



JAG
Jersey Access Group

Your Municipal Communications Resource

..... Connecting Your Town to Your Residents

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2025

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General Meeting Schedule 2025-26

Oct. 29 – Zoom Meeting
Presentation - Preparing for ADA
Title II Web and Mobile Accessibility
Compliance

Dec. 3 – Woodbridge TV
Presentation – Switchboard

Jan. 28, 2026 – Zoom Meeting
Reorganization
Presentation – TBA

Feb. 25 – Bloomfield TV
Presentation – TelVue

Mar. 25 – Zoom Meeting
Presentation – TBA

Apr. 30 – Cranford TV
Presentation – DeSisti Lighting

May 13 and 14 – Location TBA
JAG Conference & JAG Awards

Jun. 24 – Zoom Meeting
Presentation – TBA

Sept. 30 – Varto Technologies
Presentation – TBA

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President's Message

Bob Duthaler, President of Jersey Access Group



Preparing for ADA Title II Web and Mobile Accessibility Compliance (Closed Captioning & Audio Description)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) continues to evolve as technology changes. The latest updates are about to have a major impact on how state and local governments manage their online presence. The new [ADA Title II Web and Mobile Application Accessibility Rule](#) require that all digital content—including websites, apps, and videos—be accessible to everyone.

By April 24, 2026, public entities serving populations of 50,000 or more must meet the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 Level AA](#) standards. Smaller municipalities will follow a year later, by April 24, 2027. This means that all prerecorded videos must include audio descriptions, and all video content (live or prerecorded) must include closed captions. In other words, accessibility will no longer be optional or by request; it will be required and proactive.

This new rule is a significant shift for government communicators and PEG (public, educational, and government) stations alike. It reinforces the importance of ensuring that every member of our community, regardless of ability, has equal access to the information we provide. It also highlights the need for local stations and municipalities to evaluate their workflows, captioning systems, and content management strategies now to stay compliant and avoid last-minute challenges.

At JAG, we are not just watching this development from the sidelines—we're taking action. We understand that accessibility is both a moral and legal responsibility, and that the implementation of these new requirements will take planning, resources, and knowledge. That's why JAG is already working closely with national partners and organizations across the country to monitor developments, share information, and ensure that our members have the tools and guidance they need.

Through our collaborations with other PEG associations and technology partners, we're staying ahead of the conversation and bringing valuable insights directly to our members. Our goal is to make sure that every JAG station and municipal communications department understands what's required and how to meet these standards effectively.

To help you prepare, our October General Membership Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 29th at Noon (online) will focus entirely on this topic. We'll bring in accessibility experts to explain the new ADA Title II rule, discuss best practices, and provide step-by-step strategies for compliance. Whether you're a large municipality or a small local station, this session will help you understand required changes and how to start implementing them now. Guest panelists include Mike Wassenaar, President & CEO, Alliance for Community Media and others to be announced.

As always, JAG remains committed to supporting our members through education, advocacy, and collaboration. Accessibility is about inclusion, equity, and good governance—all values that lie at the heart of our mission. Together with our partners and members, we will ensure that New Jersey's PEG stations and municipal communicators continue to lead the way in providing accessible, transparent, and engaging local content for all.

This is important discussion that affects every local government and PEG operation. Let's work together to make sure we're ready to meet these new standards and continue serving our communities at the highest levels of accessibility and professionalism. Meeting invitation, October 29th at Noon, login:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86520743091?pwd=v7YCFr4TFtdtILm9alcWIYlOIX7SfB.1>

Introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. The ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability just as other civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. The ADA guarantees that people with disabilities enjoy the same opportunities as everyone else for employment opportunities, purchasing goods and services, and participating in state and local government programs.

Title II Applies to State/Local Programs

Examples of state/local service, programs, or activities that need to comply with the ADA include:

- Public education (schools)
- Public transportation
- Recreation
- Health care
- Social services
- Courts
- Voting
- Emergency services
- Offices where people go to:
 - Renew licenses
 - Apply for food stamps
 - Pay their taxes
 - Attend town meetings
 - Serve on boards and commissions
 - Conduct other government business

General Requirement

Title II of the ADA requires state/local governments to give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services, and activities. State/local governments cannot deny people with disabilities the chance to participate in programs available to others and they cannot make them participate in different programs than those available to everyone else.

Specific Requirements

The ADA also includes specific requirements for state/local governments. For example, if you are part of a state/local government you must:

- Communicate with people with disabilities as effectively as you communicate with others.
- Make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures where needed to make sure that a person with a disability can access the state/local government's programs, services, or activities.
- Allow [service animals](#) to be with their person even if you have a no pets policy.
- Provide *program access* by ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not excluded from programs because existing buildings or facilities are inaccessible to them.
- Follow specific standards for physical accessibility when building or altering a building or facility.
- Follow specific requirements for ticket sales and testing accommodations.

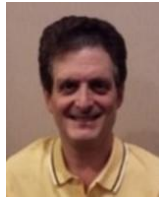
You can also learn about these and other requirements in the [State and Local Government Primer](#).

Upcoming Webinar: Livestreaming for Emergency Management

Join Switchboard Live and SoSu TV ([SoSu.TV: Innovative Government Video Production, Reno, NV](#)) for an exclusive JAG members-only special session on live streaming in emergency management situations. We'll cover best practices, platform redundancy, and real-world applications for emergency response teams. Join us on Wednesday November 12th, 11AM [Register here](#).



The Jersey Access Group has represented the interests of municipal, educational, and community television for 25 years. Our efforts on behalf of our members have never been more important. JAG's Legislative Committee has kept a watchful eye on bills—both nationally and statewide—that include potential issues for JAG members, their communities, and their operations.



Special Webinar Held on September 29th Regarding the Altice PEG Channel Switches in New Jersey and Surrounding Tri-State Municipalities

Around August, all PEG Stations who are part of the Altice/Optimum cable system had their channels switched from their normal positions to the 1300-1317 spectrum. It affected the entire tri-state area, and no one received messages from Altice that this change was coming. There was no time rebrand our stations and/or inform our residents.

After a lot of yelling from the municipalities and other parties, all channels were switched back to their original positions by the 3rd week of September. Below are some points that were made from JAG's special webinar to prepare us for the future, in the event this channel change is attempted again:

From Gerard Lederer, Attorney - Best, Best and Krieger

- Make sure your municipality's attorney understands that unless the franchise agreement talks about notice, there's no required notice of the changeover.
- You can also ask for money to help update branding. That should also be in the franchise agreement.
- Right now you should fight for your current channel position. Your municipality can send letters to Altice and the BPU stating that your channel is not to be moved. Inform them that people have grown accustomed to its current position because your station's been around for many years (be specific about the number of years). In your correspondence, let them know that your station is also used for emergency management. Be clear that your community pays the cost for these communications services. Service providers (Altice, et.al.) are concerned about anything that disrupts their customers. Other things to consider and include in any communication include:
 - The Value of the Location: There's a legal theory of detrimental reliance. You rely upon a representation to your detriment and if the other entity pulls the rug out from underneath you, may have a claim or a cause of action for that detrimental reliance.
 - What is on your stationery? What's your logo look like? Does it incorporate the number? If it has those things now, that's going to have to be changed and where do the resources come from to do that?
 - The argument that many of us make at the negotiating table for why if they move the channel, they must give us time. They must also provide money to facilitate updating stationery, etc. If there is a locally negotiated franchise, then it ought to address the impact on your individual community.
- Encourage your municipality to send a letter to Altice and BPU, stating that you want your channel to remain in this position (channel number) that your municipality invested in this year. The BPU must hear from your mayors, your council, your clerk. They need to know what's going on for them to watch and act. They're a reactive organization; they don't step out and stop something; they react when something happens. So that's why you must keep them informed. The BPU must be copied on letters sent to Altice.

More Information about HD and Systemwide Franchises from Gerard Lederer:

- **For HD.** If your agreement is a local franchise, HD needs to be negotiated. In several communities, Altice has moved to a system-wide franchise. Under the rules of the existing system-wide franchise, the BPU already requires that an HD channel must be part of that package. So, if you're in a community where your franchise is no longer under local and they've moved to the system wide, you can request an HD channel.
- **To Request HD.** All letters must come on municipal letterhead. That's always the case because they are the overseer of the franchise. You can use the templated text below.
"Dear, ..., it has come to our attention, or it is our belief that our community, (put your community's name in it), franchised with Altice, now holds a systemwide franchise for our service area. That being the case, the community would like to request that our PEG channel be elevated to HD as provided by the system-wide franchise negotiated by the BPU."
- **How do you know if your cable provider requested your municipality to be included in the systemwide franchise?** To include your station, Altice would need to send an application into the BPU and the BPU would notify you and they would also notify your municipality as well. They would let both your municipality and the BPU know that they want to switch that over to the system-wide franchise. So, your clerk would have received the communication about franchise status.

JAG Sessions at NJ League of Municipalities Annual Conference November 18-20 [Annual NJLM Conference](#)

- **Nov. 19, 10:45-12:00pm in room 416: Are Your Municipal Codes Ready for new Wireless Technologies?**

Speakers: Bob Duthaler, JAG President, Gerard Lederer, Attorney at Law, Best Best & Krieger LLP, and Mayor Brian C. Wahler, Piscataway

Association: Jersey Access Group (JAG) and NJ League of Municipalities

Description: With anticipated changes to the wireless and broadband deployment regulations from Washington, are your municipal codes ready to deal with changes to shot clock regulations and design standards. This panel will tell you what to expect and what you need to do to protect your rights to control the future deployment of wireless transmission equipment in your municipality.

CEUs: CMFO-1.5 Off Mgmt | CCFO-1.5 Off Mgmt | CTC-1.5 Gen/Sec | CPWM-1.5 Mgmt | RMC-1.5 Prof Devel | QPA-1.5 Off Admin | CPR-1.25 PDC | LGLP-5.0 | NJCLE-1.5 | PACLE-1.0 | RPPO/RPPS-1.5 M/S | Planning-1.25 Tech | Land Use-1.25 Tech | Zoning-1.25 Tech

- **Nov. 20, 10:45-12:00pm in room 310: Maximizing Municipal Benefits in Local/Statewide Cable Franchises**

Speakers: Bob Duthaler, President, JAG, Gerard Lederer, Attorney at Law, Best Best & Krieger LLP, Michael Ruger, Committee Member, Hopewell Township, and Nancy Wolf, Coordinator, State & Local Planning NJBPU

Association: Jersey Access Group (JAG), and NJ League of Municipalities

Description: The panel will explore the local and systemwide cable franchise processes and how municipalities can maximize community benefits and ensure effective oversight.

CEUs: CMFO-1.5 Off Mgmt | CCFO-1.5 Off Mgmt | CTC-1.5 Gen/Sec | CPWM-1.5 Mgmt | RMC-1.5 Prof Devel | QPA-1.5 Off Admin | CRP-1.25 Classroom | LGLP-5.0 | NJCLE-1.5 | PACLE-1.0 | RPPO/RPPS-1.5 M/S



Ocean County College Supports Television Production Mary Granahan, Television Production Director, Ocean County College

Members Spotlight

I'm Mary Granahan, Director of Television Production, and I'm excited to introduce you to Ocean TV-20, a full-service production studio and 24-hour station operated by Ocean County College. Our full HD studio also functions as an immersive training ground for the next generation of media professionals. So, our operations are a bit different than more traditional PEG operations.



Ocean TV-20 serves Ocean County with a variety of programming, including world news, culture, local stories, live campus events and original programming. For example, our show *Shore of Support* highlights organizations that enhance the lives of our community through charitable efforts. As a teaching studio, we offer students real-world experience by providing opportunities for them to participate in all aspects of production, from writing and producing to operating equipment and even directing.

Students at Ocean County College have access to our production facilities which include a recently upgraded LED lighting system, 4K cameras, and three working sets: a photo/video backdrop, a news set with removable backgrounds and large monitor, and a recently donated lifestyle set complete with recessed lighting, stonelike walls and monitors. This generous donation elevates our overall space while offering more variety to our students. Our facilities are also available to rent for public use.



In addition to running our studio and station, I'm also the advisor to the Viking Video Club, a welcoming space for students to enhance their creativity, knowledge, and industry experience outside of the classroom. Our members include students and alumni with all levels of experience and areas of study, including those outside of our Digital Mass Media Program. The club meets regularly to work on short films and passion projects, and to share ideas and feedback. Under my leadership, membership has grown tremendously.

A contributing factor to this growth is the very popular *Industry Professional Workshop Series*. Film, television, and media professionals provide valuable insights and learning opportunities for our students. Past workshops have covered producing, directing, screenwriting, special effects makeup, news reporting, filmmaking and much more. Through my industry connections, I have been able to bring in professionals and alumni with impressive résumés – including those who have worked on productions for Bravo, HBO, NBC Sports, *The Olympics*, *Only Murders in the Building*, *The Florida Project*—as well as professors from the NY Film Academy, Rutgers, Rowan and Rider Universities.



These workshops guide students as they produce their own projects (showcased at a short film screening last year). Many of our industry professionals returned to campus to support the Viking Video Club and their creative work.

An important lesson I emphasize is the power of networking. Through past connections, I secured an on-campus location for a feature film. And, even more exciting, several of our students got to work on the production.

Opportunities like this are what make our program unique and truly career focused.

Staying current with rapidly evolving industry technology is a challenge we face as a teaching studio. Thanks to recent investments and generous donations, our studio has undergone significant upgrades:

- We've transitioned our broadcast signal from SD to HD on Verizon, giving our content a cleaner, more professional look.
- Our lighting has been completely overhauled with state-of-the-art LED fixtures, providing safety and energy efficiency.
- We received a professionally designed studio set valued at over \$100,000, donated by an industry contact after only one year of use.
- Coming soon, we're launching a brand-new streaming app, making our content more accessible than ever before.

None of this would be possible without support from the Ocean County College Board of Trustees, President Pamela Monaco, Executive Director of College Relations Jan Kirsten, and the Ocean County Board of Commissioners.



At its core, Ocean TV-20 and OCC equip students with the tools, training, and confidence to succeed in the media industry. Whether a student dreams of working in film, television, digital media, or live production, our station serves as a launchpad for developing real skills in a real-world environment.

We're proud of what we've built, and even more excited about where we're going.

To learn more about our facilities and programming, visit ocean.edu.



The world of television is changing faster than ever. Nowhere is that more obvious than with live streaming. With smartphones in every hand and social platforms offering instant broadcasting, the line between traditional TV and online content is blurring. But, as more broadcasters go live, a big question remains: *what's allowed on TV these days—and what's off-limits?*



A New Era, New Challenges

Not long ago, live television meant carefully scripted programs with hefty delays to censor anything unexpected. Today, anyone with a phone can go live, and TV stations are racing to keep up. The demand for instant, unscripted content is enormous, but so are the risks. Just ask any producer who's seen a slip-up or unexpected moment go viral for the wrong reasons.

What's Changed in Live TV Content

Public TV Broadcasting Rules

The rules are changing?



Recent years have forced regulatory bodies and networks to rethink what's acceptable on broadcast TV. Decency laws and FCC guidelines still apply, but the sheer speed and volume of live content mean even big networks are double-checking their procedures.

While violence, explicit language, and nudity are typically banned, what constitutes "indecent" is up for debate—especially when something happens in the blink of an eye. One famous example is the "Wardrobe Malfunction" seen during the Super Bowl halftime show years ago, which triggered years of new restrictions and even higher fines for broadcasters.

But it's not just about what TV can't show. Many stations are taking advantage of what is possible: more live coverage of community events, instantly responding to breaking news, and bringing real-time reactions from audiences straight into their programming. The immediacy and authenticity of live TV can boost engagement and trust, so long as proper guidelines are in place.

Streaming Platforms Blur the Line

What Can Public TV BROADCAST ?



The NEW Rules are Surprising

EVEN THE VETERANS OF PUBLIC TV!

With major cable companies now offering their own streaming services and platforms like YouTube and Twitch carrying their own "channels," the distinction between traditional TV and streaming grows less clear. Some streaming platforms aren't bound by the same FCC rules, leading viewers to question—why are some things allowed on Netflix, but not on their local news?

For TV stations, this means walking a tightrope. While they want to keep up with trends and offer the unfiltered experiences digital audiences crave, they also need to avoid lawsuits, fines, or damaging their reputation with inappropriate content. That's why newsrooms everywhere are holding regular training sessions, updating delay systems, and developing live response playbooks.

The Surprise Dos and Don'ts

- DO use delay systems for live events, just in case something unexpected happens.
- DON'T broadcast graphic violence, hate speech, or explicit language—even if it happens live.
- DO provide on-air disclaimers when covering unfolding, unpredictable situations.
- DON'T stream user-submitted content without vetting—it can introduce all sorts of risk.
- DO engage viewers through live polls, Q&As, and interactive features—but with moderation in place.

Why Guidelines Matter Now More Than Ever

The stakes have never been higher for TV stations. One misstep can be clipped, shared, and go viral in seconds, potentially costing networks millions and eroding viewer trust. Setting clear, transparent standards and communicating them to the public is essential.

Looking Ahead

As live streaming and traditional TV converge, the rules will keep evolving. Networks that adapt quickly, invest in staff training, and keep the audience informed are best positioned to thrive in this new era.

**DON'T LET YOUR
STATION GO TO
BARS!**



So, next time you tune into a live broadcast, know that there's a well-coordinated team making split-second decisions to keep you engaged, informed, and safe from the surprises that come with live, unfiltered television.

For station managers and operators of public TV, adapting to this era of live and unfiltered broadcasts means continually balancing innovation with responsibility. Strong guidelines and a well-prepared team aren't just safeguards, they're your foundation for building audience trust and leading in the competitive media landscape.

By staying proactive, transparent, and responsive, public TV leaders can make the most of new opportunities while protecting both their viewers and their brand. This will ensure that live coverage keeps communities connected, informed, and engaged today and for years to come.



JAG General Meeting

Oct. 29, 2025 @ 12:00pm, ZOOM ONLY

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86520743091?pwd=v7YCFr4TFtdtILm9alcWIYlOIx7SfB.1>

Presentation: Preparing for ADA Title II Web and Mobile Accessibility Compliance

For more information and access to the meeting email JAGinfo@jagonline.org

Don't forget to check out our YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/@jagjerseyaccessgroup>

Have something you want on our YouTube channel? Send a link to dseidel@piscatawaynj.org for review.

The JAG Job Board is currently being populated with opportunities. New password is needed after June 1.

Contact Linda Besink lbesink@gmail.com for access

Share the value of JAG's newsletter with your elected officials, cable committee, station volunteers, associates and friends. Send this invitation:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/B7EMU1R/JAGnewsletter>

NJ League of Municipalities Annual Conference, November 18-20

JAG Sessions:

Nov. 19, 10:45-12:00pm: Are Your Municipal Codes Ready for new Wireless Technologies

Nov. 20, 10:45-12:00pm: Maximizing Municipal Benefits in Local/Statewide Cable Franchises

EVENT SCHEDULE 2025-26

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January 28 at 12pm: General Meeting, ZOOM, Presentation scheduled TBA

February 25 at 12pm: General Meeting, Bloomfield TV, Presentation by TelVue- Jesse Lerman, President/CEO

March 25 at 12pm: General Meeting, ZOOM, Presentation scheduled TBA

April 29 at 12pm: General Meeting, Cranford TV, Presentation by DeSisti Lighting- Paul DeStefano, Sales

May 13 & 14: JAG Conference: A Technology Forum and Production/Management Symposium & JAG Awards

June 24 at 12pm: General Meeting, ZOOM, Presentation scheduled TBA

September 30 at 12pm: General Meeting, Varto Technologies, Presentation scheduled TBA

Organizational Members



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