



Everything Jersey

## Pacts can aid students, NJTV

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**Gloucester County Times Editorial Board**

By



Based on the nightly news program that it has been running since July, we can't say we have absolute confidence that NJTV — the outside contractor that took over for New Jersey Network (NJN) — will make the most of its new production sites at four colleges around the state.

Unlike Assemblyman John Burzichelli, D-3, of Paulsboro, however, we're not ready to trash this development and plans for a partly student-based newsgathering effort. In fact, area residents should be pleased that Rowan University in Glassboro will be one of the sites. It will give NJTV a "West Jersey" presence that state-run NJN, which folded June 30, never had.

The other "content bureau" sites, as announced by NJTV, will be William Paterson University in North Jersey, Brookdale Community College in Monmouth County and Stockton State College in Atlantic County. The latter served as NJN's South Jersey home base, but it's 50 miles or so from Camden, Woodbury, Salem, etc.

Lorin Basden Arnold, dean of Rowan's College of Communications, said its pact with NJTV calls for NJTV to have offices at Rowan where reporters can put finishing touches on stories. In addition, the site can be used to interview Rowan experts. Also, students are supposed to be involved in shooting video to illustrate pieces, and possibly doing some reporting themselves.

This should be seen as a good opportunity for the students, as well as a chance for NJTV (a unit of New York's WNET-Thirteen) to beef up its still-troubled newscast. As Burzichelli and other NJTV critics point out, there are too few on-scene, live reports. Stories often run a day after the news take place, not the same night.

It's premature, however, for the assemblyman to dismiss the student component as "... free labor as the backbone of a news-gathering operation (which) means it's not necessarily going to be high-end."

We share Burzichelli's concern about the rudimentary nature of some of the technology. (Some elements of the Rowan site sound like no more than a video conferencing link to studios at Montclair State.) But students at Rowan and across the state ought to be up to the challenge of improving what NJTV sends over the air.