



My NJ. My PBS.



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

“I love NJ PBS and all its programs.”
-NJ PBS Viewer



NJ PBS is a valuable part of the advancement of New Jersey and its surrounding areas.

In 2021, NJ PBS provided these vital local services: Emergency Broadcast Service, quality local and national programming and community/education initiatives.

NJ PBS's local services had deep impact in cities and town across all 21 counties of the Garden State.



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New Brand, Same Mission

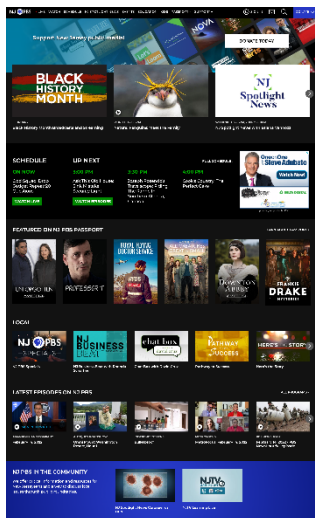
New Jersey public television has a decades-long proud tradition of serving the Garden State. The next step in its evolution happened in February 2021 when **NJTV became NJ PBS**. The new brand name more clearly identifies and differentiates the network from all other media in a crowded marketplace while more directly connecting its content with the national footprint and trust of PBS, America's Public Broadcasting service.

NJ PBS remains dedicated to its mission of providing news, programming and special events that uniquely inform and represent New Jersey and its diverse communities. It continues to provide **more than 30 hours of local Jersey-centric programming each week**, exceeding the 20-25 hours initially promised when the network operations began in 2011. In 2021 it continually innovated within the virtual world to provide that content throughout these changing times. NJ PBS uniquely brings the powerful resources of public media to all 21 counties in New Jersey, the only public television network to do so, and keeps constituents informed, enlightened and entertained. Here are some of the network's highlights and updates from the past year:



New General Manager NJ PBS welcomed a new General Manager, **Joseph (Joe) Lee**. He brings three decades of public media experience to the organization and is committed to help grow and expand on the service that our communities have come to rely on for education, engagement, entertainment. Everyone at the network is grateful to the previous GM John Servidio for his decade of leadership that began from the first flip of the NJTV switch in 2011, and wish him the best in retirement.

Appointment Local Programming NJ PBS continues to provide a dedicated primetime block called **NJmade**, featuring exclusively local programming. Viewers can tune in **Wednesdays at 8pm** to catch rotations of popular local series like *Here's The Story* and *Drive By History*.



A Robust Website MyNJPBS.org offers hundreds of hours of streamed programming and free digital resources for educations via PBS LearningMedia New Jersey.

News for New Jersey NJ Spotlight News is the news division of NJ PBS. It's New Jersey's leading destination for local issues-driven news and investigations with an audience-focused, story-first approach across all media platforms. So New Jerseyans get their news any way they want to, on television, on their computers or on their phones. Each weeknight the team reports on the newscast, **NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi**, with content and information updating throughout the day on **NJSpotlightNews.org** (a microsite on MyNJPBS.org) and social media platforms. Daily and weekly **e-newsletters** give constituents news right in their inbox. **Live virtual roundtables** invite public participation (more to come on that later). It is notable that in a media landscape where more and more news outlets are installing paywalls for their content, NJ Spotlight News resources remain free to the public.





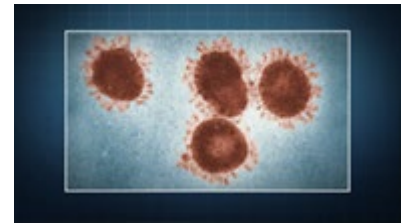
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NJ PBS Local Television Series

In 2021, NJ PBS continued, and added to, its popular local series line-up, including:

- ***Chat Box with David Cruz***: Half-hour weekly public affairs program featuring one-on-one interviews with New Jersey newsmakers and lawmakers.
- ***Classroom Close-up, NJ***: Half-hour weekly program produced by the NJEA featuring New Jersey's public school success stories.
- ***Drive By History***: The half-hour series follows the investigations of host Ken Magos as he stops at local roadside history markers to explore what happened and why it still matters with the help of esteemed historians, celebrated authors and nationally recognized experts.
- ***Drive By History: Eats*** (new): The half-hour series finds host Ken Magos revisiting past *Drive By History* investigations with a focus on the food, specifically seeking recipes/menus that would appeal to today's palate.
- ***Governors' Perspectives with Kent Manahan*** (new): Interview specials featuring former New Jersey governors sharing their insight on headlining issues and leadership.
- ***Here's The Story***: Half-hour monthly program that hits the road to tell the stories of unique people and places across the Garden State and beyond.
- ***NJ Business Beat with Rhonda Schaffler***: Each week, host/NJ Spotlight News business correspondent Rhonda Schaffler takes a deep look at the stories, trends and influencers shaping New Jersey's business landscape.
- ***NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi***: Half-hour local news program concentrating on issues and news affecting New Jerseyans.
- ***Pasta & Politics with Nick Acocella***: Half-hour program featuring conversation and cooking with local political figures.
- ***Pathway to Success***: Half-hour show produced by the African American Chamber of Commerce of NJ and hosted by its President/CEO John E. Harmon, Sr., spotlighting contributions of African American businesses.
- ***¿Que Pasa, NJ?***: Half-hour program hosted by business leader and entrepreneur Carlos Medina, who interviews the tri-state area's rising Hispanic stars and role models and celebrates the region's rich cultural diversity.
- ***Reporters Roundtable with David Cruz***: Half-hour weekly public affairs program featuring in-depth discussion with leading journalists from across the Garden State about New Jersey issues from the State House and beyond.
- ***State of Affairs with Steve Aduato***: Half-hour weekly public affairs show produced by Caucus Educational Corporation featuring in-depth analysis of critical issues that affect the lives of New Jersey residents.
- ***State of the Arts***: Half-hour weekly program goes on-location with creative NJ personalities and places.
- ***Think Tank with Steve Aduato***: Half-hour Caucus Educational Corporation series with insightful studio interviews and discussion, tackling a range of important issues.
- ***Treasures of New Jersey***: Half-hour specials profiling some of New Jersey's iconic places.
- ***Special Live Coverage***: NJ Spotlight News provides live coverage of special events such as the Governor's annual State of the State and Budget addresses, which include analysis and a GOP response.

Pandemic resources and ongoing coverage: Throughout the pandemic, NJ Spotlight News has become a relied-upon information source through *NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi* newscasts, streaming coverage of the Governor’s weekly briefings, an online coronavirus information hub, and daily newsletters. We continue to update the online [Coronavirus Information Hub](#), which was launched at the end of February 2020 and has provided the public with free information and resources throughout the pandemic. The Hub includes a collection of local reports from *NJ Spotlight News* on the pandemic and its effect on New Jersey.



AP Photo

NJ Decides 2021: NJ PBS’ multiplatform political coverage informed voters leading into Election Day with ongoing candidate/issues reporting on air, at NJSpotlightNews.org, on YouTube and social media platforms, and via e-newsletters. Five free-to-the-public virtual conversation events were produced (see below), along with a live broadcast/streamed gubernatorial debate in partnership with Rowan University and WNYC with 500-person audience and questions solicited via social media, plus a live post-debate show on YouTube, culminating with live Election night coverage on air and online.

Election and news conversation events: To help constituents learn more about the issues that played an important part in this past year’s elections, NJ PBS offered a series of virtual conversations, [NJ Decides 2021: NJ Spotlight News Election Conversations](#), unpacking topics such as the state budget, education, health care, social justice, clean energy and climate change.



Roundtable Discussions: NJ PBS regularly engages with our communities with free NJ Spotlight News [virtual roundtables](#) on a variety of topics, from healthcare and economic disparity to climate change and urban sprawl. Hundreds of people register and attend these events, which incorporate panel discussion and public Q&A. Attendance online now is higher than it ever was in-person, resulting in thousands of people engaging with the network and the panelists over the last two years alone, and bolstering sign-ups for the daily and weekly NJ Spotlight e-Newsletters.

American Cities Rebuilding: After a successful launch last year, the American Cities Rebuilding discussion series grew this October from two to five days and was conducted in partnership with three other major public television stations in Chicago, Houston and Seattle. It convened thought leaders and professionals who shared insight and experience around the challenges our cities are facing today. Numerous subject matter experts, familiar public media voices, and members of state and local governments — including Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, US Senator Cory Booker, and our news team’s former anchor Mary Alice Williams — joined the conversation.



Hunger In NJ: NJ PBS’ news division, NJ Spotlight News, explored hunger and food insecurity and its ripple effect across the state in a new initiative that started with weekly reports in 2020 and continues into the present. Profiles span school age children being shamed for not paying their lunch bills, to college kids not having money for food after paying massive tuition bills, and seniors who are forced to pick between the high cost of meds or a meal.

Front Row Festival: NJ PBS partnered with the Montclair Film Festival to create this six-part series to make the arts accessible to New Jerseyans across the state. With dramas, documentaries, and animation, *Front Row Festival* delivered movies straight from the festival circuit into living rooms, with many films featuring New Jersey settings and personalities. Some episodes include a post-screening Q&A panel.



Corporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities

NJ PBS and The WNET Group continue to take a concerted look at the world and our organization in the wake of the social justice protests over the last couple of years, actively assessing and working to maximize our inclusion and diversity policies with The WNET Group Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, an internal **Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory (IDEA) Council**, and The WNET Group diversity consultant, to provide input on strategic agenda-setting that assures the network is inclusive both in staffing and in reaching and representing our communities of color with our content. Additionally in 2021, NJ PBS explored diversity in the State through:

Social Justice Beat: NJ Spotlight News established a dedicated social justice news beat and reporting team to explore issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Black Philanthropy Event: NJ PBS explored the history, complexity, and impact of Black philanthropists on the state of New Jersey in special virtual event, *Strengthening a Community: Black Philanthropy in New Jersey*. Moderated by Eugenia Harvey, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer at The WNET Group, participants included representatives from Rutgers University, PSEG Foundation and Better Mortgage. More events like this will be coordinated in the future.

Education Initiatives



- **NJTV Learning Live** continues to teach children through its archive on the NJ PBS website. [This series](#), produced at the start of the pandemic in collaboration with the New Jersey Education Association and the NJ Department of Education, features NJ public school teachers teaching lessons to grades 3 to 6. More than 200 hours of lessons were produced in 2020 and remain a free educational resource for children and educators.
- **Leaning Materials Archive:** NJ PBS collaborated with The WNET Group Kids' Media & Education Department and New Jersey schools to create free [localized learning materials](#) for PBS LearningMedia crafted out of material digitized from the New Jersey Network Archive.
- **Digital Innovator Group:** Three New Jersey educators are part of the Digital Innovator group, The WNET Group local teacher recognition program. The group meets monthly, helping to advise us on our various projects, share strategies, learn from peers, and leverage PBS platforms to elevate their own ideas and voices.
- **Camp TV:** NJ PBS aired [Camp TV](#), providing pre-K students with free, educational fun throughout the summer months. A day camp experience in living rooms, the series head counselor, played by Zachary Noah Piser, guided "campers" as they learn through play, with experiences from partners including Carnegie Hall, Exploratorium, Memphis Zoo, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New Victory Theater, NY Public Library, OK Go and more.

Reaching Audiences in Other Languages

- **Translated News Stories:** NJ PBS' news division and Montclair State University's Center for Cooperative Media continued to collaborate this year to translate NJ Spotlight News stories into Spanish. The translations have continued typically 2-3 per month and are posted onto the [NJSpotlightNews.org](#) site as an [En Español vertical](#) and are also distributed/promoted in the news division's newsletters. These articles have also been reproduced on the NJ-based [Reporte Hispano](#) website and print edition (mostly) and occasionally other Spanish-language journals. The news team's work has also appeared also been translated into Korean and Chinese languages, appearing in *The Korea Daily* and *Sing Tao Daily*.
- **NHK World:** While NJ PBS does not broadcast in other languages, it does offer NHK World TV. NJ PBS partnered with NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) to distribute its 24/7 public television network featuring hourly live news and Japanese lifestyle programming on NJ PBS' first multicast channel.

- **Bright By Text:** NJ PBS was among The WNET Group family of stations to distribute messages in both English and Spanish about resources and other free local programs via the Bright by Text platform to local subscribers. It continued to air the promo for *Bright by Text* program in both English and Spanish on NJ PBS, among its other stations.
- **Stay And Play Initiative:** NJ PBS constituents also benefitted from *Stay and Play* virtual family workshops in Spanish on the WNET Education YouTube page.

Public Recognition



Brenda Flanagan Honored: NJ Spotlight News Senior Correspondent Brenda Flanagan received two major awards from the New Jersey Society of Professional Journalists in a ceremony July 30 in New Brunswick. The group honors work from journalists around the Garden State. Flanagan, a veteran journalist who has reported for NJ PBS’ news division for the last eight years, received both a Lifetime Achievement Award for her years of Garden State coverage and the organization’s Courage Under Fire award for her ongoing COVID-19 pandemic coverage.

Michael Aron Honored: NJ Spotlight News Chief Political Correspondent Michael Aron was honored in September with a Lifetime Achievement Award in New Jersey Journalism at the inaugural Byrne Kean Dinner in Hamilton Township. The dinner was created to honor the bipartisan legacy of two of New Jersey’s governors, Brendan Byrne and Tom Kean, and outstanding contributions to journalism on the state and local levels.



Viewer Feedback

Here are a few of the comments “viewers like you” had to say about NJ PBS and its content this year:

“I love NJ PBS and all its programs.”

“I’ve enjoyed your show [*Drive By History*] for several years now, the one on The Jersey Devil being my favorite.”

“Your wonderful programs...help our students in this difficult time.”

“I just wanted to send a quick note to tell you how much I appreciate your broadcasting of 35.2 NHK TV. My family and I have been watching it for years and have discovered so many fun things to watch we would normally not expect. Sumo, Japanese food and travel -- even the Japanese news is lots of fun and very informative. We shared it with many folks and have a great time getting a little taste of Japan. Keep up the good work!”