



## Study Shows Public's Cable Channels at Greatest Risk



**The Alliance for  
Communications  
Democracy**

[www.theacd.org](http://www.theacd.org)

**April 5, 2010:** Today the Alliance for Communications Democracy (ACD) and the Benton Foundation released results of a nationwide study on public, educational and government (PEG) Access showing that public access cable channels have been the hardest hit by a wave of funding cuts and closures across the country in recent years. The primary causes are new state franchising laws and decisions of local governments.

“These findings reflect an alarming trend,” said Rob Brading, ACD President. “The loss of Public Access channels closes the door on the local community, including health and jobs groups, housing advocates, small business, churches, and arts and civic groups. Immediate steps need to be taken to stop the erosion of the infrastructure devoted to public use.”

“Public access channels advance first amendment goals through inclusion of a diversity of people, ideas and issues,” said Benton Foundation Executive Director, Cecilia Garcia. “That’s deserving of our government’s highest protections, particularly at a time of unprecedented media consolidation.”

The study looked at results from over 200 PEG centers from around the country, as well as tracking closures of centers in the past five years. Findings show:

- PEG Access Centers in at least 100 communities across the United States have been closed since 2005. A disproportionate number (93) exclusively served the public.
- Hundreds more PEG Access Centers in six states affected by state franchising laws may be forced to close or experience serious threats to financial and in-kind support over the next three years.
- Half of the 165 survey respondents providing financial information for 2005 and 2010 reported an average funding drop of 40% since 2005.
- The primary reasons cited for reductions in funding and in-kind resources for PEG Access Centers were new state franchising laws and/or decisions by local governments.

The study was conducted by The Buske Group, a Sacramento, California based consulting firm.

The Benton Foundation works to ensure that media and telecommunications serve the public interest and enhance our democracy. It pursues this mission by seeking policy solutions that support the values of access, diversity and equity, and by demonstrating the value of media and telecommunications to improve the quality of life for all Americans.

The ACD was founded over twenty years ago to preserve and strengthen community access to media through participation in constitutional questions and court cases involving community media.

Complete study results are available at [www.theacd.org](http://www.theacd.org).