



NJN DEAL GOOD FOR NEW JERSEY...WITH THE PROPER SAFEGUARDS

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The pending transition of the New Jersey Public Television and Radio Network (NJN) from a New Jersey owned and operated station to New Jersey Television (NJTV) which would be operated by WNET, a New York based Public Broadcaster is a move that should be commended. The sale of NJN is a bold initiative by Governor Christie that makes both economic and logistical sense-provided the needs of the State continued to be addressed.

The impending shift to relocate production services from NJN in Trenton to NJTV (permanent location to be determined) will trim \$11 million from New Jersey's operating budget in just five short years, while allowing New Jersey to maintain the rights to the radio broadcasting licenses—which will generate roughly \$50 million in lease fees. Aside from cost savings, the transaction also contains language to protect New Jerseyans by requiring NJTV to air New Jersey centric programming. This programming would include, but not be limited to coverage of state house events such as the Governor's annual State of the State address and Budget message, election coverage, the nightly news and public affair programming, as well as between 20 and 25 hours of New Jersey based programming.

While the transfer should be applauded, there are also several concerns with a move of this magnitude. NJN has covered New Jersey for forty-three years, and has a workforce of 130 dedicated employees in its Trenton office. Currently, WNET is planning on reducing the state-based workforce from 130 employees to roughly 20; such a reduction in workforce will not allow WNET to sustain the same impact NJN has had in New Jersey's news cycle. Ultimately, NJN is the public voice of broadcasting in New Jersey and 20,000 residential viewers may soon lose their high quality New Jersey based programming.

The Southern New Jersey Development Council is a member-based organization charged with promoting sustainable economic development in South Jersey by working with the region's county economic development directors and promoting projects that will increase economic viability throughout the region for years to come. While SNJDC supports the transition of operating NJN to WNET we remain concerned that the voice of the State, particularly South Jersey, could be lost in the white noise of multi-state programming.