

CGB

Connector

Putting Consumers First

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Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau



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The Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau Is Open For Business!

by K. Dane Snowden, Chief, CGB

CGB is the FCC's primary link to telecommunications consumers - and that's just about everybody. We deal with all kinds of consumer-related matters, from answering questions and resolving informal complaints, to identifying consumer concerns and distributing informational materials in response. We act as a bridge to connect the key groups vital to ensuring excellent consumer service: the FCC; state, local and tribal governments; the telecommunications industry; and, of course, consumers. When these groups work together to share information and address concerns, our common goal - consumer satisfaction - is achieved.

The most obvious change in the Bureau is our new name. We've changed from Consumer Information Bureau to Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, reflecting in part the additional responsibilities the Bureau has assumed for intergovernmental affairs. The intergovernmental affairs function is aimed at ensuring a close working relationship with other federal agencies, and with state, local and tribal governments and a coordinated effort to keep consumers informed on telecommunications matters. This function also encompasses CGB's role as liaison to the Local and State Government Advisory Committee (LSGAC).

To ensure we achieve our goals, I have asked some familiar faces to assume new responsibilities within CGB. Margaret Egler and Thomas Wyatt have each been promoted to Deputy Bureau Chief. Margaret has been with the FCC for eight years and leads our policy work, which includes both the Policy Division and the Disability Rights Office. Thomas joined the agency 18 years ago and is responsible for the Information Access and Privacy Office and the Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division, which includes the Washington and Gettysburg Consumer Centers.

A new addition to the staff is Robert "Doc" Mirelson who is the Deputy Bureau Chief for Consumer Affairs. He is responsible for managing the Bureau's consumer outreach efforts. Kris Monteith has joined the Bureau as Associate Bureau Chief for Intergovernmental Affairs. Formerly Chief of the Policy Division in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Kris leads our policy coordination efforts with other federal agencies and tribal, state and local governments. Chief of Staff Barbara Douglas will continue to work closely with the deputies, other senior staff, and me in developing and implementing Bureau initiatives.

Another change for the Bureau is a proactive approach to our business. Moving forward, it is our plan to have the Bureau identify and track trends that affect consumers. The Policy Division's Analysis Branch will take the lead in trend analysis. Our goal is to identify an issue and address it before it becomes a problem. This is particularly important as we prepare information for our Consumer Centers and outreach staff.

From The Chief (cont'd.)

The Bureau is also placing a greater emphasis on using technology to achieve our objectives. Our Internet and intranet Web sites are vital to this effort.

Steve Gorey, Chief of our Systems Support Office, and his staff are working hard to ensure consumers have ready access to vital information.

The Systems Support Office manages the consumer Web pages (www.fcc.gov/cgb) for the FCC and coordinates the Bureau's intranet site. It also works to enhance CGB's Consumer Centers' and complaint taking technology.

Our new Bureau is also reaching out to various communities and audiences. Among the Consumer Centers' staff are Spanish-speaking Consumer Advocacy and Mediation Specialists (CAMs). They work with consumers who prefer to conduct their business in Spanish.

Another way we want to connect with people inside and outside the Commission is through this newsletter. Our goal is to create an interesting and informative product. We'll be letting you know about consumer issues, outreach programs, and the people in CGB who are making our programs work.

When your office has a program or item of consumer interest, please share it with Rosemary Kimball (202-418-0511) or Doc Mirelson (202-418-7489), so we can get the word out.

Christian Fiascunari



Christian is a bilingual Consumer Advocacy and Mediation Specialist (CAMs) in the Consumer Inquiries and Complaints

Division. He responds to requests for information and informal complaints that come into the Bureau. While he takes requests and complaints in both English and Spanish, 80 percent of his work is conducted in Spanish.

Christian has appeared on behalf of CGB on Telemundo and on Bloomberg Radio Spanish Language Service to talk about FCC consumer initiatives.

He joined the Commission in January 2001 and is one of our three CAMs who are native Spanish speakers.

Christian was born in Lima, Peru, and immigrated to the United States in 1987. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1990 and was stationed on the USS Seattle in Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War in 1990-1991.

He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, and is pursuing a master's degree in National Security and Intelligence Studies at the American Military University.



CGB Partners: Keys To Success

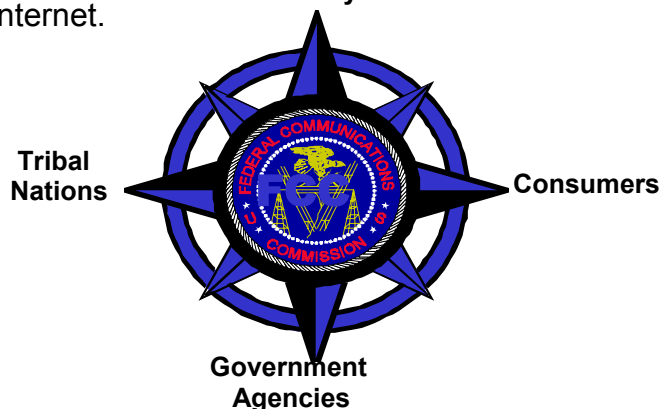
When it comes to implementing programs and regulations to bring the benefits of the information revolution to as many people as possible in our country, the FCC does not act in a vacuum. We have many partners, and CGB is the Bureau charged with working with federal, tribal, state and local groups. Leading this effort is Kris Monteith, Associate Bureau Chief for Intergovernmental Affairs, with the support of Dr. Emily Hoffnar, Staff Chair of the Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunications Services and FCC's liaison to the Local and State Government Advisory Committee.

The Local and State Government Advisory Committee (LSGAC) was formed in 1997 to advise the FCC on issues of concern to state, local and tribal governments. The 15-member LSGAC meets at the FCC every other month to discuss and make recommendations to the Commission on topics that concern most levels of government. Examples include right of way management and rulemaking proceedings. The majority of LSGAC members represent local governments - cities or counties. The CGB Web site has a link to the LSGAC site.

The LSGAC also links the FCC to several important organizations, including the National Governors Association, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, and the National Association of Counties.

The Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunications Services (Joint Conference) was formed in 1999 to help fulfill the promise of Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 - to encourage the deployment of advanced telecommunications services to all Americans. The FCC Chairman, all of the FCC Commissioners and five state PSC commissioners are members of the Joint Conference. FCC Commissioner Kevin Martin is the Chair.

The Joint Conference is planning the next round of field visits, which will focus on increasing consumer awareness of the options for advanced services like DSL, cable modems and wireless Internet.



Outside The Beltway

On The Road With CGB

One of CGB's most important missions is to take the Commission's message "beyond the beltway." While a lot of this is done by placing interviews and stories in the media across the country and using satellite hook-ups to appear on far-flung television programs, there is no substitute for meeting in person with consumers, industry groups and government agencies. The Bureau is firmly committed to outreach, and we'll be reporting regularly on where we've been and what we've been doing across the country.

The CGB staff has met with consumers throughout the country to let them know what's happening at the FCC and to hear what's on their minds.

In January, Bureau Chief K. Dane Snowden and Jenifer Simpson, a Telecommunications Accessibility Specialist (see sidebar), traveled to St. Paul, MN, to speak at a forum entitled "*Emergency Information: Television Access for People with Hearing Disabilities.*" It was sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management Emergency Response, and Communication Services for the Deaf (the Minnesota Telecommunications Relay Services provider). The forum dealt with access to emergency information in video programming and was targeted at television industry professionals and consumers.

Jenifer Simpson



Jenifer Simpson is a Telecommunications Accessibility Specialist in CGB's Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division. She joined the FCC in February 1999

following two years as the Employment Advisor on Technology at the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities (PCEPD). There she worked to help reduce the high level of unemployment among adults with disabilities.

Before joining the federal government, Jenifer was a Senior Policy Associate at United Cerebral Palsy Association's (UCP) national headquarters in Washington, DC. At UCP her legislative and regulatory portfolio included social security, civil rights, housing, technology and transportation. Her primary focus, however, was always on technology, including telecommunications. Jenifer worked on many technology and telecommunications policy initiatives in her ten years with UCP. She was a founding member and five-year chairperson of the Consortium For Citizens With Disabilities Task Force on Communications Access and Telecommunications that was instrumental in ensuring inclusion of disability access safeguards (Section 255) in the Telecommunications Act of 1996. She also worked on the Assistive Technology Act and Title IV of the ADA (Telecommunications Relay Services). She was the Principal Investigator for one of the few research studies ever conducted on telecommunications access needs for people with severe speech disabilities sponsored by the National Institute on Disability Research & Rehabilitation.

Jenifer graduated magna cum laude in Arts & Communications from the University of Massachusetts in 1984.

Calling Home...Tips For Department Of Defense Civilians, Servicemembers, And Their Families...

Recent events have reinforced the importance of the contributions the Department of Defense (DoD) makes to America. While many Armed Forces members and civilian employees of DoD are deployed or away from their home stations, they often have difficulty staying in touch with family and friends.

Lack of access to telecommunications services or just the high cost of calling can keep men and women serving away from home, in the U.S. or abroad, from hearing the familiar voices of friends and family. To help DoD personnel stay in touch, the FCC launched the "Calling Home" program in May during Armed Forces Appreciation Month.

"Armed Forces Appreciation Month is an especially appropriate time for us to think about the sacrifices made by members of the Services and Defense Department civilians," said K. Dane Snowden, Chief, FCC Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, when the campaign was launched. "It's also a perfect time to think about ways we can make their lives a little easier," he said.

A new FCC brochure titled, "**Calling Home: What You Should Know**," contains information about making long-distance contact cheaper for Defense personnel and their families. Options such as using "Dial Around" or "International Callback" services are explained. Special carrier plans are discussed, as well as using the Internet to keep in touch.

The "Calling Home" brochures are available several different ways. They are posted on the CGB section of the FCC's Web site (www.fcc.gov/cgb/military). Thousands were mailed to organizations and associations affiliated with DoD for further distribution. Consumers may also request copies directly from the FCC at, 1-888 -CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888 -TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY.



For more information about
"Calling Home", visit
www.fcc.gov/cgb/military

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