del McCoury and his family helped transform a community through bluegrass, philanthropy, and connection

OWINGS MILLS, MD – [Maryland Public Television](http://MarylandPublicTelevision.org) will air the documentary *Sweet Appalachia: The Story of DelFest* on MPT and the MPT livestream at 6 p.m. on Sunday, August 2. The 60-minute film will also be available to stream on demand beginning Monday, August 3 on the [free PBS app](#) and [MPT's online video player](#). A preview is available to view on MPT's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KleGsoftYg>.

Directed and produced by Frostburg State University professor Annie Danzi, the documentary takes viewers behind the scenes of the annual DelFest music festival and explores its transformative impact on a rural city in Appalachia.

Cameras follow Grammy Award-winning bluegrass musician and festival founder Del McCoury and his family as they set up and break down the festival while offering backstage access to bluegrass musicians, festival producers, and the McCoury family. Through exclusive, intimate interviews with McCoury family members Del, Rob, and Ronnie, as well as contemporary artists such as Billy Strings and Sierra Hull, viewers discover how DelFest found its home in Cumberland and how the McCourys have embraced the area and its people.



Once a booming textile and transportation hub, Cumberland has often felt forgotten in the western reaches of the state, especially as it faced economic hardships common to post-industrial mountain towns. Today, however, the city is actively working to redefine itself, placing bluegrass music at the

center of its revitalization plan. *Sweet Appalachia* illustrates how DelFest – held annually at the Allegany County Fairgrounds in Cumberland – infuses the entire region with a renewed sense of hope and identity.

The documentary's production merged academia with real-world application. Danzi, an associate professor in Frostburg's Department of Digital Media and Visual Arts, recruited several students from the university to assist in every phase of the production. Produced over six years, the project provided undergraduate students with hands-on opportunities to gain real-world experience and learn the craft of filmmaking through involvement on a professional feature-length production.

Sweet Appalachia is an independently produced program acquired by MPT for the benefit of viewers throughout its multi-state audience. Each year, MPT's Programming & Acquisitions Department identifies upwards of 25 local and 12 national series and specials to broadcast on its airwaves, stream on its digital properties, and share with national public TV distribution partners. Other recent MPT acquisitions include [*Liberty of Conscience: The Founding of Maryland*](#), [*Upstream, Downriver: Uniting for Water Justice*](#), and [*Allergic to Failure: The Robert Covington Story*](#).

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining and educational content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices via its [online video player](#) and the [free PBS app](#). A state agency operating under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission, MPT also produces local, regional, and national programming and frequently earns regional Emmy® awards for its work. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through its [Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education](#) and [Thinkport.org](#). MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources covering a wide range of topics. More information is available at [mpt.org](#).