

TRIBAL TELECOM OUTREACH NEWSLETTER



INDIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES



United South and Eastern Tribes and FCC Sign Historic Agreement on Tower Siting

On February 3, 2004, USET President Keller George and FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding cell tower siting and the protection of Tribal sacred sites under federal environmental and historic preservation laws. Signed at the Washington Impact Week meeting of the USET Board of Directors, the MOU affirms the government-to-government relationship between USET Tribes and the United States. In the MOU, USET and the FCC agree to a continued course of consultation culminating in a Best Practices document to provide guidance to the tower industry and Indian Tribes regarding the siting of cell towers and appropriate proce-



FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell and USET President Keller George sign MOU. (Photo: Kenneth H. Carleton) [More Photos](#)

dures for assuring the protection of Tribal sacred sites. The MOU also commits both organizations to support the newly developed Tower Construction Notification System, an electronic database and notification system which will provide notification to Tribes of proposed tower locations in geographic areas of interest to them.

The MOU is the first of its kind for the FCC with Indian Tribes and the "Best Practices" that it envisions will serve as a model for other potential cooperative efforts with other Tribes nationwide. Both the Best Practices guidance and the new Tower Construction Notification System are expected to

National Congress of American Indians Honors FCC with Leadership Award

On February 24, 2004, the FCC was presented with NCAI's Leadership Award by Tex G. Hall, President of NCAI, "for demonstrating exemplary commitment to the honorable exercise of the government-to-government relationship through meaningful outreach and consultation with Indian

tribes." During the award ceremony, President Hall stated that the award "recognizes the FCC's steadfast commitment to Indian Country and its dedication to ensuring that tribes and Indian peoples' communication needs receive fair consideration at the Commission."

Upon learning of the award, Chairman Michael K. Powell stated, "We are honored to be receiving the NCAI's Leadership Award in recognition of our partnership in the digital migration and our strong commitment ... (cont. on page 3)

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We're on-line!

For more information on these and other important tribal telecommunications issues at the FCC, please visit the FCC Tribal Initiatives web page at:
www.fcc.gov/indians



CGB Chief K. Dane Snowden, NCAI Executive Director Jackie Johnson and NCAI President Tex G. Hall, Chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, & Arikara Nation. (Photo: Geoffrey C. Blackwell) [More Photos](#)

2003-2004 FCC Tribal Outreach Efforts

In 2003, the FCC engaged in unprecedented outreach in Indian Country. To date, 2004 has proven to be equally busy. The FCC welcomes the opportunity to meet with tribes on their own lands. Here's a list of our 2003-2004 efforts:

2003

February 2003 – Arlington, VA: FCC senior staff met with United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) President, Tribal Leaders, Executive Director and Culture and Heritage Committee members at USET's Annual Washington Impact Week Meeting.

February 2003 – Washington, DC: FCC Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB), Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB), and Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) staff attended National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 59th Annual Session and "Connecting for the Future II" panel session; CGB/ Intergovernmental Affairs staff served as moderator for panel on "Issues in Tribal Telecommunications and Information Technology Breakout Session;" FCC staff provided "Federal Report" on telecommunications issues.

February 2003 – Portland, OR: FCC WTB senior staff attended and participated as speaker in conference of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Winter Conference, met with Culture and Elders Committee, Natural Resources/Land Committee, Telecommunications and Utility Subcommittee of Economic Development Committee.

February 2003 – Washington, DC: CGB hosts first annual *Dialogue* between NCAI Executives, NCAI Telecommunications Subcommittee members, and the FCC. Chairman Michael K. Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein attended the meeting; FCC Bureau and Office Chiefs gave overviews of activities within their respective organizations.

March 2003-May 2003 – Washington, D.C.: FCC senior staff continue consultation with USET on cultural preservation issues under the National Historic Preservation Act.

May 2003 – Fort Mojave Indian Reservation: FCC Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy and CGB Chief Snowden participate in roundtable discussion with Fort Mojave Tribal Chairperson and Council Members, and representatives from Fort Mojave Telecommunications, Inc., and Gila River Telecommunications, Inc.; Commissioner Abernathy and CGB Chief Snowden tour Fort Mojave Telecommunications, Inc. telecom facilities and Fort Mojave tribal education and health sites.

May 2003 – Taos Pueblo: CGB senior staff from Intergovernmental Affairs and WTB Cultural Resources Officer meet with Taos Pueblo Governor and Taos Pueblo officials and representatives as part of ongoing National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Tribal Consultation matter.

June 2003 – Omaha Reservation: At tribal headquarters in Macy, CGB Chief Snowden met with Omaha Tribal Chairman and Council members to discuss telecommunications development issues.

June 2003 – Gila River Indian Community: CGB senior staff from Intergovernmental Affairs attended National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year Session and presented FCC report on Commission telecommunications and historic preservation issues. In coordination with NCAI Session, CGB staff toured Gila River Telecommunications, Inc. home office and met with the General Manager, Board of Directors, and company staff.

June 2003 – Gila River Indian Community: CGB senior staff from Intergovernmental Affairs attended Quarterly meeting with the National Tribal Telephone Association and provided a federal report to the membership of Tribally-owned and operated telephone companies.

June 2003 – San Carlos Apache Reservation: CGB senior staff from Intergovernmental Affairs met the General Manager and staff of San Carlos Telecommunications and Utilities, Inc and toured the reservation and the company's facilities.



Kris Monteith, Geoffrey Blackwell, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, CGB Chief K. Dane Snowden, and Sue McNeil meet in Window Rock, AZ on the Navajo Nation. (Photo: Navajo Nation)



Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council members, CGB representatives, and representatives from Turtle Island Communications meet at the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Headquarters at Fort Yates, ND. (Photo: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)



Conglomerate of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Telephone Authority. (Photo: Geoffrey C. Blackwell)

Alaska Rural Outreach Involves Several Alaska Native Villages

As a part of the FCC's Rural Outreach Initiatives through activities and programs under its Indian Telecommunications Initiatives, Bureau Chief Dane K. Snowden, joined by senior staff members of the Consumer & Governmental Affairs, Wireline Competition and International Bureaus visited Alaska in September 2003. The delegations met with the Alaska Rural Development Council's Conference on Rural Economic Development, with members of the Regulatory Commis-

sion of Alaska and toured Alaska Native villages in the Northwest Arctic Borough and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

Staff visited a total of seven Alaska Native communities, including Kotzebue, Akiak, Holy Cross, Kiana, Selawik, Emmonak, and Bethel, and where they toured health care clinics and schools that receive Universal Service support for access to broadband telecommunications services, as well as earth stations and

central offices maintained by area service providers. Back in Anchorage, FCC representatives met with members of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska and participated in a two-day conference on economic development in Alaska Native communities sponsored by the Alaska Rural Development Council. The conference was videotaped and ARDC plans to have portions broadcast throughout the coming year on Alaska's public broadcasting stations. (cont. on page 4)

First ITI Regional Workshop and Roundtable a Success CGB Hosts over 100 attendees from over 25 tribes

The FCC's Indian Telecommunications Initiatives Regional Workshop and Roundtable, was held in cooperation with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California in Reno, Nevada on July 17 and 18, 2003. The event was attended by over 100 American Indian and Alaska Native Village leaders and representatives and tribal businesses from across the United States. The event provided an opportunity to meet with FCC officials, learn issues central to the successful deployment of telecom systems on tribal lands, and discuss, in an open-forum government-to-government setting, topics of concern to tribes as they undertake their own telecom development agendas and priorities.

The ITI Reno Workshop presented panels on topics such as: from infrastructure feasibility planning and tribal implementation strategies; federal program financial planning and universal service fund management; and public safety systems interoperability requirements. Presenta-

tions from Tribal Leaders, Tribal companies and FCC representatives centered on strategies for telecom to ensure sustained economic growth, public safety and welfare, educational opportunities, and obtaining successful governmental services. In a "nuts and bolts" fashion, telecom applications, choices, costs, regulatory implications, and consumer issues were highlighted, as well as key federal government financial support programs.

The Regional Roundtable portion of the program, an open-forum government-to-government discussion on telecom regulatory issues of importance to the tribes, was attended by a majority of the Workshop attendees. The Roundtable included discussion about: regional developments in the Universal Service Fund program outreach; current Commission regulatory rulemakings of importance to tribal lands; and the relative "pros and cons" of different and emerging telecom technologies for tribal government, business and residential services. A few common themes

emerged from the discussions including the premise that telecom infrastructure growth continues to be a key component to economic development plans of tribes throughout the nation and that continued sharing of perspectives and discussion of issues is a viable method of achieving telecom solutions to the various health, welfare and safety prerogatives of tribal government for their peoples.

The ITI Reno meeting was the first regional meeting held under the ITI banner, where American Indian Tribes and Commission staff engaged in discussion on telecom development in Indian Country. Attendees and Commission staff agreed that ITI was a successful endeavor for all who participated. For more information on the FCC's Indian Telecommunications Initiatives and regulatory outreach efforts for Indian Country visit the Commission's tribal web page at: www.fcc.gov/indians.

USET - FCC Cultural Preservation Agreement (cont.)

(cont. on page 3)
(from page 1) greatly simplify and improve the communications process between the FCC, tower industry companies, and Indian Tribes.

In his introduction, President George praised Chairman Powell's dedication in addressing the preservation concerns of USET and stated that Chairman Powell's efforts in seeking resolutions that are beneficial to all parties involved made him a "Friend of Indian Country." President George stated that "the MOU represents a year's

work and the commitment of both the USET and FCC to find 'win-win' solutions so that the expansion of the Nation's communications infrastructure can go forward while assuring the protection of Tribal sacred sites."

Receiving two standing ovations during his remarks, Chairman Powell stated that the Commission must ensure that communications services are deployed consistent with federal law to protect valuable historic and environmental resources, including sites of religious and cultural significance to Tribes.

Chairman Powell reflected that the FCC strives to ensure that everyone has access to basic and advanced telecommunications services and that Indian Country must be part of this tech-



Chairman Michael K. Powell addresses the United South and Eastern Tribes Washington Legislative Impact Week Meeting prior to signing an MOU with President Keller George, seated right. (Photo: Daniel Rumelt) [More Photos](#)

NCAI Leadership Award (cont.)

nological revolution.

(from page 1) ...to ensure that all Americans, including American Indians

and Alaska Natives, have access to the Nation's telecommunications infrastructure." Accepting the award on behalf of the FCC, K. Dane Snowden, Chief of FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, stated that "the distinction NCAI has bestowed upon the Commission with this Leadership Award is a great honor, and one that we will strive to live up to in every facet of the Commission's work."

NCAI bestows three Leadership awards annually for outstanding commitment and support to American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages. This year's recipients are House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo of California, the US Commission on Civil Rights, and the FCC. The award also recognizes the FCC's work in fostering government-to-

July 2003 – Reno, NV: The FCC hosted its first Indian Telecommunications Initiatives Regional Workshop and Roundtable in Reno, NV. More than 25 tribes from Alaska to North Carolina participated in the 1 ½ day event. Legal Advisor to Commissioner Copps, CGB, WTB, WCB, and International Bureau (IB) staff participate in interactive consultative roundtable with attendees.

July 2003 – San Francisco, CA: CGB senior staff from Intergovernmental Affairs attended the National Conference of State Legislatures' state-tribal relations seminar and established relationships with representatives of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

August 2003 – Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation: CGB senior staff met with representatives of the Cheyenne River Telecommunications Authority in Eagle Butte to discuss ways to improve access to telecommunications services.

August 2003 – Standing Rock Sioux Reservation: CGB senior staff met with representatives of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to discuss their interest in establishing a tribal telephone company and increasing telecom access in their community districts.

September 2003 – Navajo Nation: CGB Chief Snowden and CGB senior staff met with Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, senior members of his administration, and the Navajo Nation Regulatory Commission to discuss telecommunications issues affecting the Navajo Nation.

September 2003 – Hopi Tribe: CGB Chief Snowden and CGB senior staff met with senior tribal officials to discuss the Hopi Tribe's interest in establishing its own telecommunications company and other telecommunications issues affecting the Hopi Tribe.

September 2003 – Umatilla Indian Reservation: CGB Chief Snowden and senior CGB staff participated in the 50th Annual Meeting of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) on the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton, Oregon. Mr. Snowden delivered an address to the General Assembly and CGB/Intergovernmental Affairs staff presented a FCC report to the ATNI Telecommunications and Utilities Committee.

September 2003 – Alaska: CGB Chief Snowden and senior staff, WCB, and IB participated in the Alaska Rural Development Council's Conference on Rural Economic Development, met with members of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska and toured tribal villages in the Northwest Arctic Borough and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

November 2003 – Albuquerque, NM: CGB senior staff from Intergovernmental Affairs presented at NCAI's 60th Annual Session at the "Future of Telecommunications in Indian Country" panel; and provided a FCC report to the NCAI Telecommunications Subcommittee.

November – December 2003 – Washington, DC: WTB and CGB senior staff demonstrated and consulted upon the operation of the new Tower Construction Notification System with USET, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and NCAI.

December 2003 – Southern California: FCC Chairman Michael Powell met with tribal leaders of the Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association (SCTCA) and toured telecommunications and educational facilities of the SCTCA's Tribal Digital Village.

2004

January 2004 – Washington DC: CGB Chief Snowden and senior staff from CGB and WCB met with Chairman Wayne Taylor and telecom representatives of the Hopi Tribe to discuss the tribe's telecommunications development plans.

February 2004 – Arlington, VA: Chairman Powell and USET President Keller George signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding between the FCC and USET to a course of ongoing consultation and Best Practices guidance for Tribes and Industry in the cultural preservation process and siting of communications towers.

February 2004 – Washington DC: CGB senior staff met with representatives of the Alaska Rural Development Council to discuss the telecommunications development throughout Alaska and in Alaska Native Villages.

February 2004 – Washington DC: CGB assists IB in hosting "Making the Connection; Rural Satellite Forum." Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley addresses the forum via satellite link.

February 2004 – Washington, DC: NCAI honors the FCC with the 2004 NCAI Leadership Award for exemplary tribal outreach and consultation efforts.

February 2004 – Washington, DC: CGB hosts second annual *Dialogue* between the Commission and the NCAI Telecommunications Subcommittee.

Alaska Visit (cont.)

(from page 2) The FCC representatives learned about the innovative communications solutions that enable telemedicine, distance learning and communications in some of the most remote areas of the world. The Alaska visit offered FCC staff the opportunity to learn first hand about the unique communications needs facing consumers in remote areas of the nation's largest state and to examine how the FCC can assist in meeting those needs.



Twenty six miles above the Arctic Circle.

(Photo: Eric Einhorn) [More Photos](#)



Representatives of the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, International Bureau, and Wireline Competition Bureau with Village of Selawik Mayor Lloyd Davis, Jr., and his son. (Photo: Eric Einhorn) [More Photos](#)



CGB Chief Snowden addresses the 50th Annual Meeting of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians on the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Photo: Geoffrey C. Blackwell)

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