

NJN PUBLIC TELEVISION AND RADIO (NJN) The Plan for a New Jersey Public Media Corporation

This plan has been compiled by NJN Staff members who disagree with the “privatization” concept proposed as the only way to save NJN. The following plan to re-invent NJN as an autonomous authority is being presented to the Task Force as a better alternative. This document suggests ways to create a viable New Jersey Public Media Corporation for the people of New Jersey, it also points out some of the implicit weaknesses of the privatization path, and highlights how NJN’s premature steps towards privatization have already negatively impacted NJN.

CONTENTS

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY pp.2-3

B. VISION FOR A SUCCESSFUL NJ PUBLIC MEDIA CORPORATION pp. 4-9

Successful, positive changes can be made to the current NJN through a variety of policy changes, organizational changes, and implementing aggressive revenue-generating ideas.

- B1. POLICY CHANGES
- B2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES
- B3. REVENUE-GENERATING IDEAS
- B4. CONCLUSION

C. THE PROBLEMATIC IMPACT OF THE NJN FOUNDATION pp. 10-13

How Foundation-driven leadership policies have created numerous conflicts, problems, and production policies that were ultimately more destructive to NJN than were helpful.

- C1. BACKGROUND
- C2. EXAMPLES OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACT
- C3. CONCLUSION – A MORE POSITIVE ROLE FOR A FOUNDATION

D. THE NJN FOUNDATION’S PRIVATIZATION PROPOSAL pp. 14-17

Staff responses to some typical pro-privatization arguments offered by those who wish to privatize NJN.

- D1. BLAMING THE STATE SYSTEM
- D2. PRIVATE FUNDING, WITH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES
- D3. MEDIA CONTROL
- D4. CONCLUSION – AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

E. NJN’S MISSION, LOOKING AHEAD pp. 18-19

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the passage of the New Jersey Public Broadcasting Authority (NJPBA) Act of 1969, New Jerseyans have had a broadcast and multi-media outlet dedicated to covering the issues that affect their lives. For many years NJN Public Television and Radio (NJNI) has thrived and produced award-winning programs and educational services for our statewide constituents and beyond.

That level of service began to deteriorate in the 1990's when Elizabeth Christopherson, the Executive Director of NJN and President of the NJN Foundation, assured legislators year after year that significant cuts in State funding would not harm the network. But it did harm NJN: during the ensuing years the amount of New Jersey television programming was constantly cut, significant staff were lost, reinvestment in technology was overlooked, and a true statewide radio network was never developed. While the NJN Foundation was never able to raise enough funds to cover these reductions, fiscal resources were used instead to expand the Foundation's own staff and spending. These spending decisions that weakened NJN were the policies of those who favored moving NJN to a private model and taking ownership from the State.

Currently, NJN's Interim Executive Director Howard Blumenthal maintains that NJN cannot possibly thrive as long as the State of New Jersey holds the broadcast licenses. This document has been compiled by NJN staff members who disagree strongly with that assessment and believe that the control of the licenses should remain in the hands of New Jersey's citizens and their representatives in the Legislature; we feel that is the only way to ensure that NJN will continue to survive as a New Jersey-centric public service media organization. We believe the NJN Foundation should return to operating as a "pass-through-only" organization that focuses exclusively on fundraising and delivering the majority of those funds directly to NJN.

This document outlines the idea of an autonomous public authority, which is the goal of the legislation introduced in the Assembly (A2949) for the creation of a NJ Public Media Corporation. This plan will require a continued investment on the part of the State in the short-term, but that investment is designed to stabilize NJN through a period of re-growth, one that will repair some of the organizational damage done by over fifteen years of poorly-managed resources. That initial investment will retool NJN's production efficiency, giving the organization the time and capital to upgrade equipment, increase production of local programs, and make NJN both sustainable as an operation and attractive to potential funders. ***It is imperative that this connection to the State remain permanent, because this solidifies fundraising and mission campaigns that are built on the***

premise of a long and stable level of professional service to New Jersey's citizens.

The State's annual financial support might be modest, but its stewardship of both the assets (licenses) and the mission (the delivery of New Jersey-centric media on all platforms) should be steadfast. The State's modest contribution to keeping NJN sustainable should be seen in the same vein as a state's investment in a public utility. ***NJN itself should be revitalized and branded as a service-oriented public institution, like a utility, one that should be invested in and maintained for the broadest public good.***

We believe that consistent, dedicated sources of funding are essential to the long term health of NJN and its ability to expand and transform itself to fill the increasing void of New Jersey news, public and cultural affairs, especially as print and broadcast sources contract. We stress that the new "New Jersey Public Media Corporation" stay New Jersey-focused and New Jersey-controlled, and that it answer to the citizens of New Jersey through the stewardship of the New Jersey Legislature that originally created it.

B. VISION FOR A SUCCESSFUL NJ PUBLIC MEDIA CORPORATION

Through the support of the Governor, State Legislators, the appointed NJPBA commissioners, new leadership at NJN, and the NJN Foundation Board of Trustees, NJN can improve its level of service and become a much more sustainable media organization. Many of the details of these changes are included in Assembly Bill A2949. Successful, positive changes can be made to the current NJN through a variety of policy and organizational changes, and implementing aggressive revenue-generating ideas:

B1. POLICY CHANGES

1. Use the autonomy granted by the proposed NJ Public Media Corporation to redesign management/staff relationships so that TV and media specific jobs can be made more flexible and suited to keeping high professional standards.
2. Use the autonomy granted by the proposed NJ Public Media Corporation to establish a vetted task force with the goal of finding and placing reputable non-profit, public broadcast professionals in key management positions. New leadership for the Corporation should be interviewed on the premise that they would be tasked with the predetermined organizational goals of the new autonomous authority, with its connection to the State of New Jersey made evident, and its mission and policies already clearly defined.
3. Redesign the budgeting philosophy to encourage maximized use of in-house staff and equipment as opposed to discouraging increased production as “too expensive.”
4. Design a thorough fiscal and program audit of NJN and the NJN Foundation as part of an ongoing guarantee to citizens and stakeholders that any and all funding – state or private – is directed toward the efficient production of New Jersey-centric media and its dissemination.
5. Establish clear guidelines for the NJ Public Media Corporation’s relationship to its separate “pass-through” organization, an NJN Foundation, emphasizing both a management firewall and an editorial firewall between the organizations. Establish clearly-defined lines of authority and recruit top-notch leadership who are tasked with leading the fundraising efforts knowing these clearly-defined ground rules exist.
6. Seek ways (through autonomous status) to encourage a more flexible, business-friendly model for the NJ Public Media Corporation, a model that loosens restrictions to garner more private dollars, allows media business growth that helps other New Jersey State agencies cut their media costs, and supports aggressive and innovative partnerships that bring increased revenue and public exposure.

B2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

1. Create a legitimate executive search to hire a permanent Executive Director for the NJ Public Media Corporation who has integrity, professional experience and a vision for taking this organization forward as an autonomous authority.
2. Create legitimate staff/management creative teams to assess best ways to maximize increased program production under existing technology status and financial status, and improve local production immediately.
3. Create legitimate staff/management creative teams to assess best ways to use any improvement monies to make long-term systems changes in order to work with, and upgrade existing technologies. This team should include members from key departments and represent ideas that suggest holistic approaches to the media end-products, with the goals of increasing NJ-centric media output in both quality and quantity.
4. Embark on an aggressive campaign to increase quality and quantity of local production: improved and efficient technology systems for production and post-production.
5. Build NJN radio into a true statewide network by securing at least one “Class B” radio station to appropriately cover the entire state. Immediately begin developing original New Jersey programming for radio, including an interview-format daily show or shows.
6. Fully integrate web access to all areas of NJN production. Establish producer-driven production guidelines to efficiently re-purpose original media for delivery through other formats, where applicable. This means designing smart systemic rules for when to re-edit/re-purpose television content for web and or radio, and how to do it efficiently.
7. Conduct a needs assessment of our sister state agencies to determine what media/communication services NJN can provide; establish Media Liaisons within each state agency to keep the lines of communication open and ensure that NJN is included when they consider developing video/training/promotional programs.
8. Implement production-driven improvements to methodology for green-lighting productions and streamlining workflow
9. ***Transfer any and all production and/or production promotion work back to the Public Media Corporation from the NJN Foundation.***
10. Explore an investment in funding a holistic NJN ARCHIVE project that truly embarks on archiving what has been produced and what is being produced by NJN.

A metadata-based useable archive would capitalize on NJN's unique value (no one would have this resource). That archive could be accessed by non-profits (universities, think tanks, government organizations and NGO's, students, etc), and/or extended into the revenue-generating world as a storehouse for all media companies requiring archival material for or about New Jersey.

11. Increase NJN visibility through low-cost and/or no cost public relations campaigns like social networking, aggressive web launches about NJN and NJN programming, and organizational partnerships. Since the NJ Public Media Corporation will be delivering content on multiple formats, design ground rules for cross-promoting all formats (television, radio, video on web, traditional web sites) on all the various formats themselves.
12. ***Re-focus a pared-down Foundation on a mission of aggressive private funding work, connected to overall NJN needs.***
 - a. This would entail aggressive major donor campaigns, capital campaigns and appeals for general funding.
 - b. This will discourage "grant-for-hire" funding requests like underwriting specific shows or underwriting for the production of broadcast spots or production favors.
 - c. Project funding and grant-finding could be returned to NJN management staff, project developers and producers. Project underwriting, grant finding and proposal writing were all things NJN did well – as part of the State -- before the Foundation existed.

Those revenue-finding missions for specific projects can return to NJN, especially in a more "funder-friendly" autonomous NJN.

B3. REVENUE-GENERATING IDEAS

1. A Capital, Major Gifts or General Operating Fund Campaign should be organized to reach out to traditional NJN funders and others. The State might help by providing a matching challenge grant when the campaign launches. The State's official recognition of the new NJ Public Media Corporation as a viable organization will certainly go far in attracting corporate executives who may wish to contribute, as well as encouraging leaders from the corporate and non-profit sectors to serve on the NJ Public Media Corporation board.
2. During the initial stages of two Capital and Major Gifts campaigns, NJN can concurrently build on this donor base and ask for support for an on-going Fund for New Jersey Programming. This funding can be used to supplement employee salaries if needed, purchase equipment, and provide seed money for developing programming and educational projects.

3. Assess values for existing transmission rental agreements and look to boost these, as well as explore still untapped rental agreements.
4. ***Develop a plan to ensure that NJN receives full value from leasing the remaining unleased Educational Broadband Services (EBS) spectrum and determine if, over time, additional revenue can be received from currently leased EBS spectrum.***
5. Seek out additional State or Federal grants or fees in relation to State-owned transmission assets and/or antennas, licenses. Currently, for example, NJN's transmission assets are obligated to serve New Jersey's Emergency Alert System, or EAS; if there were a state of emergency, ***NJN is currently bound by law to give State Police full access to that valuable statewide transmission service and this comes at no cost to the State of New Jersey. That binding obligation is not the case with most community-licensees or private licensees.*** If the State wishes to keep EAS utilization as "free-of-charge" or in-kind, promote and publicize this value-added cost-saving to the State's citizens on a regular basis (the way the NJ Lottery advertises how it uses its profits for "good causes" to the State.)
6. Look for ways to increase revenue through Broadband applications. Wireless transmission of video and data are certainly going to require transmission assets. ***NJN's market position requires third-party investigations into possible monetary gains in the next 3-5 years pending FCC and governmental policy moves regarding broadband and its wireless transmission.***
7. Continue to increase revenue through On-air Underwriting contracts and Project Underwriting for programming and educational projects. With increased local productions to support, NJN can achieve this over time. ***New ground rules establishing an editorial firewall separating the funding group (NJJN Foundation) and the funders from the broadcast authority (NJ Public Media Corporation) will remove the perception that funders drive the programming; funders can give more freely and producers can seek funding without funder interference in production.***
8. NJN's Media Productions Department, which uses production expertise in all formats to produce non-broadcast media for paying clients as well as for other state agencies, has always been under-utilized as a potential revenue-generating production group. Media Productions has a long list of loyal clients and a wide variety of productions that have generated revenue that is complementary to NJN's broadcast mission – all without the benefit of a marketing budget. As part of the NJ Public Media Corporation, Media Productions should be able to promote its services and, with the help of the State, gain more business revenue by requiring that other State entities include NJN when they are putting video projects out to bid. Media Productions can also save the State money by providing media production and dissemination services to other agencies, saving them from paying outside firms for that work.

9. Create an endowment fund to help sustain NJN for future generations. Maryland Public Television, a state-owned licensee PBS station with a successful Foundation as a partner, has created several endowment funds that supporters can contribute to. When these endowment candidates give over \$100,000, MPT creates a named endowment fund in their honor. The State of New Jersey's revitalized commitment to a new NJ Public Media Corporation would send a signal to these individuals that this organization will be viable for a long time and worthy of legacy giving (in direct contrast to the current year-to-year budgetary battles for survival).
10. Planned Giving is an important element to help raise revenue. NJN needs to nurture this source of revenue that sometimes takes years to pay off. NJN will more broadly encourage supporters through the NJN Website, quarterly newsletters, personal letters and on-air promos to consider leaving a bequest or opening a Charitable Gift Annuity.
11. Ask the State for dispensation that that would allow NJN to name the headquarters on Stockton Street after a major supporter. We also could name the NJN Studios in Newark and at Stockton College after major gift supporters as well as the studios inside the buildings.
12. Request that the State sets up a system that allows taxpayers to check off a \$1 box on their State tax returns to help support NJN.
13. Provide for a portion of the existing statewide cable franchise fee, for example, 10 cents per month to subscribers of cable, satellite, and FIOS, to be dedicated to a stable NJN fund. This franchise fee already sends monies to support public access channels all over New Jersey and a small percentage should be shared with NJN for its role in providing statewide public service. NOTE: This would not be a consumer increase, but a small slice of the existing fee shared with NJ Public Media Corporation.
14. Study the possibility of a dedicated, consistent fee based source of funding. One possibility is to seek retransmission fees for NJN similar to those received by commercial broadcasters.
15. Work with the New Jersey Congressional delegation to obtain support for the concept of an Endowment for Public Media (including NJN) to be funded through the transition of TV spectrum to mobile broadband.

B4. CONCLUSION – STABILITY MEANS SERVICE

These are just a few of the organizational changes and revenue-generating ideas that have been talked about, researched, and cultivated by consultants, but not always acted on in the past. While the staff has many more specific ideas in this regard, the main emphasis is on creating a more autonomous organization that can use new technologies and a stable commitment of support to leverage a wider variety of productions and media on multiple platforms, creating greater numbers of identifiable products that serve more New Jerseyans. ***A commitment by the State of New Jersey to stand up for its citizens and keep this public service healthy will be the foundation upon which a refurbished NJ Public Media Corporation can flourish.*** Once renewed, the potential for this new NJN as a public institution to develop and sustain long-term private partnerships will be much stronger; as donors and supporters will be assured that their investment in NJN's mission will continue to strengthen the services NJN provides for years to come.

As NJN moves towards financial stability, funds will be used to purchase new equipment that will meet the needs of the Public Media Service we have become since the advent of broadband and digital technology. If the State helps us to rebuild NJN, today's professionals can train a new generation of media experts who will keep NJN's mission alive for the next forty years.

TOGETHER we can achieve this goal!

C. THE PROBLEMATIC IMPACT OF THE NJN FOUNDATION

C1. BACKGROUND

The NJN Foundation formed with less than five people on staff, and its first President (Barry Bornstein) held no position within NJN or had any impact or control over management on the NJPBA side. When Elizabeth Christopherson was named Executive Director of NJN in 1994, she also assumed the role of President of the NJN Foundation, and that blurring of the line between two organizations and two boards – both with very different charters and very different levels of accountability – has created policy and management crises ever since.

In 1997, and again in 2008, Ms. Christopherson and the NJN Foundation launched aggressive campaigns to convince government leaders to relinquish the NJN license to the NJN Foundation. Ms. Christopherson's policies to "wean" NJN from state funding rather than lobby for more funding ended up weakening NJN in favor of strengthening the organizational size and power of the NJN Foundation, a group that by charter should have no policy-making control over NJN, and a group that has little or no evident accountability to the NJPBA or its stewards, the NJ State Legislature. *This long-term blurring of the lines between the NJPBA and NJN Foundation has been exacerbated by the fact that one group, the Foundation's privatizing champions and its advocates within NJN, have been creating policy changes to force the other group (NJNI production staff) to give up their public employee status or become obsolete.* This, we believe, was a conflict of interest for those who would ultimately get the licenses, for free, from the State. We also feel these management decisions actually led to the current "sad state of NJN." *We find it ironic that the privatizers seem happy to publicly brag about how bad things are at NJN, as proof of failure by the New Jersey State Legislature (NJNI's current stewards), and as the best reason for a giveaway of NJN, when in fact it was this privatizing push that starved NJN of its resources to operate effectively.*

C2. EXAMPLES OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACT

While the working staff of the NJN Foundation has been a good partner to NJN since 1994, its leadership policies have created numerous conflicts, problems, and policies that were ultimately more destructive to the NJN organization than were helpful. For example, by 2007, NJN was already struggling to survive with very little funding available for equipment or program development. This made it extremely difficult to fulfill NJN's mission to serve the people of New Jersey. Meanwhile, the NJN Foundation appeared to be building up its own organization, accumulating approximately \$6 million in a reserve fund. More examples are listed below.

1. The NJN Foundation has recently touted their track record of raising \$100 million dollars for NJN since 1993. 100,000,000.00 divided by 17 years equals about 5.8 million dollars a year. NJN has NOT received this level of funding per year for 17 years; in fact, it traditionally received a grant of 3 million dollars a year and has never received six million dollars in one year. Much of that touted one hundred million raised went to self-sustaining purposes, including a Foundation

“reserve fund,” with a nest egg for a hoped-for break away from the State that would result in the NJN Foundation owning the assets. This is also a negative reflection on the NJN Foundation’s track record as what is supposed to be a “pass-through-only” non-profit.

2. Much of the touted \$100,000,000.00 over 17 years comes from NJN activity (on the NJPBA side); these are broadcast services, production and labor which upon which the NJN Foundation relies upon and uses, services that the NJN Foundation couldn’t garner revenue from, without NJN. Examples include:
 - a. project underwriting funding sent to the NJN Foundation for series and shows that are produced by NJPBA staff and broadcast on NJN, which is the NJPBA asset. For example, the NJ State Council on the Arts annually funds the program State of the Arts; producers not only produce the product but package the grant, propose it, and pitch the series, etc. NJN staff do all the development work, and satisfy the work obligations proposed in the grant, yet the monies are considered “raised” by the NJN Foundation. Similarly, many special projects work this way as well. Historically many NJN projects were funded by private monies and shepherded by producers who helped locate and develop the grants, long before the NJN Foundation required that all grants be passed through its accounting scheme;
 - b. general funding for NJN that results in the broadcast production of General Support Announcements, or GSA’s, non-commercial “spots” that are produced with NJPBA staff and equipment aired on NJN;
 - c. an NJN Gala/Benefit event that liberally uses NJPBA labor, equipment, and even air time in its promotion to raise its funds;
 - d. numerous non-broadcast and broadcast “friend-making” Foundation-directed promotional campaigns that require NJPBA staff sources to videotape public events, parties, and promotional spots, all directed by Foundation administrators in order to develop friends and partner with consultants and potential funders;
 - e. project funding that is often developed by Foundation staff for funder “pet projects” that become broadcast specials and/or broadcast shows that require NJPBA producers and production staff to deliver and NJN to broadcast. In many ways the tools of raising revenue of the NJN Foundation have cost obligations to the NJPBA, undercutting the premise that these revenues are net revenues. In summary, the NJN Foundation could not have raised these monies without an NJN and its resources.

3. When Elizabeth Christopherson became both the NJN Executive Director and the President of the NJN Foundation, *that organizational change blurred the previous firewall between two clear management positions: one person with broadcast professionalism on one side, and one person with expertise in fundraising for a non-profit on the other.* In retrospect, Ms. Christopherson’s background was fit for the latter. Her inexperience in the broadcast world (none) did not prevent her from putting policies and people into place that discouraged increased production, better-managed production, and support structures for re-investing in the infrastructure or programming. Over fifteen years time, many non-News

- productions would eventually be starved for funding, or guided toward a model of private funding whereby only “friend-funded” projects would be given the green light to be produced.
4. The NJN Foundation as an organization prior to Elizabeth Christopherson was a lean two person operation. At the height of the NJN Foundation’s growth, the staff neared thirty.
 5. The rapid unchecked expansion of the Foundation lead to instances of waste both major and petty. The amount of overhead for the Foundation in comparison to its fundraising mission approached the fifty percent range.
 6. In an era of “weaning,” production staff were never replaced but administrative/management costs soared. One clear example: while NJN production staff dwindled, NJN Executive Director Christopherson’s administrative staff expanded. Every Ex. Director of NJN prior to 1994 employed one Executive Assistant; Christopherson employed an Executive Office administrative staff of at least four.
 7. In the 2008 attempt by management to wrest control of the NJN licenses from the State, the same leadership had indicated that the station was already well into a fiscal crisis and that its budget had a built in "structural" deficit. Dramatic cuts in hours of operation and programming were proposed as the only option, despite the fact that the previous 2-3 years at NJN had already required freezing new hires or replacing positions, discouraged equipment purchases, and limited production costs. An Open Records Act action in 2008 would later show that most of the senior management received raises in both years from Fiscal Year 2006 to FY 2008 during this period of fiscal crisis. (See detailed breakdown in Addendum.) At the time, many senior managers were called upon to publicly advocate for the privatization scheme and lobby staff to support it too.
 8. For years, many producer or production staff ideas for new projects were often discouraged or routinely dismissed as too expensive. Meanwhile, production resources (studios, field crews and cameras) were being utilized with great expense for NJN Foundation-directed broadcast shows or even short broadcast promotional spots (once referred to as “New Jersey Treasures.”) Grantor-funded shows proved to be the model that NJN Foundation wanted to see made. Generous pledges to the NJN Foundation from someone who also happened to be a board member of another organization often received a proposal to do a documentary about that other organization; in this way, the private funding model for green-lighting projects began to dictate that only certain projects would be produced. In summary, this eroded the editorial wall between the public institution and the private funders who might influence and/or control that institution.

9. This practice of favoring privately-funded projects only also contributed to the significant decrease in overall quantity (and television quality) of NJN's air product. In many cases, Elizabeth Christopherson herself shepherded projects into production on behalf of favored funders, and in some cases she aggressively pursued editorial changes to the program content to curry favor with the funder of the program. (Examples of this can be found in Section D3.)
10. In the "private model" being developed by the NJN Foundation, multiple vice-presidents were hired for created programs and initiatives. Several of these high paid positions lasted only a year or two, with the touted revenue-generating program or campaign expiring without results. One example: a freelance producer-consultant paid by the NJN Foundation was eventually hired on staff as a "Vice President for National Programming." The individual left after two years in the position, without a single program produced by NJN for that program, nor a single "Producer meeting for National Programming" held at NJN. In summary, many private relationships designed to replace staff producers quickly soured and failed, with great cost to Foundation revenues and with no appreciable gain or product provided to NJPBA. (Note: the producer went on to notable success producing material he'd already been working on for himself while being paid by NJN.)

C3. CONCLUSION – A MORE POSITIVE ROLE FOR A FOUNDATION

There have been three unsuccessful attempts by the Foundation to "privatize" NJN, including this latest attempt in 2010. From the self serving, "no one wants to pay to replace the State's leaky roof" excuse for not raising more funds, to the current, vicious attack on the integrity and work ethic of the staff, key members of the Foundation and NJN Executive staff have devoted countless hours, resources and undisclosed funds to advance their privatization agenda. It is time to end the division within NJN by establishing the New Jersey Public Media Corporation referenced in the proposed legislation A2949. This will result in focusing the Foundation exclusively on its statutory mission, fundraising. In point of fact, millions are raised every year "to fix the state's roof" through donations to state colleges and universities, which of course are autonomous entities. The roof of the New Jersey State House – the restoration of the Gold Dome profiled in NJN's film documentary "A Legacy in Gold" – was funded through a public/private partnership advocated by Gov. Christie Whitman that included many robust private funders.

NJN staff believes that a vibrant Foundation, focused exclusively on its statutory mission of developing funding for NJN, is the best kind of non-profit partner for a broadcast entity. That Foundation must be limited to the work of finding and developing funding for an NJN that exists and operates independent of the influence, costs and administrative needs and designs of that Foundation. NJN staff believes that with stable management (preferably an experienced broadcast executive to run NJN and a seasoned fundraiser to serve as President of the Foundation); we can bring the Public Broadcast Authority/Public Media Corporation and the Foundation TOGETHER to work to rebuild NJN as a cutting-edge, multi-media public media service. To accomplish this, we need inspired leadership that we can put our trust in to help us mend the divides that exist between the Public Broadcasting Authority staff and the Foundation so that over time NJN will become a sustainable public/private organization that serves the people of New Jersey for generations to come.

D. THE NJN FOUNDATION'S PRIVATIZATION PROPOSAL

Below please find responses to some of the more typical pro-privatization arguments offered by current NJN management.

D1. BLAMING THE STATE SYSTEM

1. "Increased output is too difficult to achieve within the State system."
 - a. NJN staff has a wealth of innovative, creative and cost-saving ideas that can and should be implemented, including re-investment in production systems and equipment and budgeting practices that increase and encourage in-house production, not discourage it.
 - b. Many project ideas for production, marketing, and revenue enhancement have been consistently ignored by an executive staff determined to follow the privatization agenda espoused by the current Interim Executive Director and key members of the Foundation staff and board.
 - c. For example, suggestions to create Media Liaisons in every state department and to conduct a media/communications needs assessment of every state department have been routinely ignored by Executive staff for years.
 - d. *In-house production staff, when used effectively and managed well; curtail the need for excessive dependence on freelance production staff.* Freelance professionals require payment for scheduled dates even when shoots are cancelled, and their work often results in a "money in/money out" dynamic of the funding dedicated to projects that require flexible shooting schedules and multiple editing revisions. Flexible staff crews for the field and studio make in-house production cheaper, especially for a station with a wide variety of production approaches.
 - e. *A primary goal of establishing a more autonomous NJ Public Media Corporation, with better business, purchasing, and operational practices, would solve this issue.*
2. "Advanced strategic innovation and change are difficult to achieve within the State system."
 - a. Advanced strategic innovation has rarely, if ever, been attempted by NJN's Executive staff without linking it to their privatization agenda.
 - b. Much of the hullabaloo about "new equipment" and "new systems" as well as "new training" has never alienated a production staff eager to re-invent itself and make more content. Unfortunately, in 2010, this suggestion of new technologies was always mentioned hand-in-hand with privatization, loss of public employee (and union) status, and the practice of employing interns and consumer-producers as replacement production staff.
 - c. NJN News and all of NJN's staff are eager to embrace quality-driven change, new innovations, new technology and multiple platforms; however, they are not willing to embrace change for change's sake, especially change predicated

on top-down decisions that negatively impact the quality of the product and the service.

D2. PRIVATE FUNDING, WITH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES

1. “A privatized NJN will have greater fundraising capability and be more fluid.”
 - a. NJN has been raising funds for over 40 years, including the 25 years before the NJN Foundation came into being. As an already private fundraising entity, the NJN Foundation failed to establish a Capital Grants and Major Gifts Campaign. That failure falls on the Executive staff within the Foundation and key NJN Executive staff who have deliberately sabotaged the Network in order to advance their privatization agenda.
 - b. Many of the NJN Foundation’s revenue-generating practices benefit from using NJPBA labor and resources for free. Without in-house production staff, many of these practices will require real expenditures that will almost certainly cut into the Foundation’s performance for true net revenues from their efforts.

2. “There is a widely-held belief that raising additional funds for a State institution is a constant challenge. As a nonprofit organization this issue will evaporate.”
 - a. *Perhaps NJN Executive staff and Foundation staff need to be reminded that the NJN Foundation already is a nonprofit organization.*
 - b. Donations made to NJN are tax-deductible.
 - c. A nonprofit is a nonprofit and those willing to make a donation to a nonprofit cannot or do not make the distinction between a state-owned licensee or a community-owned licensee.
 - d. *The only individuals making that distinction are NJN Executive staff and Foundation staff who hope to profit from privatizing NJN.*
 - e. NJN does not have to become a nonprofit to succeed successfully in fundraising. Other state operated networks achieved considerable success in fundraising; for instance, at IdahoPTV state employees carry out all fundraising activities. At IdahoPTV private contributions including memberships, gifts, and underwriting account for 63% of revenue – a much higher percentage than in NJ. (Source: Interview with Peter Morrill, General Manger of IdahoPTV)

3. “Partnerships will be made more easily if NJN is not a State entity.”
 - a. NJN management currently cite efforts to create partnerships with The College of New Jersey, Rutgers University, Montclair State University, Newark Museum, the Liberty Science Center and many more. What prevents these partnerships from being established immediately?
 - b. Several of these institutions are partially funded by the state either directly or through grants, similar to NJN’s funding.

- c. The failure to develop these partnerships is solely the failure of NJN management to prioritize the development of such partnerships.

D3. MEDIA CONTROL

1. “Media produced by a state entity represents a possible conflict of interest; government support of the institution might affect content.”
 - a. NJN programming has followed strict PBS standards in restricting undue influence on its content from state officials as well as corporate and private funders. NJN News has been especially diligent in being sensitive to this policy.
 - b. Currently every member of the State Legislature, past and future, from all districts and every political sector, as well as every Governor, have represented New Jersey’s citizens in making sure that NJN owned up to its mission. Swapping this changing roster of elected officials for a handful of privatization board members will not remove the threat of control over what NJN produces. In fact, that potential to control the media coming out of NJN will reside with a smaller group upon whom the private entity desperately counts on for funding.
 - c. *A strong NJ Public Media Corporation, with a clear and well-defined editorial firewall between all its funders and its stewards, will stand a better chance of upholding a high standard of editorial control. A balanced board, as well as a bevy of political leaders from all sides of the aisle and sectors of New Jersey, can still hold the organization accountable to its mission, but it would be less likely that any one group or party could monopolize control over the production content without a response from others.*
2. “A privatized NJN has no appearance of conflict and is free from influence on its editorial control.”
 - a. The NJN Foundation, under the leadership of Elizabeth Christopherson, has already established a poor track record of how a private NJN would defend the editorial control firewall that staff producers require in their relationship to funders of documentaries and specials. One example: in the editing stage 2008 NJN production of the environmental documentary GREEN BUILDERS, Christopherson attempted to force the producer to remove a single line in the program that was a muted criticism of fossil fuel dependence, for fear that NJN’s gala host, the CEO of PSE&G, might be offended. PSE&G never exerted any negative pressure whatsoever, but it was the Foundation’s sycophantic relationship with its funders that prompted this obvious “self-censorship” attempt.
 - b. Private funding does not necessarily result in a “free media.” The NJN Foundation’s track record of what it chooses to green light for production has been directly connected to the subject choices of outside individuals and organizations whose funds were available. Outside of NJN News and the

mission programs, many “funded specials” made at NJN were not ideas generated by NJN producers, but were created in response to available monies offered by private organizations or individuals. These funders were asked what programs they wished to see NJN produce, and that dictated both the subjects NJN covered in its specials, as well as limited the quantity of specials – eliminating most project ideas that were not directly connected to a funder or Foundation board member. This does not fit with the public perception of a media free from influence or control, and yet many people think moving away from a connection to the State makes NJN “free.”

D4. CONCLUSION – AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Many of the criticisms leveled at the current NJN structure as “State-owned” or “State-connected” that deal with the issues of slow purchasing practices, hiring and firing, and other business-related issues can be ameliorated in the suggested NJ Public Media Corporation. In fact, many of these organizational changes were proposed for NJN years ago in the waning months of the Byrne administration, in an effort to free up the agency to raise funds easier, make equipment purchases faster, and recruit capable television production talent. The concept was always a viable improvement of the current NJN, and should be seen as a very intelligent and easy structural change which provided a middle ground between the current status and a completely privatized NJN that results in the entire State asset – paid for with taxpayer funds for forty years – being gifted to a private group.

Many of the easy benefits of “going private” being cited as advantages could already have been in place; in fact, many of the campaigns and partnerships should have been embarked upon long ago. In addition, a NJ Public Media Corporation with more autonomy and broader fundraising permission – aided by a spare but more efficient Foundation – can do all of these things as well.

Lastly, issues regarding editorial control and answering to the interests of its “owners” have just as much serious import to them in a private model as they do in a state-owned model. While the public perception of the State’s stewardship of NJN can be framed to appear nefarious, it should be noted that NJN has answered to forty years’ worth of governance, with a variety of Governors and their administrations, and Legislatures representing every district in the state. NJN has been accountable to its citizens through these representatives. A private board and management that answers only to a small group of wealthy funders cuts that cord to the State, and its citizens. The broadcast product and the mission could be altered or severely harmed, or certain special interests served, instead of the broader interest of every citizen in New Jersey. *The privatization advocates have yet to detail how a future NJN would be held accountable to this difficult mission of service, and furthermore who would hold them accountable.*

E. NJN'S MISSION, LOOKING AHEAD

NJN has always had the challenge of a truly unique mission: to provide New Jersey with both local content of the PBS ilk, as well as straight news and public affairs that is typically provided in other parts of the U.S. by a local commercial network affiliate. Most PBS local stations do very little state-focused original production, and only Oklahoma has a PBS local station that endeavors to produce a local daily news show like NJN.

Why such a challenging mission? It's the geography: never have so many citizens been so underserved by the media marketplace in which they live. One may not theoretically agree that a state government should have a connection to a media outlet, but the New Jersey State Legislature stepped in where the marketplace would not, and has not, and that's why NJN was created as a public institution. New Jerseyans live in a state that is poorly served by greater commercial stations with greater resources, and it is often deeply divided by its regionalism and the lack of a unifying media voice. NJN is the only statewide network, and its dedication to bringing every part of New Jersey to every other part of New Jersey has been unmatched.

1. NJN News is NJN's flagship production that offers a unique brand of journalism that recognizes the rich diversity of the Garden State and the common interests that connect us as one, statewide community.
2. The Hughes Commission which recommended the creation of New Jersey public broadcasting, believed that it should be state-operated with the broadcast licenses owned by the taxpayers of New Jersey. The Commission believed that this arrangement would ensure the mission to cover New Jersey would not be overwhelmed by the broadcast market forces that strongly favor New York and Philadelphia.
3. Over the last four decades, NJN has produced home-grown series and documentaries that focus on the arts, the environment, history, and our cultural diversity that captures the essence of the Garden State. Since its inception NJN programming has received over 340 Regional Emmy Nominations and won over 70 Regional Emmy Awards, as well as numerous awards from other organizations— an accomplishment our production team is proud of.
4. NJN also is proud of the educational services we provide to the people of New Jersey. Over the years, we've conducted Ready to Learn and Ready to Lead in Literacy projects throughout the state to help parents and caregivers teach their young children how to read. In cooperation with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, we have developed a broad range of workforce training programs and services that are designed to provide all the people of

New Jersey with access to information that can enhance their chances of success in the workplace.

5. Through NJN News and its Jersey-centric programming, NJN's video archives include the culture, history and natural environment of the state – with images, interviews, historic documents and records.
6. Now, with the advent of Broadband technology in recent years and the transition from analog to digital, NJN can do so much more for the people of New Jersey as a public media service. The NJN Website provides access to information about all of our programming and educational services, and visitors to the site can view programs and the news on demand.
7. Working in partnership with the NJ State Police, NJN also serves as the State's emergency communications system that provides New Jerseyans with a redundant, reliable, secure and fast communications solution that makes it possible to embed, within its digital television signal, high resolution video, audio, photographs, graphs, and evacuation maps that can be sent over NJN's wireless broadband network to emergency response command centers and first responders on the ground.

All of these aspects of NJN's mission of service have even greater potential in the new age of multiple media formats and increased capabilities for delivery. Created in the broadcast age, NJN was a noble experiment by the State to rectify the poor service of the media marketplace to the citizens of New Jersey, and answer the media void with a truly unique PBS station – one that put its local audience first. While the digital media marketplace unfolds with opportunity, New Jersey again finds its media choices slim, based on the whims of the marketplace. NJN has the trusted professionals and the production experience to renew this mission of service and make it expand exponentially on multiple formats and in new ways.

This would be the wrong time to end this noble experiment and give NJN away, or let it continue to starve. The need for NJN's service has not gone away; if anything, reliable and grounded information for New Jersey's citizens is more necessary than ever. State pride, state identity, and statewide unity are needed more than ever. A new NJN, re-tooled and powerful in its reach, is on the eve of becoming a reality. A new statement of commitment and support will reinvigorate this mission, and once again turn NJN into a unique PBS station that puts its citizens first, and brings New Jersey's stories to everyone in the state.