

**Statement
Of**

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FCC En Banc Hearing

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Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, thank you for inviting me to speak today. Call center activities have served a critical role in supplementing the FCC's efforts to address consumer inquiries related to DTV. As the deadline for the transition approaches, these services and the information provided by call center agents and advisors will often be the first, and potentially only, assistance that consumers may be able to obtain to address their concerns. As such, the importance of ensuring that all consumers can both reach and receive effective support through our call center agents and advisors is paramount.

The FCC's past and current efforts in evolving its call center functions can be separated into three distinct, albeit overlapping, phases. During the first phase, the Commission invested more than 1.2 million dollars to expand and improve its in-house call center capabilities. During this period, additional agents were hired, call center hours were extended and infrastructure upgrades were implemented to address a rapid rise in DTV-related call volume. Specifically, the Commission has increased its call capacity 10-fold, resulting in the ability to handle 1,000 concurrent calls. Agent staffing has increased over 3-fold; from approximately 60 to 200 staff. In addition, we completely re-engineered our National Call Center's telecommunications architecture. The Commission's 15-year-old call center infrastructure was replaced in its entirety with a more robust and modern Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) system. These changes were necessary to address daily call volumes that have, at times, exceeded 30,000 calls – in the past, this level of calls was more typical of monthly volume at our facilities. We continue to monitor and refine this implementation.

For the second phase of our call center work, we sought to establish a more robust, outsourced solution capable of addressing the anticipated surge in call volume

around February 17.th Early on, efforts in support of this initiative focused on identifying the FCC's requirements. Currently, our efforts are concentrated on overseeing the FCC's recent contract award to IBM. Through this effort, the Commission has contracted for two million agent-answered calls for the period of February 12th to the 21st. This means the FCC will be able to handle several hundred thousand calls a day. We are providing IBM the materials and guidance needed so that they can rapidly finalize their telecommunications architecture and recruit and train agents.

Despite the extensive effort put forth in each of the first two phases, it became apparent that the FCC alone would be unable to muster enough resources to sufficiently and completely address the 3.5 million calls anticipated around the original transition date.

The FCC recently entered a third phase. This most recent phase is defined by an unprecedented partnership across industry, the NTIA and the FCC. We are coordinating DTV-related efforts in order to take advantage of the increased capability of a larger, combined initiative. To date, this group has successfully accomplished several distinct objectives. First, all partners have agreed to use a single, nation-wide contact number, 1-888-CALLFCC. Second, the activities supporting this number will be hosted through a common, integrated technical approach. This approach has been designed, developed, and is being built for an anticipated "live" date of February 12th. Third, all agents and advisors will be working from the same set of DTV information as they respond to consumer inquiries. The partners have largely completed development of a common set of DTV information and have begun training agents. To complement this library of information we have been working with our partners to establish a set of tools that both

agents and the public can access for information on local assistance, resources, and service options.

Finally, together we have developed a common model for projecting anticipated call volume. We are currently revising this model to address the changes found in recent legislation which moves the final DTV transition date, and will continue to collaborate on these projections to better scale the coordinated call center function. Because of this partnership, sufficient call center capacity should be available to address the projected call volume anticipated around February 17th and, most likely, through June 12th.

Our work is, however, far from done. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the herculean efforts of both the federal and contract employees at the FCC, the people who have made all of our progress possible. I have been fortunate to work with a team that spans many Bureaus and Offices, a team composed of individuals from all levels of our organization. I have witnessed a level of dedication and personal sacrifice that demonstrates not only a commitment to the FCC's mission, but also a selfless commitment to public service. Recently, these efforts have been complemented by our industry partners who have tirelessly worked with us to ensure coordination of our combined efforts, all of which are focused on easing the Digital TV transition for consumers.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.