General Meeting Schedule 2026-27

Mar. 25 – Zoom Meeting
Presentation – JAG Conference 2026

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

Oct. 29 – Zoom Meeting
Presentation – TBA

Dec. 2 – TBA
Presentation – TBA

Jan. 27, 2027 – Zoom Meeting
Reorganization
Presentation – TBA

Feb. 24 – Bloomfield TV
Presentation – TelVue

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President's Message
Doug Seidel, President of Jersey Access Group

A few things going on and coming up in JAG.

Our Legislative Committee is gearing up for Hill Day. This is a great yearly opportunity for our organization to get some face-to-face time with legislators on Capitol Hill. We will discuss the potential consequences of HR 2289 and look for our representatives to support us by voting against it.

The Leadership Development Committee is looking toward the future and reshaping the mission statement for JAG while looking into any potential partnerships with the new Hollywood studios popping up in New Jersey.

The JAG Awards submissions may be closed, but the committee is moving into the judging phase of your fantastic submissions. And stay tuned for exciting announcements about this year's JAG Conference and Award Ceremony. Save the dates for May 13 and 14.

You can join us down in Atlantic City again this year in November at the League of Municipalities Conference. If you are interested in helping at our booth you can reach out to Geoffrey Belinfonte, chair of the External Relations Committee.

I would like to thank the membership for how quickly most of you have replied to membership renewals this year. It definitely helps JAG when this is taken care of sooner rather than later. So again, thank you to all of you that have put in your PO requests or sent checks already.

The biggest news this past month comes from our Finance Committee. We have a budget to introduce at the March membership meeting. We will also vote on an amendment to the JAG Bylaws establishing term limits for the JAG Trustees.

That means now is a good time to get your voting forms in so you can be sure to have your say in JAG's operating budget. Absentee ballot will be sent out prior to the March 25 meeting and must be returned by 11:00am on March 25.

I look forward to seeing you all online for our March meeting. Reminder: Our meeting in April will be in person in Cranford with a presentation from DeSisti.

REMINDER: Countdown to ADA requirements:

- 1 month for towns > 50,000 residents.

- 1 year and 1 month for towns < 50,000.

Doug Seidel
President, Jersey Access Group

Attention JAG members:

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
May 13 & 14, 2026   Crowne Plaza Hotel, Edison, NJ
A Technology Forum and Production/Management Symposium

Partners
TelVue Cooperation, Varto Technologies, Planet Network,
LiveU, and DeSisti Lighting

Equipment Seminars
Technology Showcase and Panels
Product Demonstrations
User Group Breakfast Meetings
Panel Sessions/Roundtable Discussions
JAG Awards Banquet

Topics include:
Program Creation and Development, Content Distribution,
Facilities Operation, and Legislation Impacting Community Media

https://jagconference.com/

Schedule *(Conference details will be posted as they are finalized.)*

May 13- 8:00am-10:00pm
- Technology Showcase and Panels
- User Groups Breakfast Meetings (TelVue and Varto Technologies)
- Equipment Seminars
- Product Demonstrations
- Technology Luncheon
- JAG Awards Banquet

May 14- 8:00am-5:00pm
- Panel Sessions
- Roundtable Discussions
- Networking Breakfast
- Keynote Lunch

Click Here to Register Now!

Please reach out to JAG Treasurer Linda Besink for your JAG Membership Discount Code: lbesink@gmail.com
Questions? Feel free to reach out to me. bduthaler@jagonline.org. See you at the conference!

Bob Duthaler
Member, National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (EMMYS)
Past-President, Jersey Access Group
Past-President, NJ NATOA

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 national and statewide—that include potential issues for JAG members, their communities, and their operations.

The Reauthorizing of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) - H.R. 7386

On February 10th, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology voted to reauthorize FirstNet.

<u>**From NATOA**</u>:

The House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology today approved with a bipartisan voice vote the Markup of **H.R. 7386 - To reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet.)**

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) was created through the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 as an independent authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to develop a dedicated, reliable, secure, and interoperable nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) to support the communications needs of first responders and other public safety officials. Congress allocated $7B of spectrum auction revenue to its startup and, 9 years ago, FirstNet awarded AT&T a 25-year, $6.5 billion contract and 20 megahertz (20 MHz) of spectrum to build, operate, and maintain the nationwide public safety network.

FirstNet's authority is set to expire on February 22, 2027. This bill will renew FirstNet's mandate through Sept. 30, 2037.

Both the House and the Senate have held hearings recently to improve the administration and functionality of the FirstNet.

The House bill approved by the subcommittee by unanimous voice vote will move to the full Committee. H.R. 7386 will:

- Remove language in current law which has FirstNet as an "independent authority" within NTIA/Commerce
- Give NTIA approval of FirstNet's actions other than those on a specified list developed by NTIA
- Create an associate administrator position within the Commerce Department to oversee the FirstNet Authority
- Require NTIA to report annually to Congress on cybersecurity and outages, and on both the adoption & the deployment of FirstNet by public safety services and by geographic area.
- Raise the number of Board seats for public safety representatives from three to five and stagger terms.

[Press Release](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Richard Hudson (NC-09), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, delivered the following opening statement at today's markup of a bill to reauthorize FirstNet.

Good morning, and welcome to today's subcommittee markup on the First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act. I'm excited about our progress and taking this next step towards reauthorizing this important program.

Last week we heard from a great panel of witnesses who shared their expertise and experience with FirstNet and provided input on how this legislation would improve the network and ensure it operates in the best interest of public safety.

We heard directly from NTIA that not only is the FirstNet Board protected in statute, but they have no intention of dismantling or casting aside the FirstNet Board. It's actually quite the opposite. NTIA relies on the Board to provide crucial expertise and direction on the needs of public safety. This legislation not only keeps the Board, but strengthens public safety's voice by requiring two additional seats on the Board be dedicated to public safety.

I want to note this vote today does not signify we're done working on this legislation. We are continuing to gather feedback from public safety groups and stakeholders about certain provisions in this legislation, and we have a lot of work in the coming weeks to ensure that this bill is the best possible version it can be before it reaches the House floor.

Reliable communications are absolutely essential for our first responders in emergencies. While a lot has been done to stand up this first-of-its-kind public safety communications network, there is more work to do to ensure the promise of FirstNet is fulfilled. In my home state of North Carolina, first responders have shared their frustrations about FirstNet not working during Hurricane Helene. The reforms included in the legislation before us today are intended to ensure that FirstNet delivers a reliable, interoperable communications network to our first responders, and the FirstNet Authority acts in the best interests of the public safety community it serves.

I want to thank my colleagues for their continued commitment to this issue and for their work developing this proposal. I look forward to reauthorizing the First Responder Network Authority.

[Press Release](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks at today's Communications and Technology Subcommittee markup of H.R. 7386, the First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act of 2026.

Today the Subcommittee is considering bipartisan legislation introduced by Representatives McClellan and Dunn to reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority. We must reauthorize this Authority to ensure we are providing first responders with reliable, interoperable communications during emergencies when it matters most. It is critical that we resolve the looming sunset of FirstNet and I commit to doing all I can to support that effort.

At the Subcommittee hearing last week on this legislation, witnesses stressed how the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network is an essential component of our emergency communications infrastructure. It provides an invaluable service keeping first responders connected not just when crises occur but also supports increased connectivity during major events like the Super Bowl this past Sunday in San Francisco, or the World Cup Finals at the Meadowlands in New Jersey later this year.

Much of FirstNet's popularity with public safety users is the fact that the network has been deployed with direct input from public safety leaders who serve on the FirstNet Board. Since the early days of planning and standing up the network, to expanding coverage and upgrading services more recently, the FirstNet Board has ensured public safety has multiple seats at the table and a central role in the Authority's activities.

It's critically important that we ensure the voices of public safety leaders remain at the table. That's why I am pleased the legislation before us today actually improves public safety representation on the Board by raising the number of Board seats reserved for public safety representatives from three to five. The bill also makes a technical correction to fix the stacking of Board terms so that only a portion of seats become vacant at one time. This should address the issue of brain drain from the Board while alleviating the burden of re-filling many vacancies at one time.

It is also clear, however, that the original classification in law of the First Responder Network Authority as both an independent authority and an authority under the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has been a source of unnecessary confusion over the years. This unique situation has created structural problems with the FirstNet Authority that have, at times, opened the door to poor decision making and waste without any consequence for those responsible.

The Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General has identified a handful of troubling circumstances and actions that make clear there is not enough oversight of the Executive Director position under the current structure, which prevents accountability when it is called for.

The bill proposes to eliminate the ambiguity in current law by bringing the FirstNet Authority more formally under the purview of NTIA with the full intention of preserving the autonomy of FirstNet Authority leadership and employees over day-to-day operations, emergency response, strategic planning, and other activities they currently carry out. I appreciated feedback from witnesses and public safety stakeholders who have recommended that the Committee more explicitly contemplate the division of roles and responsibilities in the legislation. Those kinds of recommendations and others are highly useful as we move ahead with this process.

I look forward to continuing to work with Chairs Guthrie and Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, and Representatives McClellan and Dunn to continue to strengthen the bill in order to build broad support in advance of a full Committee markup.

I am confident that with continued bipartisan cooperation and good-faith participation by Members and stakeholders alike, we will reauthorize FirstNet and guarantee first responders do not lose access to this critical service.

In the early years of FirstNet, JAG helped to spread the word of this important venture. All of us were invested in our Office of Emergency Managements in our own municipalities and the affiliation seemed destined and very relevant between our two groups.

And since we are still heavily entwined with our OEM's, and they are interlinked through FirstNet during those emergencies when it truly matters the most. The importance of the passage of H.R. 7386 could not be made any clearer!

David Garb, Legislative Chair
Jersey Access Group
davegarb@paps.net

Local coverage offers a window into the places where people actually live.

When people talk about "the media," they often imagine large national networks, major newspapers, or digital outlets covering stories that affect the entire country.

Different Perspectives Different Coverage

Those organizations play an important role in helping people understand national events and global developments. At the same time, there is another layer of media that operates on a much smaller scale: local media. While both serve the public, they operate in very different ways and focus on different kinds of stories.

National media tend to cover issues with broad impact. Elections, economic trends, international events, and major policy decisions often become national stories because they affect millions of people at once. These outlets must reach audiences across many regions, so their reporting naturally focuses on topics with broad relevance. The goal is to provide a shared understanding of major events and developments.

Local media works from a different starting point. Instead of looking at issues through a national lens, local reporting focuses on the everyday life of a particular community. Town meetings, school events, neighborhood initiatives, local organizations, and cultural traditions often become the stories that matter most at this level. These topics may not appear in national headlines, but they shape daily life for the people who live there.
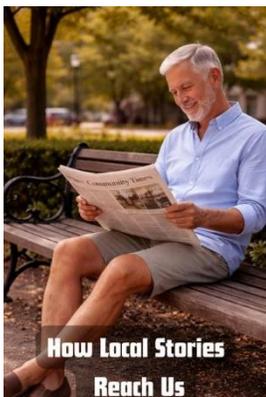

Voices From the Community

Another difference is proximity. National reporters often cover stories from a distance, sometimes traveling to locations only when major events occur. Local media, on the other hand, is rooted in the same community it covers. The people producing the stories usually live in the area, understand the local context, and often know the people involved. This closeness gives local reporting a different perspective. It reflects not just what happens, but how events fit into the broader fabric of community life.

The scale of storytelling also differs. National outlets often need to condense complex topics into formats that reach a wide audience quickly. Local media can sometimes take a slower and more detailed approach. Stories may explore community traditions, long-standing relationships, or small but meaningful changes that develop over time. These kinds of stories help document how a town grows and changes.

Local media also plays a role in visibility. Many activities that bring communities together, such as festivals, volunteer efforts, school programs, or local arts, rarely receive national attention. Local coverage ensures these moments are recognized and remembered. In doing so, it creates a record of community life that might otherwise go unnoticed outside the town itself.

How Local Stories Reach Us

Another important difference is audience connection. People who follow national news may never meet the individuals involved in the stories they see. Local media, however, often features familiar faces and recognizable places. A viewer or reader might recognize a local park, a neighborhood organization, or a community leader mentioned in a story. This familiarity creates a sense of shared experience that is unique to local coverage.

None of this means national and local media compete with each other. In many ways, they complement each other. National reporting helps people understand the larger forces shaping the country and the world. Local reporting shows how those forces appear in everyday life within individual communities. Together, they provide a more complete picture of the world people live in.

In recent years, conversations about media have become more complicated as digital platforms expand how information travels. Stories can move quickly from one place to another, and local events sometimes gain wider attention through online sharing. Even in this environment, the distinction between national and local coverage remains important. Each level of media serves a different purpose and reaches audiences in different ways.

The Stories You Miss Are Happening Right Here

Understanding that difference helps people appreciate the role each plays. National outlets provide a broad view of major events, while local media capture the details of community life that might otherwise be overlooked. Both contribute to how people stay informed, but from different vantage points.

Looking closely at local media reveals something easy to miss in larger conversations about news and information. Communities are not only shaped by national events. Everyday moments, local conversations, and shared experiences also shape them. Thus, Local coverage helps preserve those stories, offering a window into the places where people actually live their lives.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
May 13 & 14, 2026   Crowne Plaza Hotel, Edison, NJ
A Technology Forum and Production/Management Symposium

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Building an integrated AI strategy that makes AI a useful co-pilot

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into public, educational, and government (PEG) channel operations represents a fundamental shift from traditional "capture" media to a "construction of thought" paradigm.

Research indicates that while AI can enhance individual creativity by up to 26.6%, particularly for less skilled creators. But it presents a critical paradox. The PEG manager when utilizing AI risks losing some of the creative diversity demonstrated in their final product, with those allowing AI to take over the creative spirit creating superb output that is difficult to distinguish from the works of others that allowed AI to take over their efforts.

For PEG operators, the objective is to leverage AI as a "co-pilot" to improve operational efficiency and public accessibility without compromising the authentic, community-driven spirit that defines the sector. The most immediate benefits for PEG channels lie in automated facilities for closed captioning, real-time meeting documentation, and cost-effective post-production. These efficiencies, however, carry significant reputational risks, including "hallucinations" (AI-generated inaccuracies), data privacy concerns, and the "uncanny valley" effect that can erode public trust.

The following outlines a "Human in the Loop" strategy, prioritizing cryptographic authentication (C2PA) and human oversight to ensure that AI-assisted content remains transparent, legally compliant, and environmentally responsible:

- **Embedded AI Facilities in the tools of the trade.** AI is no longer a futuristic concept but is currently embedded within the standard software suites used in PEG production. These tools facilitate complex tasks with sub-second processing and technical precision.

- **Post-Production and Editing.** Editing studios employed for integrating the collected recordings from multiple cameras and audio sources into a cohesive video creation all include AI facilities in their workflow. This includes Sensei AI within Adobe Premier Pro, AI tools for face detection, scene edits, auto reframe and other uses within Divinci Resolve and AI used to provide Hollywood style effects, background enhancement and removal of dead space from the editing process automatically.
AI enhancement suites like the ones imbedded directly within the suites, add ins like Adobe Podcast and standalone products like Lalai.AI and Suno.ai isolate vocals, clean the broadcast quality of audio and enhance the entertainment quality of videos.

  Color grading and Visual special effects (VFX) are accommodated through advanced integration which accommodates "match moving", thereby aligning digital elements with live action footage. Again, all of this is accommodated by utilizing AI utilized in every facet of the digital editing studio to ensure that LUTS and other color correction as well as frame to frame alignment are handled brilliantly.

- **Pre-Production and Planning.** Platforms like Luma AI use Neural Radiance Field (NeRF) technology to create 3D scans of local environments using smartphone cameras, reducing the need for repeated physical site visits. Text-to-image generators (Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, Invideo.Ai, etc.) allow operators to rapidly prototype "look books" and pitch decks for new local programming at minimal cost. Many of the digital studio editors have begun introducing storyboard creators driven by prompts or allow for editing footage using prompts and will align footage to the storyboard with uncanny accuracy. This capability is in its infancy and is gaining prominence with digital editing studios like Capcut and Divinci Resolve leading the way, particularly in their advanced studio offerings.

- **Mandated Capabilities: Accessibility and Transparency.** For PEG channels, AI serves as a critical bridge for meeting legal mandates and improving government transparency through automated documentation.

- **Closed Captioning and Public Minutes.** Systems such as Diligent Community utilize AI to transform livestream captions into structured, agenda-aligned minutes in minutes rather than days. Searchable captions and timestamped minutes allow constituents to jump directly to specific discussions, significantly reducing the workload for clerks and board administrators. While AI tools like Otter.ai, Zoom and Cockatoo provide rapid transcripts, PEG operators must remain the "evaluator of record" to correct errors in technical jargon or local accents.

- **Content Authentication (C2PA).** As deepfakes and manipulated media become more sophisticated, PEG channels must protect their status as trusted information sources. The C2PA (Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity) standard allows for real-time signing of live video. Technical architectures now allow for "sub-second" processing (under 500ms) to hash, sign, and embed metadata into live streams, enabling real-time detection of tampered or reordered segments without disrupting playback.

- **Artistic Freedom and the Risk of Homogenization.** AI introduces unprecedented "ideational" freedom, allowing small PEG stations to produce high-end visuals previously reserved for major studios. However, this freedom is tempered by specific risks to the creative spirit. The "uncanny valley", the point where an audience feels a subconscious suspicion that "something is not right", is a pressing concern. PEG content must prioritize "emotional truth" over "fidelity to physics":

AI Utility Category	Benefit for PEG Operations	Risk to PEG Identity
Volume Generation	Rapid creation of community promos and social clips.	"Slope": Low-quality, generic content that alienates viewers.
Technical Precision	Automated lip-syncing and physics-based animation (Cascadeur).	Loss of "authentic voice" and local cultural nuance.
Trend Synthesis	Identifying underserved local topics through data.	Chasing the algorithm rather than serving the community.

- **Mitigating Reputational, Ethical, and Legal Risks.** Utilizing AI requires a "Responsible AI" framework to navigate a moving target of regulations and ethical standards.

- **Ethical Oversight and Bias.** AI models can replicate biases present in their training data (e.g., Google's launch of tools with significant bias hurdles). PEG operators must audit AI outputs to ensure fair representation of all community demographics.

  There is a growing debate on whether AI-generated content should be watermarked. PEG channels should lead in transparency, disclosing AI involvement in architectural designs or dialogue cleanup. While there is a push for identifying Ai generated content, the legislation will always be significantly behind the technology enabling the integration of AI into any final output, and the question will always be the degree of introduced AI into the final creation, especially all tools utilized for creating videos (phone cameras utilizing computational photography, studio cameras imbedding Ai into their capture mechanisms, microphones utilizing Ai to clean up the sound tracks, editing studios utilizing AI into their overall workflows, etc.)

- **Legal and Labor Compliance.** AI-generated material is not currently considered "literary material" under major agreements (e.g., WGA rules). AI cannot receive writing credit, and its use must not undermine human creators' rights. However, the rules governing the use of AI are shifting. Even YouTube has begun demonetizing video created purely from AI facilities, largely because it has become an authentication

problem (the output has become that good). Unauthorized use of likenesses or voices (vocal cloning) through AI can cause significant reputational harm. PEG operators must ensure all "virtual" elements have human consent. This is an area where the legislation is just beginning to address even the most basic issues. The sophistication and capabilities of the technology are morphing too rapidly for legislation to "catch up" any time soon.

- **Environmental Impact.** The computational power required for AI has a seismic environmental footprint. Training the prompt driven footprint has significant power consumption characteristics, especially as these prompt driven (Chat-GPT, Gemini Studio, etc.) gain in sophistication to make the use of their wares easier for the operator. Training an AI model can consume as much energy as powering 100,000 homes for a year. The processing characteristics of a single AI prompt (i.e., a Chat-GPT request) generates three times more CO_2 than a standard Google search. PEG channels committed to sustainability should be mindful of the hidden environmental costs of "hyped" AI applications.

Best Practices for the PEG Channel "Human in the Loop"

To preserve the spirit and law of PEG broadcasting, operators should adopt the following management strategies:

- It is foolhardy for PEG operators to believe that AI will go away if ignored. The PEG operator must understand the art of the prompt and master prompting so that it enhances their efforts and does not be given the opportunity to replace their efforts. Think of the prompt as another component of your studio, with AI being provided specific roles, provided the assignment of deep content and improving works through iterative refinement. This adoption of AI as a tool of the trade will remain a defining skill for modern media professionals.

- Consider phased integration of AI into your works. Identify specific use cases, like transcription and archiving, where AI adds immediate value.

- AI lacks common sense and a conscience. All final decisions regarding funding, cultural value, and local accuracy must remain in human hands.

- Operators should prioritize "closed" AI systems for sensitive data to prevent local governmental information from being ingested into public training models.

JAG General Meeting
March 25 at 12pm: ZOOM ONLY
Presentation: JAG Conference 2026

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. A new password is needed after June 1 of each year. 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

EVENT SCHEDULE 2026

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

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

December 2 at 12pm: General Meeting, Location TBD, Presentation scheduled TBA

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