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Federal Communications Commission
Lisa M. Fowlkes
Designated Federal Officer
Hurricane Katrina Independent Panel
445 12th Street, SW, Room 7-C737
Washington, D.C.   20554
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Dear Ms. Fowlkes: 10 May 2006

Please submit the following as part of your record for written comments on the discussion
of Emergency Communications for Federal Disasters.

With all the discussion on your panel about how Emergency Alerting and Communications could
be improved, there is still nothing that has been decided on to implement in time for the 2006
hurricane season.

The question seems to be what the best way of alerting the general public would be. There is
already EAS alerting for Radio, TV and Cable systems. But how many people are standing in
front of the TV during the day, or listening to the radio in their offices.   Most carry a Cellular
phone with them, but what about when it is turned off in the charger unit, or at night?

What your panel has been overlooking is the obvious and immediate answer.   "PAGING"

Yes, the Paging industry has and is currently sending "Simulcasted and Multicasted" messages
all throughout the United States of America as we speak. This network exists NOW, and does
NOT need to be built. There are Paging systems currently covering the majority of America,
with a lot more area of coverage than Cellular, Radio, or TV can claim.

A Pager unit is small, mobile, self contained, inexpensive and runs on batteries for weeks, and
they do not need charging.   Replacement AAA or AA batteries can be stored and stock piled for
long periods of time. Alpha-Numeric pagers allow large messages to be received, and stored.
Different types of message priorities can be setup on the system. GROUP PAGES can be sent in
times of Emergencies, and will alert 10's, 100's, 1000's or millions of pager units ALL AT THE
SAME TIME, and within under a few minutes.

These systems ARE UP and RUNNING NOW !!!!

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So what is needed to connect these Paging systems to be used as Emergency Alerting Systems?

Just a simple, small satellite dish and EAS (Emergency Alerting System) type receiver at the Paging Carriers "main" terminal unit.

About the only change that might be needed to the system is that the Emergency data needs to be sent in a "Data" format. This can just be a normal "text" type message. Any message received as an Emergency (Federal, Local, Hurricane, Tornado, Amber Alert, etc.) can be immediately sent into the Paging Carrier's terminal, and override existing normal traffic. It would then be sent out as a high priority Group page throughout the Paging Carrier's entire network. Any pagers with the correct "Group" Capcoding would be able to receive the message all at the same time.

A Paging Carrier's transmitter is usually high power, and covers a wide area. Paging systems use multiple transmitters to overlap areas for density and redundant coverage. Most Paging Carriers use a satellite feed to receive the traffic from their "main" terminal unit, and are therefore not dependant on telephone lines.

This addresses the need for Emergency Alerting and Notification THIS hurricane season.

What can be done with this existing technology in the future??

A simple household alerting unit can be manufactured, and used on existing Paging Systems, to get Alerts and Emergency information, and the unit can be small enough to take with a person in case of evacuation. The unit can have many features needed for receiving Emergency information and still be within a price that the average consumer could easily afford.

Existing One-way Paging Systems in the U.S. could be "Upgraded" to operate as Two-way Paging systems. It was demonstrated in Emergencies within the last few years, that Two-way Paging worked well, when other means of communications did not. Unfortunately, Two-way Paging systems are mostly found in Urban populated areas.

Additional Two-way Paging coverage could easily be obtained by helping existing Carriers of One-way Paging a means to "Upgrade" to Two-way Paging. This could be done by the Federal Communications Commission providing a "Common" frequency for these existing systems to use as a "Return or Talkback" channel, thus then allowing a Two-way pager to communicate back to the Paging Carrier's terminal unit. By "Upgrading" the existing network of One-way Paging Systems in the US to be able to then provide Two-way Paging, would go a long way to supplying the communications needed in Emergency situations, especially in Rural locations across the U.S.A.

Wayne Markis, President
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