



A 501c3 organization founded in 2001

Legislative Update

Your Municipal Communications Resource

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Welcome to JAG's new Legislative Update.

There is a growing need for local government to communicate with residents across multiple platforms including using social media. This has developed into live hybrid meetings integrating social media and establishing delivery to various platforms, not just cable television.

JAG maintains awareness of and responds as needed to any proposed changes in local, state, and federal communications laws, administrative rulings, judicial decisions, and technology issues impacting the interests of local governments. Each month be on the lookout for our legislative newsletter. I urge you to find out more about our organization by visiting our website at www.jagonline.org or sending me an email directly at bduthaler@jagonline.org.

Bob Duthaler, President

A Retrospective on the Importance of PEG - The Full Picture

by Dave Garb, Legislative Committee Chair

Last month we talked a little about how PEG Television Channels showed their true value to our individual communities during the pandemic. We all embarked on a "fast tracked" learning curve in order to deliver important information and programming to our audiences.

Local governments, schools, small businesses, community organizations and of course, our residents, all benefited immensely because of the endeavors of their individual access channels.

PEG organizations are the ones who truly bleed the slogan "As Local, As Local Gets"! Or should we say *Hyperlocal*???

PEG stations are, always have been, and will continue to be the main source for community communications, monitoring and involvement with our local government officials and school boards. Our municipal leadership was finally able to experience the issues which we had been complaining about regarding the broadcast quality of the stations on cable, and saw first hand how the cable companies have been dismissive towards the PEG community.

Let's review what PEG actually accomplished in the beginning of the pandemic:

- 1) PEG, as I had just mentioned, had a limited time to figure out how to continue broadcasting all local government and public meetings to our residents to maintain transparency. Every PEG station has different requirements in order to air their specific programming. We had to quickly learn how platforms, such as Zoom and Cisco, worked with our various channel needs. Not only were we able to go Live through these means, but we were able to air our vital information to Facebook, YouTube, ROKU, AppleTV and Amazon Fire. We also were able to stream on individual municipal websites and PEG websites, and some stations did Instagram and Podcasts. Wherever our audiences were able to see and hear us, we made sure that the messages got to them!
- 2) PEG constantly updated essential messages from Mayors, Superintendents and Health Officials. All of us were put on a 24/7 standby notice to make this happen. PEG channels were also the only place viewers could go to watch Governor Murphy's "daily" press briefings in their entirety, both "live" and "on demand."
- 3) PEG recorded a series of chemistry, biology, and other education labs and lectures to be able to bring the practical education to students' homes. Many stations tried to create programming to help parents entertain their kids while they worked from home. PEG even developed specialized programming around yoga, meditation, drawing, painting and sing-a-long songs that both educate and entertain. Everyone created unique programming that was something that the residents looked forward to, learned from, and provided something positive.
- 4) While many municipal stations don't normally carry religious services, because of the pandemic, special arrangements were made with local churches, synagogues and mosques to carry services to worshipers who were not allowed to attend them in person. Many PEG stations also covered virtual graduations to give families a chance to celebrate with their graduates when traditional celebrations were not allowed to be in person. While sports were allowed to be played, attendance was restricted so PEG stations carried many local school sporting events, so friends and family could watch their teams and children compete. In addition, events such as Memorial

Day parades, that were not allowed to have an in-person audience, were recorded so they could be seen later, providing an important sense of normalcy.

5) PEG stations kept their Bulletin Boards up-to-date with local news and announcements from the latest Covid information to senior hours at grocery stores. This included public service messages about proper hand washing techniques, social distancing requirements, the need to wear masks, testing locations and more.

PEG stations are, always have been, and will continue to be the main source for community communications, including the monitoring and involvement with our local government officials and school boards. Unfortunately, it took this pandemic for everyone to realize the benefits of having local channels, and the value which PEG has always provided to local communities.

FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel Responds to Lawmakers' Concerns About *The Future of the Universal Service Fund*

In September, Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel penned responses to two groups of lawmakers who had written to Rosenworcel about the future of the Universal Service Fund. In her responses, the chairwoman highlighted the FCC's Report on the Future of the Universal Service Fund

adopted on August 12, 2022. **[FCC Reports to Congress on Future of the Universal Service Fund](#)**

This report is connected to the Infrastructure Act, which includes the largest ever federal investment in broadband, totaling approximately \$65 billion. This Report provides recommendations for further actions by the Commission and Congress to build upon that investment and improve the ability of the Commission to achieve its goals of universal deployment, affordability, adoption, availability, and equitable access to broadband through the Universal Service Fund and other Commission programs, to ensure that all of us have the broadband needed to succeed and thrive today.

The Report includes discussion of the costs of data transportation and their impact on rural providers, according to Rosenworcel. "It recommends that the FCC initiate a proceeding to consider the future support needs of networks serving high-cost areas, and in doing so assess what continuing support is needed to develop, maintain and improve broadband operations in those locations," she said. "In addition, the Report includes discussion of middle-mile development in high-cost areas," she continued, and recommends that the FCC "engage with NTIA on this program, and then study its results and its implications on for High Cost and the other universal service programs."

Rosenoworcel also states that the Report includes discussion of whether the Universal Service Fund contribution base should be broadened to include "edge providers," such as streaming video providers or major digital advertisers, which are by many accounts responsible for a significant volume of traffic on networks serving high-cost areas."

JAG (Jersey Access Group) is an organization that advocates, promotes, and preserves the right to media production, distribution, civic engagement, and education in support of diverse community voices, through Public, Educational and Government access facilities and other forms of media.

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