John L. Augustine III

Executive Leader | Regional Economic Strategist | Economic Development Professional

John L. Augustine III is a Northeastern Pennsylvania executive, economic development strategist, public policy advocate, educator, and communications professional with more than 25 years of experience spanning economic development, technology, infrastructure, energy, site selection, strategic planning, and media relations.

He is President and Chief Executive Officer of Penn's Northeast, the regional economic development organization serving Northeastern Pennsylvania. The organization works with businesses, developers, site-selection professionals, utilities, government, and regional partners to attract quality employers and investment to its nine-county service area.

A Career Dedicated to Northeastern Pennsylvania

John L. Augustine III's career reflects a commitment to regional collaboration, innovation, public service, and the belief that Northeastern Pennsylvania can compete successfully on a national and global stage when its communities work together.

Throughout his career, Augustine has worked at the intersection of technology, communications, business development, and economic growth. He began his professional career during the formative years of the commercial Internet, developing expertise in Internet marketing, e-commerce, information architecture, and digital communications. He later brought that experience into higher education, regional economic development, the energy industry, and executive leadership.

Today, that work - which is nationally recognized - encompasses some of the region's most important economic challenges and opportunities: attracting advanced manufacturing and technology investment, developing infrastructure for artificial intelligence and data centers, strengthening workforce development, redeveloping former industrial properties, and ensuring that economic growth creates opportunities for local residents.

For more than two decades, Augustine has worked to position Northeastern Pennsylvania not merely to respond to economic change, but to anticipate it.

A central theme has remained consistent throughout his evolution of success: **creating the conditions for Northeastern Pennsylvania to compete successfully for investment, develop its workforce, and provide opportunities for people to build successful careers in the region.**

Education, Technology, and the Early Internet

Augustine earned a **Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies and Communication from King's College**, developing a foundation in communications, public relations, media strategy, and corporate messaging.

As the commercial Internet emerged in the late 1990s, Augustine became largely self-taught in Internet marketing, HTML, e-commerce, and digital infrastructure. At a time when these fields were still developing, he gained practical experience by building and managing E-commerce and digital systems for businesses and organizations.

His early career included work with **BeyondtheWall.com**, where he managed E-commerce operations and higher-education sales integration as online commerce was beginning to develop.

He also served as an **Information Architect for one of the region's first "dot coms" - CollegeRecruiting.com**, helping create an online system for organizing and presenting student information to college coaches and recruiters. His work involved information organization, database structures, navigation, and the development of searchable digital resources.

Augustine subsequently founded **GlobalInfoNet.com**, an Internet and technology consulting company. The business also served as a practical training environment for university students, giving young people hands-on experience in the emerging technology sector.

These experiences established an important foundation for Augustine's later work. He developed an understanding of technology not simply as a communications tool, but as infrastructure capable of connecting people, organizations, information, and economic opportunity.

Higher Education and Digital Media

As colleges and universities began adapting to the Internet, Augustine brought his practical experience into the classroom.

He developed and taught early programs in **Internet marketing and digital media**, serving as an adjunct professor at three Penn State University campuses, King's College, and Luzerne County Community College.

His work in higher education reflected his belief that academic programs should remain connected to the changing needs of employers and the economy.

Long before digital marketing and online communications became standard components of business education, Augustine was helping students understand how the Internet would change marketing, communications, commerce, and information management.

His technology and teaching experience also reinforced a broader philosophy that would later become central to his economic development career: **education, workforce development, technology, and economic growth must work together.**

Economic Development and the Innovation Center

Augustine eventually transitioned from technology and education into regional economic development, becoming **Senior Economic Development Director for the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry**.

In that role, he was responsible for marketing and developing available commercial properties across five Chamber-owned business parks and worked directly with corporate site selectors, developers, and business executives.

One of his most significant accomplishments was his leadership of the **Innovation Center @ Wilkes-Barre**, a business and technology incubator located in downtown Wilkes-Barre.

Augustine helped oversee the transformation of a former downtown retail property into an entrepreneurial environment designed to attract technology companies and emerging businesses.

His responsibilities included tenant recruitment, operations, infrastructure, economic incentives, and business development.

The Innovation Center ultimately housed more than 15 startup and early-stage companies and helped foster more than 115 technology-related jobs.

The project demonstrated Augustine's belief that successful economic development involves more than recruiting established corporations. It also requires creating an environment in which entrepreneurs can launch businesses, technology companies can grow, and local talent can find professional opportunities.

During this period, Augustine received regional recognition including **Top 40 Under 40** and **Top 20 Under 40 Business Professional** honors.

Energy and Public Policy

During Pennsylvania's expansion of the Marcellus Shale industry, Augustine became **Community Outreach Manager for the Marcellus Shale Coalition**.

He served as a public representative for the natural gas industry throughout Pennsylvania, participating in community meetings, civic forums, legislative discussions, and regulatory proceedings.

He addressed issues involving infrastructure, environmental concerns, transportation, economic development, and the impact of energy investment on local communities.

Augustine also worked to demonstrate how energy development could create opportunities for existing Pennsylvania businesses. He organized business-to-business programs that helped contractors, fabrication companies, tradespeople, and other small businesses understand how they could participate in the expanding natural gas economy.

This experience expanded his understanding of the relationships between energy infrastructure, public policy, business investment, economic competitiveness, and regional growth.

Penn's Northeast
Regional Economic Development Leadership

In April 2016, Augustine became **President and Chief Executive Officer of Penn's Northeast**. His responsibilities include strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, stakeholder relations, legislative relationships, and efforts to attract quality employers to Northeastern Pennsylvania. Today, Penn's Northeast serves a nine-county region encompassing **Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, Wayne, and Wyoming counties**.

Under Augustine's leadership, the organization has pursued an increasingly collaborative and data-driven approach to regional economic development.

His strategy has brought together county economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, utilities, developers, government officials, educational institutions, and private-sector partners around a common regional economic message.

The "Co-opetition" Philosophy

One of Augustine's defining leadership concepts is **"co-opetition."**

The philosophy recognizes that communities can compete for individual development projects while cooperating to market Northeastern Pennsylvania as a unified economic region.

Rather than presenting the region as a collection of individual municipalities and counties, Augustine has emphasized its collective advantages:

- Strategic access to major population centers
- Interstate highway and transportation infrastructure
- Available industrial sites
- Reliable energy resources
- Fiber and digital infrastructure
- An established workforce
- Proximity to major U.S. and Canadian markets

Augustine has proactively positioned NEPA for advanced manufacturing, logistics, food production, artificial intelligence, and the burgeoning data-center economy:

- **Data Centers Forum:** Naming the region's "4th Industrial Revolution", he hosted a landmark forum in March 2026 uniting over 150 stakeholders from business, government, and utilities to prepare regional infrastructure for massive technological investments.
- **AI Integration Guide:** Developed practical guides and resources for regional nonprofits and small businesses to streamline operations and leverage artificial intelligence, generating thousands of downloads and views.

Tangible Economic Impact

Augustine's commitment to implementation is mirrored in recent regional milestones:

- **Project Support:** Assisted with over 100 projects, working alongside 80+ companies and supporting 2,000+ jobs created or retained. These projects have contributed more than $10 billion dollars to the local economy.
- **Industrial Inventory:** Spearheaded efforts bringing over 11 million square feet of modern industrial and commercial development online.
- Assisted local developers in receiving millions of dollars in Business In Our Sites funding as well as other grants and loans. Facilitated major new industrial and business developments encompassing more than 15 million new square footage planned for the Northeast corridor.

The objective is to make Northeastern Pennsylvania large enough, unified enough, and competitive enough to attract investments that individual communities might struggle to secure on their own.

This regional approach has helped produce sustained national recognition. Northeastern Pennsylvania has repeatedly ranked among the nation's leading economic development regions, including a **five-year consecutive top-10 streak** in Site Selection Magazine and most recently, the region ranked **sixth nationally** in its population category in the 2025 Governor's Cup rankings.

Infrastructure, Energy and Legislative Advocacy

Augustine's economic development work increasingly involves public policy and infrastructure.

He has advocated before federal and state policymakers on issues involving energy infrastructure, industrial development, environmental remediation, taxation, and site competitiveness.

His work has included testimony before the **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** as well as the **Pennsylvania Senate Majority Policy Committee and the Pennsylvania Environmental Quality Board (EQB) / Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**

At the local level, he has advocated for flexible economic development tools such as **Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA)**, emphasizing the importance of competitive and predictable incentives when communities are competing for major investments.

His approach is based on the belief that successful site selection requires more than available land. Companies evaluate energy, transportation, workforce, taxes, infrastructure, permitting, utilities, broadband, and the overall business environment.

Economic development, therefore, requires coordination among many different sectors.

Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Data Centers

Augustine's early career in information architecture and Internet infrastructure has become particularly relevant as the economy moves toward artificial intelligence, advanced computing, data centers, and increasingly digital industries.

He has characterized this transition as Northeastern Pennsylvania's **“4th Industrial Revolution.”**

His economic development strategy emphasizes the region's potential to compete for technology-intensive investment by leveraging its energy resources, transportation network, industrial sites, workforce, and proximity to major population centers.

He has also emphasized the importance of responsible planning as communities evaluate large technology projects, including the infrastructure, energy, zoning, and workforce requirements associated with data centers.

This work represents a continuation of Augustine's career-long ability to identify emerging economic trends and consider how Northeastern Pennsylvania can position itself to benefit from them.

Media and Public Communications

Augustine's communications background remains an important part of his executive role. He is frequently called upon by regional media to discuss economic development, business investment, infrastructure, workforce issues, real estate, energy, technology, and regional growth.

His work has appeared in publications including the **Northeast Pennsylvania Business Journal**, **Mid-Atlantic Real Estate Journal**, *The Times Leader*, *The Citizens' Voice*, *The Scranton Times-Tribune*, and the *Standard-Speaker*.

He has also appeared on regional television and radio outlets including **WNEP-TV, WBRE-TV, WYOU-TV, WVIA**, and **WILK**.

His ability to translate complex economic and infrastructure issues into information accessible to the public has become an important component of his public leadership.

Leadership Philosophy and Community Service

Augustine maintains an extensive record of civic and nonprofit service. His affiliations and board service have included the **Pennsylvania Economic Development Association, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition - Pennsylvania Advisory Committee, Leadership Northeast, Fidelity Bank, The McGowan School of Business at King's College, Wilkes-Barre Law Library Charitable Foundation,** and **Pennsylvania State Police - Camp Cadet**.

He has also been involved with community organizations including Kiwanis, UNICO, the Marian Sutherland Kirby Library, and St. Jude Parish.

Augustine also contributes his technology expertise to nonprofit organizations, providing website and digital assistance to organizations that may otherwise lack the resources to maintain effective online platforms.

Recent Awards & Recognition

In October 2026, John L Augustine received two prestigious awards. The first was given by the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association (PEDA). He was chosen by his peers as the **2026 Economic Developer of the Year**.

The award is one of PEDA's premier awards. It honors an individual who has made a significant, positive impact on economic development within the Commonwealth.

The award recognizes leaders who demonstrate excellence, collaborative thinking, innovative strategy, and a strong track record of driving job creation, capital investment, and community revitalization.

(PEDA) is the primary statewide organization representing economic development professionals across public, private, and non-profit sectors in Pennsylvania.

Additionally, Augustine was recognized as one of the **Top 50 Over 50** across PA by City & State Magazine. The award recognizes trailblazers, visionaries, and changemakers who have made a lasting impact on Pennsylvania through their professional leadership, vision, and dedication to public service representing key sectors that shape state and local policy.

In 2024, Leadership Northeast honored Augustine with its **Distinguished Leadership Alumni Award**, at the organization's 43rd annual dinner and graduation. This award recognized his more than 25 years of work for his contributions to community servant-leadership and regional capacity-building across Northeastern PA.

Congressional Recognition

On **June 28, 2024**, Augustine received formal recognition on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

U.S. Congressman **Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania** delivered remarks recognizing Augustine's career and contributions to Northeastern Pennsylvania. The remarks were entered into the **Official Congressional Record**.

Congressman Meuser described Augustine as a **“pillar of our community”**, recognizing his more than 25 years of work involving economic development, infrastructure, community service, and regional growth.

The recognition represents a significant acknowledgment of a career devoted to Northeastern Pennsylvania and its economic future.

Personal Life

John L. Augustine III is a lifelong resident of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He resides in **Mountain Top, PA**, with his wife, **Kristine**, their two children, **Jack and Jill**, and their beloved family dog, **Louie**.