



2021 Annual Planning Retreat, Essex Junction VT

The Essex Resort & Spa, 70 Essex Way, Essex Junction, VT 05452

Autumn casual and comfortable dress throughout. All meals from Monday reception and dinner through Wednesday breakfast are group events. All general sessions in the Atrium.

Significant community institutions A powerful distributed network

Monday, October 11

8:00am – **Board Meeting** (Executive session)

2:30pm Board Room

2:00pm **Registration** Atrium lobby

4:00pm – **Welcome**

6:00pm

Scott Finn, President & CEO, Vermont Public

Dave Kansas. Chair, SRG Board of Directors

Strategic context

The critical challenges and opportunities before us and the strategies, priorities, and performance of our organizations.

Tom Thomas and Terry Clifford, SRG co-CEOs

What's the main thing?

We are working with our communities to explore new service models that better reflect the richness of America's growing pluralism, the advantages of evolving distribution and communication technologies, and the era's imperative of solution-oriented community engagement. We aspire to new levels of resources and the capacities they enable even as we confront changes in our business models.

In all of this, what are the most important next big steps we are taking to advance essential public service for our communities?

Group discussion

6:30pm – **Reception and Dinner**

9:30pm Garden Terrace (Ballroom backup)

Tuesday, October 12

8:00am – **Breakfast**

9:00am *Main Group* *SAG-AFTRA Stations*
Atrium Terrace Timber Room

9:00am – **Audience first growth strategies**

Noon SRG members are united in pursuit of serving audiences, delivering on mission, and remaining viable in a multi-service, multi-platform world. Widely shared aims include better reflecting the diversity of our communities in our services, activating the “full stack” of digital connections, and advancing our brands in competitive spaces.

What are our notable accomplishments and where are the greatest challenges? How do we envision a greater success?

Individual philanthropy and local public media

Major donors played a pivotal role in sustaining many of our local organizations these past 18 months. SRG convened a panel of philanthropic leaders to discuss their motivations for supporting local public media organizations and their experiences in doing so. Jarl Mohn, who before serving as NPR’s CEO was board chair and a major supporter of his local station, KPCC, hosted the discussion.

We will watch edited excerpts from the donor conversation, share reactions to the donors’ comments, and discuss how to grow this vital pillar of our financial strength.

Bill Davis, SRG Consultant

More on the money

We will move from major donors to other revenue topics members have raised, with some debate, such as diversifying revenue sources, content paywalls, sponsored content, and reimagining the member relationship.

Noon **Lunch**

Garden Terrace (Ballroom backup)

1:00pm – **Mapping public radio’s growing local journalism**

5:00pm For over a decade, SRG has tracked members’ (and others’) aspirations to grow the capacity and impact of our local journalism, along with charting the steady realization of those goals.

A next step is a place-based rendition of this progress – literally mapping some 50 anchoring “news forward” stations and a companion group of approximately 80 “news emphasis” stations across the country, backed up with key metrics of their capacities and performance.

A team at GBH and SRG staff have collaborated over the past four months to integrate data from multiple sources. We will see a demonstration of the first iteration of the interactive map and discuss how to use and improve this tool.

Jon Abbott, President & CEO, WGBH

Pam Johnston, General Manager for News

Building toward scale

Since we were last together some 10 SRG members have completed or are pursuing moves to expand the scale and reach of their operations through Public Service Operating Agreements, acquisitions, and mergers. Half of the respondents to our strategies and priorities survey indicated they intend to seek out opportunities to acquire, merge with, or partner with other entities – in broadcasting, digital, and other areas.

We will hear about some recent and notable examples and discuss as a group the opportunities and possible pitfalls of this work.

On being local

Many SRG members are rethinking what it means to be “a local public media organization” – how to express growing capacities to support community connectivity, local journalism, and local music and culture. This discussion is one part the “other shoe” of building toward scale, one part responding and realigning our work in the context of changing communities and the overall media environment.

Mental health, confidence, and joy

Many of us feel like we have been through one of the toughest patches of our careers. Many of those who work with and for us feel anxious and overwhelmed. If we are not too tired at the end of a very full day, let’s reflect on how we can rebuild the culture, cohesion, and energies of our teams.

6:00 – 9:00 **Reception and Dinner**
Black Flannel Brewing Co. (nearby walkable off-site)

Wednesday, October 13

8:00am – **Breakfast**

9:00am Atrium Terrace

9:00am – **The distributed network – shaping the collective enterprise we want**

11:45am What are our ambitions and roles in leadership and advocacy for the public media “eco-system”?

- Expectation for CPB’s role
- Interactions in a larger public media space
- Partnerships/mergers with and/or acquisitions of existing journalistic organizations (newspapers, digital start-ups, etc.)
- Evolving dynamic of NPR and stations

Noon – **Concluding thoughts for going forward**

1:00pm

Board meeting (Executive session)

Board room