

**Statement of Rod Odom
Hurricane Katrina Status
Before the Federal Communications Commission
September 15, 2005**

I. Introduction

My name is Rod Odom, and I am President of Network Services for BellSouth. BellSouth is a full-service communications company providing service to customers in the nine southeastern states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. I have worked with AT&T and BellSouth for 33 years, and in my current position I am responsible for network operations and planning, interconnection services, and network technology.

The purpose of my testimony today is to address the impact of hurricane Katrina on BellSouth's network, the status of the network based on restoration completed to date, and where we expect to go from here as we continue to restore communications to the hard hit Gulf Coast area. What I will give you today is a snapshot – the situation is still changing rapidly, as power is restored, flood waters are pumped out, field surveys occur, and repairs are made. Furthermore, because we are still assessing the full impact of the storm on our network and our customers, damage estimates are preliminary. It will take some additional time for us to know with certainty the total magnitude of the destruction caused by hurricane Katrina. Given the force of the hurricane, however, we are very pleased with the resiliency of our network, and with the significant progress that our employees, working with the larger communications industry, have made to restore service to date.

II. Impact on Network Operations

As is our standard operating procedure, we activated our Emergency Operations Centers and began tracking Tropical Depression 12 on August 23, then located over the southeastern Bahamas with 35 mph winds, moving northwest at 10 mph. We continued monitoring the storm as the days progressed and began our extensive preparations. Prior to Katrina making landfall in Florida, we activated our standard hurricane procedures.

These include ensuring that our 1000+ mobile generators are in working order and staged at the sites needed, fuel tanks are filled for our central offices and key administrative office generators and vehicles, network supplies are relocated (including tents in the event tent cities need to be established for the safety and shelter of our employees), and support personnel are staged in nearby locations. As a note, as a part of our prior overall network planning and preparation, BellSouth had located six switches in low lying areas of the New Orleans bowl on the second floor or above in those buildings. The tropical depression became Hurricane Katrina and first made landfall in South Florida as a Category 1 hurricane on Thursday evening, August 25, causing considerable damage to the area.

Given where our network is located, BellSouth has dealt with hurricanes for years, and has been proud of the resiliency our network has demonstrated from Camille to Andrew. As will unfold in this Statement though, at this point no one could predict the extent of the devastation that was to follow. Hurricane Katrina, which developed into a Category 5 hurricane and then dropped to a Category 4 just before making her second landfall in our operating area at about 2 p.m. on Monday, August 29, east of New

Orleans. As the storm made landfall, it had sustained winds in excess of 145 miles per hour and storm surges reported from 25-40 feet.

Operations in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, all have been impacted by hurricane Katrina. Nevertheless, we have made significant strides towards restoration of communications capabilities. As I will describe in more detail below, we have three different types of restoration efforts underway. In places like Gulfport and Biloxi, Mississippi and New Orleans, the impact on our customers, our employees and our network have been catastrophic and basic restoration is still encumbered by flooding, debris and security issues. In other parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, we are well into our restoration efforts and progressing rapidly. In Florida, we are wrapping up our restoration efforts, and freeing up resources like generators and technicians to move to the other areas where they are needed. Here are some damage survey results to date that shed light on the magnitude of the storm's impact:

- 27,044 Damage Surveys Completed
- 11,089 Poles Down
- 26,003 Cable Spans Down
- 21,427 Drops Down

III. Network Status

In the Gulf region of Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, BellSouth has 4.9 million access lines. A snapshot on August 30 after the second landfall estimated that 2.475 million lines, a little more than half of those in the area, were actually affected by the

storm. As of the morning of Wednesday, September 14, approximately 15% of the original 2.475 million lines remained impacted.

BellSouth had 1591 central office buildings across its region. 578 of these central office buildings were located in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. Throughout the storm, 545 of the 578 central offices in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi never lost service. As the loss of commercial power was widespread, many of these offices were running on batteries, supported by generators. Today, eight central offices are still running on batteries, supported by generators. Generators require fuel, and in the past, our network personnel have had access to the central offices where the generators are housed in order to ensure their proper fueling and operations. This was not true with Katrina.

Katrina was different from any hurricane BellSouth has faced previously. It had three distinct phases – the Florida hurricane, the Gulf Coast hurricane, and the New Orleans flooding. Severe damage was associated with the storm's landfall, but the flooding that followed when the levees broke created significant additional disruption. Generally, hurricanes have an initial surge, the water recedes, power restoration begins, and then we follow the power company with telecom restoration forces. When the levees broke in New Orleans, the water did not recede. Because of the continued flooding, and the unprecedented security issues, generator power was lost at several central offices due to our inability to refuel. The flooding also caused extensive damage to buildings and other structures in the flooded areas.

We lost service at various times in a total of 33 of BellSouth's central offices in the impacted area since August 29. Today, there are 16 central offices that have not been

restored to service. Of the 16, 10 are small offices along the coastal area with severe devastation. We have already begun restoring service in some of those areas using digital loop carrier systems. The remaining six offices are in the New Orleans flooded area. Five of these offices are currently being restored and one is still inaccessible due to flood waters.

We are continuing to work around the clock to restore service. As a part of our restoration efforts, we conduct damage surveys throughout the area. Overall, the surveys are approximately 80% complete, as we have completed 27,044 surveys to date (approximately 95% complete in areas where we have access). Initially, we concentrate on restoration of highest priority circuits, specifically those which support public safety including hospitals, E911 centers and law enforcement. Then we focus on supporting other carriers, including the wireless industry. I have listed these sequentially, but they are often worked simultaneously.

In terms of restoration priority, we have been and continue to focus our support on public safety concerns, including hospitals, E-911 centers and law enforcement. Following the storm, in Florida and Alabama, there were no E-911 centers that incurred outages. For Mississippi, service was impacted to 43 out of 138 E-911 centers, and service to all 43 centers has been restored on site or by re-routing the calls to other centers. Many 911 centers required the re-routing of traffic, and in most instances these re-routes were accomplished within hours after contact with the 911 center officials. All of these centers were back in service by September 4.

In Louisiana, 35 of 91 E-911 centers were impacted, and 30 of these are back in service, either partially on site or through re-routing of calls to other centers. Of the five

E 911 centers that remain out of service, all are the New Orleans area. Three of the centers are located in Plaquemine and St. Bernard parishes, low lying parishes along the Mississippi River. The remaining two are located in New Orleans. BellSouth is in contact with the E 911 officials in the five Louisiana 911 centers that remain out of service and we are working with them to implement plans to re-route traffic to alternate sites and restore E 911 service to these areas.

BellSouth has also been extremely focused on the wireless industry in its network restoration efforts. Prior to the storm's landfall, we invited several key carriers to collocate at our emergency command center, recognizing the critical role that wireless plays in today's communications and also knowing the key role we play in enabling wireless service. Together with members of the wireless industry, we developed a joint wireless restoration plan, focused on interoffice rings, prioritizing cell site restoration, and the placement of microwave facilities. These carriers provided input for restoration priorities together with our team. We also conduct two daily calls – one with wireless carriers and one with wireline carriers. These collaborative efforts have been a very important of the restoration effort.

I am also proud of our efforts to reroute traffic from New Orleans to Texas, or to Florida, or to switches and locations requested by the carriers in order to create communications capacity and restore service for wireless and wireline customers.

Efforts are ongoing as we search collectively to overcome the unique problems caused by flood waters that blocked access to switches and cellular sites in need of restoration. Escorted teams traveled by boat to several of the sites to survey accessibility and status to determine what equipment was needed to restore service. Microwave

antennas have already been placed to enable communications from two of these sites. The first one at Florida Boulevard serves T-Mobile, AllTel, and Sprint/Nextel; the second at Franklin Road near Lake Airport serves Verizon, Sprint/Nextel and Cingular. And a third microwave antenna is being placed in Biloxi, MS.

The significant progress towards restoration is due to the tireless and often heroic efforts of our employees on the ground who are working around the clock with a single minded mission of restoring communications to these hard hit areas, and to the efforts of our wireless and wireline industry colleagues who have partnered with us with an unwavering commitment to enable communications.

Our experience in the New Orleans Main Central Office at 840 Poydras Street gives a sense of the situation on the ground. BellSouth employees began staffing an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on the 12th Floor of the building on Sunday, August 28. The office lost power and engaged generators when the storm hit on Monday, but occupants breathed a sigh of relief that there was no flooding. Then, the levee broke and conditions rapidly deteriorated on Tuesday. Technicians and engineers in the office were trying to re-establish service and maintain power by keeping the generators fueled and running. As the situation in New Orleans deteriorated with violence and looting, the New Orleans police and the Louisiana State Police told us to evacuate the building. There was gunfire in the area and we were told it was unsafe for our employees to remain in the area. At 3:00 p.m. CST, the Louisiana State Police arrived and provided us with an armed escort so we could leave the building. We moved to Baton Rouge and, concerned for the security of the building, we arranged for FBI agents to take occupancy of the building at approximately 9:00 that evening. By Friday morning, the Louisiana State Police and the

FBI occupied the building. At that time, we began armed and escorted caravans to the building to bring fuel for the generator, water for the chillers, BellSouth personnel, as well as personnel from other carriers (at BellSouth's open invitation) . In spite of these harrowing facts, this key switch, which serves as a regional hub for multiple carriers, remained in operation. And, of course, some of the Poydras Street personnel, as well as personnel assisting in restoration efforts across the impacted area, are putting forth Herculean efforts in trying circumstances. Many of them have lost everything. Some of them are now residents, with their families, of the BellSouth tent cities. Yet they continue to demonstrate commitment and resolve to rebuild the communications network expected by their fellow citizens.

Another heroic story rises out of the coastal town of Gulfport, MS. On September 3, a brick wall protecting the main generator keeping the central office alive started to give way. Nine workers from that central office ran from the basement, where they had been working while riding out the storm, to the rooftop room and fortified the walls with whatever they could find – plastic tarps, plywood and even the cardboard from a science project of one worker's son. The main wall in the office collapsed, yet their efforts to protect the switch were successful.

IV. Government Cooperation and Needs

The cooperation and assistance from local, state and federal agencies overall has been good. The FCC, along with its Staff members, has been extraordinarily helpful. The FCC has reached out to offer assistance in many areas: waiving rules that will help customers who are without service; taking actions that have and will allow for the quick restoration of network facilities (including the emergency routing of traffic over whatever

facilities are available for use); and helping with the publication of "find me" numbers to help locate BellSouth employees. Because of this, BellSouth has been able to make its interLATA corporate communications network available to companies like Sprint and Telapex, a Mississippi wireless carrier, for use in emergency routing of their traffic impacted by Hurricane Katrina. BellSouth has also been in constant communication with other federal agencies and has received strong support from the White House Executive Office of the President.

We will continue to need this type of help, particularly related to the efforts to restore communications in Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast areas. The magnitude of the damage will present unique issues that will need to be resolved quickly and efficiently in order to restore service.

The Louisiana and Mississippi Public Service Commissions have also stepped up to provide assistance to the industry in efforts to assess damage, maintain the operation of the remaining network, and restore service to impacted areas.

As we continue to restore service to the area, several things are critical. First, we need safe access to our network facilities. This will require the abatement of the flooding in New Orleans, which is underway. Now and when the flood waters have receded, we need adequate security measures to ensure the safety of our technicians trying to assess and conduct repairs.

Second, we will need flexibility and patience. It will take many months for the services and residents in the area to permanently repair the damage caused by Katrina. We will continue to work around the clock to restore service to our customers as they have rebuilt and are ready to be served. BellSouth has experienced 22 hurricanes since

1992, storms such as Andrew, Hugo and now Katrina. Congress and the private sector alike should be cautious about building unrealistic expectations about how long it takes to fully recover from a storm packing the furor of a Katrina. Also a key difference in this storm is the amount of social dislocation experienced by the fact that nearly one million people have been moved because of the storm. Many of the population patterns may never return as they were. Cities like Baton Rouge, Memphis, and LaFayette have experienced significant population growth with the attendant stress on all infrastructures, including the communications. Building capacity will take time.

Third, the government needs to recognize that the cost to BellSouth to restore the communications infrastructure will be significant. BellSouth has estimated that the cost to restore our network as a result of hurricane Katrina will be between \$400 and \$600 million. By comparison, the cost to BellSouth of the damage caused by the four hurricanes that hit Florida last year was approximately \$200 million. And, of course, we're still in the middle of the hurricane season, and the long term impacts of the flooding in New Orleans are hard to estimate.

Restoration of our near ubiquitous infrastructure will demand that we deploy capital, not as a cost plus utility, but as a company in a very competitive industry. We will be expected to rebuild without knowing what our ultimate demand will be. And, we will rebuild this network in an environment where many companies depend on our network for providing service to their customers, but policy doesn't equally distribute the burden of restoration among all players. The FCC has been very helpful in waiving rules that hamper restoration. We will need continued focus from the policy community on rules and regulations that hamper access to capital. Timely restoration requires that we

technology in the more remote parts of the network (remote terminals, DLC systems), these systems require power to operate, and thus introduce more potential points of failure in the event of an extended power outage. Consumers are using more cordless phones, which also require commercial power to operate. And the vast proliferation of cellular phones, which could potentially use automobile batteries for recharging, also becomes an issue when your automobile is 6 feet under water. As a result, many “communications” failures flow from the loss of power to CPE and other power driven applications, not from a fundamental loss of connectivity in the telecommunications network.

Second, the communications industry and government bodies need to work more closely together to establish, well in advance, multiple alternate retreat points and paths for the routing of E 911 traffic in the case of a catastrophe. BellSouth has a proud history of service to E 911 centers and will continue its commitment to find new and better ways to ensure that emergency traffic can be successfully routed and handled during emergencies.

Third, first-responders to emergencies need radio equipment that can access a common frequency. Many of the first responder issues in Katrina arise from the use of dedicated radio emergency communications equipment by first responders. As we saw in 9/11 oftentimes different departments, i.e. police and fire, or different jurisdictions, i.e. state and city or Louisiana and Arkansas, have equipment based on different frequencies and thus can not communicate with each other. This needs to be resolved, probably by the promulgation of national standards.

Fourth, carriers should be mindful of, and plan for flooding when locating their switch equipment in flood prone areas, locating them, where practical, above flood lines. As I previously mentioned, BellSouth has taken this step in the vast bulk of its offices, locating both switches and generators on upper floors of buildings. In addition, the location and availability of fuel needs to be addressed in a way that ensures that fuel can be available for emergency generators no matter the circumstance. This likely will have some environmental questions attendant to it which will require flexibility and engagement to resolve.

Finally, industry cooperation throughout the recovery from Hurricane Katrina has been extraordinary. This should be used as a template to build industry wide emergency response and restoration plans for future catastrophes of this kind.

I would like to close by thanking you for your interest and help and by thanking my colleagues here at BellSouth. As Commissioner Copps noted last week after seeing our response efforts, we have mobilized this company from top to bottom. We will continue to serve the over 8400 meals a day to our employees impacted by the storm. I am please to say that we have located all of our 6500 plus employees in the impacted area. They are all alive and safe. The same can not be said, regrettably about all of their family members in several cases. And many, many of them have lost all or a significant portion of the home and possessions. Our BellSouth family of employees has stepped forward with over \$770,000 in contributions to aid the impacted families. Our company will match these on a 2 to 1 basis. In addition, we have started an adopt a family program which matches employees willing to help with those needing help. And we have announced a \$5million grant to the Departments of Education in Louisiana and

Mississippi to facilitate elearning, to ensure that those high school students displaced by the storm can continue with their studies, through the use of technology, and graduate onetime. We will restore and rebuild, as we always do. That's what we expect of ourselves. That's what we do.

Remarks by Booker Lester, administrative assistant to CWA Vice President Noah Savant
Federal Communications Commission field hearing
September 15, 2005, Atlanta

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today as the Commission examines the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and what is needed to be done to restore communications services to the citizens and businesses of our area.

I'm here today representing Noah Savant, who is vice president of the Communications Workers of America for District 3 in the Southeast. Our union represents about 84,000 workers and their families in this region, many of whom are telecommunications employees.

I'd like to talk today about our members' response to this catastrophe, first in terms of helping to comfort and support those made homeless, and then of the efforts to restore vital communications, especially in Louisiana and Mississippi.

In some cases, it's our members who are critical to the repair and reconstruction effort, who have been so devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

CWA delegates made an immediate commitment of \$4 million on Aug. 30, through the CWA Disaster Relief Fund, to support members and retirees who have lost their homes or other essentials

Additionally, CWA members to date have donated nearly \$40,000 through the CWA website, and are involved in numerous fundraising and support activities, opening their hearts and giving their all to help those made homeless and in need of support.

Just a few examples:

* CWA members nationwide worked the phones on Friday, Sept. 9, for the national telethon for Hurricane Relief that was broadcast on all major networks.

* CWA members have been working to make their union halls, community centers and homes available to hurricane victims, from Texas to California.

* Many locals are adopting homes families, like a Tulsa local that "adopted" an extended family of 19 people from New Orleans who lost everything.

* Others are working through the Red Cross and United Way to provide relief.

In our union, we often talk about the CWA family. It's at times like this that family steps in to help, and I'm very proud of the efforts of all our members.

We also have been working in partnership with BellSouth, Cingular Wireless and other employers both to help workers hit hard by the hurricane, and to restore services as soon as possible. And we appreciate all that these companies have done, particularly Cingular Wireless and BellSouth, to help care for employees and their families in this crisis.

Some good news: about 400 employees are back on the job at a Cingular Wireless facility in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. That center normally employs about 800 people and was devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

Cingular put up a tent city there, providing workers with meals, showers, a day care center and counseling through its employee assistance program. The company is continuing to try and locate temporary or permanent work for its displaced employees in retail stores, in other call centers in Lafayette, La., Memphis or Nashville, Tenn., or other locations.

We also want to acknowledge the efforts of SBC Communications and Verizon Communications, which are matching the donations of employees.

Restoring vital communications connections to this region is a huge task. Again, our members are dedicated to getting this job done. They are working around the clock, under difficult and sometimes unsafe conditions, to do their part.

Just about four years ago, CWA members went into action following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Their round-the-clock work got the New York Stock Exchange up and running quickly, and was critical to restoring communications links in lower Manhattan.

The assault by Hurricane Katrina left fierce devastation but again, our members are on the job. Despite high waters still in some parts of New Orleans, and the threat of contamination and disease, CWA members are working to do what's needed to restore telephone and communication links.

Let me give you a report received yesterday from one of our technicians outside New Orleans. He reports that technicians are working 14 hours a day and more,

while many others have been moved to Alabama and other locations to pick up additional work rerouted from Louisiana.

In the greater New Orleans area, about 18 BellSouth central offices remain out of work, mostly because the standing water is still much too high. Some locations were covered by 30 to 40 feet of water.

Several hundred technicians are working out of two locations --- Kenner and Marrero -- and the Marrero garage has a huge tent city sleeping about 300 technicians. Many of them don't have a home to go to.

That's what our members have been doing. And they've been joined by CWA technicians from as far away as Milwaukee, who are bringing not only their expertise, but supplies to help those in need.

In Louisiana, one work center damaged by the storm is up and running on the west bank, but there is so much more that must be done.

In Mississippi, where there was a tremendous amount of building destruction, many CWA families were directly affected, losing everything. We'll continue to assist them, as well as remain a full partner in the effort to restore vital communications there.

Again, thank you for the opportunity today to talk with members of the commission.

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

September 15, 2005 FCC Open Meeting)
Atlanta, GA)
Hurricane Katrina Communications Recovery)

Testimony of Steve Brownworth
Vice President, Network Planning
ITC^DeltaCom, Inc.

Thank you, Chairman Martin and the other members of the Commission, for giving me the opportunity to discuss the efforts of ITC^DeltaCom to maintain and restore communications service to our wholesale and retail customers in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. I would also like to thank the Chairman, and the Commission, for their support, the initiative the Commission has taken to reach out to all carriers to cut red tape, and the Commission's efforts to act as a liaison between the carrier community and the various federal disaster-recovery agencies in order to restore communications and facilitate the relief effort.

As Vice President, Network Planning, I am responsible for the planning, provisioning and supporting operations in the disaster recovery efforts of ITC^DeltaCom. I will explain the degree to which Hurricane Katrina destroyed ITC^DeltaCom facilities, and disrupted service for our customers, primarily in the states of Louisiana and Mississippi, as well as the actions taken by ITC^DeltaCom to restore service to our existing wholesale and retail customers—in many cases by engineering emergency accommodations for these customers—and our efforts to facilitate overall disaster

recovery in the region by providing emergency communications services to local, state, and federal emergency workers. Finally, the purpose of my testimony is to demonstrate the critical importance of diverse, independently operated wireline communications facilities to disaster recovery and service maintenance for our country's local and long-haul, and wireless as well as wireline, communications networks.

Company Background and Description

Although ITC^DeltaCom can trace its history back over 100 years from its founding as a small, independent telephone company in West Point, GA, ITC^DeltaCom is today an integrated competitive provider of local, long-haul, voice, data, wholesale, and retail telecommunications and Internet services to primarily business, but also some residential, customers throughout the Southeastern United States. We are still headquartered in West Point, GA, and, as you will see, we are an integral part of every community we serve.

To provide the services described above, ITC^DeltaCom relies on a 14-state synchronous optical network (SONET). This network is operated over 14,000 route miles of fiber optic lines, almost 11,000 of which are company-owned. The ITC^DeltaCom network is comprised of point-to-point circuits, a multi-level hierarchy of connectivity architecture, and high-speed, redundant routers and switches. Specifically, ITC^DeltaCom's network has 240 "Points of Presence (POPs)," 28 voice switches, 81 frame relay switches and asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) switches, 48 next-generation soft switches, and 258 collocations with other carriers. Among the critical facilities ITC^DeltaCom has in Louisiana and Mississippi are a large POP for Internet,

data, and frame relay in New Orleans, LA and a very large voice switch in Gulfport, MS, along with eight smaller POPs, and thousands of miles of fiber.

Effects of Hurricane Katrina

Within only hours of the hurricane passing through, there were five fiber cuts across the network. The storm isolated over 110 DS3s of customer and network facilities. We lost service for a short period of time at our switch site in Gulfport, MS and while our New Orleans site continued to operate with partial service, it was isolated from our switch in Gulfport. The fiber cuts also isolated portions of Baton Rouge, LA; Lafayette, LA; Tupelo, MS; Jackson, MS; Meridian, MS; and Hattiesburg, MS.

Even as the hurricane was still in Southern MS, our operational first responders, comprised entirely of ITC^DeltaCom employees, were in route with supplies. After driving all day, the crews could not get into Gulfport and many spent what was the first of many nights sleeping in trucks or the switch room floor. Before getting to the switch site the next day, one of the crews restored fiber along the way. ITC^DeltaCom employees worked throughout the first week and through Labor Day weekend, most working with 3-5 hours of sleep over the entire week, to get our network restored. Our people worked in a team effort with Alabama Power, Georgia Power, Mississippi Power, Entergy, contractors and other carriers. Under adverse conditions of long-hours, heat, lack of facilities, running water, security road-blocks and no electricity, this team worked in the hurricane-impacted areas to restore our switch, POP sites, and fiber network.

After the first week, all but a few DS3s were in-service outside of New Orleans, LA. Presently, all of our transmission and switching facilities are operational. However, due to the large amount of heavy equipment being deployed to clear debris throughout

the disaster area, we have to contend with right-of-way maintenance and potential fiber cuts on a daily basis. Nonetheless, due to the redundancy with which our network was engineered, and the assistance of other competitive carriers, these subsequent facilities repairs generally do not constitute a threat to customer service.

While not unique to ITC^DeltaCom, among all of the carriers and other utilities struggling to restore service in the hurricane-impacted areas, here are just a few illustrations of the "above and beyond" actions taken by our employees to restore communications service to our customers:

-The hurricane caused power to our Gulfport switch site to fail and our technician could not access the site, due to the wind, debris and flooding in the area. One of the switch techs made it to the site and was able to borrow a 2-way radio from a power company to make a call back to us. His ability to get to the switch quickly, secure the site and restart the generator, saved serious damage to our switch and facility. The switch room itself had some water from a damaged roof, which the team repaired with plastic, 2x4s and duct tape and converted it to our own command and evacuation center, with water, food and cots. We were able to lease a mobile camper to the switch site so showers could be taken.

-Two employees rented an airboat and guide to cross 15 miles of Lake Pontchartrain in order to get to our New Orleans site, which was cut off in all directions by the flooding. They saw a helicopter, tied up the airboat and were able to procure the pilot for assistance. Not only were they able to get the helicopter to the New Orleans site, but upon finding it intact, they were able to get a return flight back to Gulfport (saving them 4 hours of boat and drive time).

-The same team brought in 1,500 gallons of propane and equipment to the site, via truck, to get New Orleans operational within seven days.

-One fiber cut, isolating Hattiesburg, MS, involved a flooded basement and semi truck that rolled onto our fiber access site. A contractor gave us the keys to his \$400,000 backhoe, just so we could restore our fiber and return service. The team gave him and his wife some food and water as a thank-you.

-Another fiber cut, between Gulfport and New Orleans, involved moving over ½ mile of urban debris including the concrete utility poles carrying our fiber that were shattered in the middle.

Other Carriers and Rescue Workers

Because of the size and scope of ITC^DeltaCom's fiber network, we provide many services to wholesale customers, including wireless carriers, Internet backbone providers, and other competitive carriers. Throughout the disaster region—in addition to supporting the field workers—our operational support people provisioned services for the State Government, American Red Cross, Municipalities, priority customers, and other carriers, ensuring that communications remain available to their customers as well as our own. Additionally, we have been the recipient of network services from other fiber-based competitors where our own service was down. The diversity of competitive wireline and wireless networks in the southeast has enabled all carriers to work together to provide communications service to each other, hurricane survivors still in the area, and the many rescue and relief workers assisting in the disaster recovery. While it would be impossible to list each instance of cooperation, here are just a few examples of the helpful and innovative ways in which we and others have worked together to restore service, or to make service available to rescue workers:

-We were able to quickly restore/re-provision over 40 DS3s on the network thanks to help and facilities from Entergy and our other carriers.

-For one period of time, we had the only working IXC switch in Gulfport. We set up 49 phones off the Gulfport Switch for rescuers and residents to use to call for assistance, family and friends.

-We were able to quickly provide IXC and CLECs with alternative routing of our fiber network and connectivity to our IP network.

-We have been able to recover our local and long-distance trunk groups on the Gulfport switch, including 800 service to Florida for children to start school.

-Within days we enabled T-Mobile to install a temporary radio tower beside our Gulfport Switch, and ran 10 DS1s to the tower, so that T-Mobile could restore service to the residents and rescue workers in the Gulfport business district.

-We were able to quickly re-route multiple high capacity circuits for NuVox and WilTel, both of whom were providing service to critical facilities such as hospitals and the American Red Cross.

Lessons for the Future

While no one can anticipate a disaster of the magnitude that we have seen in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we can take steps to ensure that we are better prepared in the future. In many cases, we and other carriers believed they had achieved fiber route diversity by using multiple carriers with diverse fiber routing—in some cases 5-10 miles apart. Normally, this level of diversity is sufficient for human-error or natural disaster fiber cut disruptions. However, when, as here, the path of destruction has the potential to be much wider, steps must be taken to improve reliability. To this end, ITC^DeltaCom and several other competitive carriers are beginning to examine the feasibility of a joint build in order to install more redundant facilities much further inland, in order to be completely out of a hurricane path, but still be accessible to serve the coastal areas.

Nonetheless, despite the weaknesses exposed by the unprecedented destruction of Hurricane Katrina, the disaster did expose some critical strengths. One of these strengths in our communications network that will hopefully remain a fundamental feature of our country's future network and policy is the virtue of multiple carriers using multiple networks using multiple technologies. By having a "network of networks" interconnected in many different points, every carrier was able to play an important role in the recovery and restoration of communications. The Commission recognized this and began immediately reaching out to all network providers, and to coordinate offers of, and

requests for, help among government agencies. Obviously, the more carriers that are able to provide service, using any technology, the stronger our shared network.

The other strength, of course, is that of the people in the communications industry. At ITC^DeltaCom, and I'm sure other carriers, all along the way no one said "no." The team had to push to get what they wanted many times, but they got the support and resources they needed to make our network available for service.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission.

Written Statement of Steve Largent
President and CEO of CTIA-The Wireless Association
Atlanta, Georgia
Thursday, September 15, 2005

Good Afternoon Chairman Martin, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps and Adelstein. Thank you for the opportunity to share the wireless industry's efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. This was by all accounts and measurements a catastrophic storm and I want to express my heartfelt sorrow to all those who are affected.

Katrina delivered a knock-out punch to the region that brought with it significant challenges for the wireless industry. Not only were more than a thousand cell sites and multiple switches throughout the region rendered inoperable, but the hurricane and ensuing flood terminated all landline service and access to power in some of the hardest hit regions, two key elements in the delivery of wireless service. Additionally, concerns regarding access to food, water and fuel, as well as general concerns about safety, all were present.

In spite of these obstacles, the industry has done a tremendous job in the days and weeks since the storm. As is standard practice, carriers began their around-the-clock effort to ensure service is maintained in the region many hours before Katrina hit land in the Gulf. By marshalling assets, positioning key personnel and procuring critical materials, carriers embarked on a process that has been successfully followed many times in the recent past.

As the storm weakened over land, carriers began first to focus on their employees. With thousands of workers in the path and wake of Katrina, the most immediate priority - like any company serving the region - was to confirm that their employees were safe. Companies moved quickly to track down missing employees, and where possible, provide whatever level of comfort was available. Unfortunately, many of our employees have simply lost everything. As you can imagine, our members are fully committed to working with those employees who have been most impacted by the storm.

The critical task of ensuring our employees' well being marked just the beginning of wireless carriers' response to Hurricane Katrina. Simultaneous with that effort, carriers immediately began working with federal, state and local officials to assist in rescue and recovery efforts.

In addition to distributing thousands of wireless phones and providing priority access to public safety personnel, wireless companies provided emergency communications trailers, generators, and other equipment to public safety officials and emergency first responders on the ground. Additionally, wireless industry personnel coordinated daily with the various levels and jurisdictions of government to match public sector requests with industry resources.

Next, the industry moved toward restoration. Simply put, the industry's goal has been to ensure that reliable telecommunications services are available to people from the Gulf Coast region as soon as possible, so they can begin the difficult process of putting their lives back together. It gives me a great sense of pride to sit before you this morning as a representative of the wireless industry to share with you what we are doing to achieve this goal. I say this because I believe our members' response to this devastating natural disaster has been nothing short of extraordinary.

I particularly want to note the selflessness and dedication of technicians and other telecommunications carrier employees -- many of whom have been personally impacted by this Hurricane. I just can't get over the many stories conveyed to me about employees who have lost literally everything, but are still showing up to work everyday and working around the clock to get service restored.

Despite the challenges, we have now been able to restore wireless service to much of the affected region, while also providing evacuees throughout the country with temporary telecommunications capabilities. Carriers have established emergency communications centers throughout the region where customers can send text messages and make long-distance calls to loved ones, free of charge. Many carriers also are providing relief agencies free wireless broadband connections to help reunite displaced families.

Across the industry, carriers suspended all collection efforts for affected subscribers and are providing free battery charging, calling, and technical support to help those without power and phone service at company-owned retail stores and other locations across Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

This effort has been enhanced by carriers agreeing to work together to bring service back to the region. Spectrum sharing, roaming arrangements, and sharing fuel, trucks, and security are some examples of what the industry did to help get the area back on its feet.

As an industry, we have never seen an event like this, but we must nonetheless be ready for the next Hurricane Katrina. We are fully committed to preparing for these circumstances. We recognize that wireless telecommunications services are vital in emergency situations and look forward to continue working with you and the public safety and first responder communities going forward.

In closing, our prayers go out to those impacted by this tragedy and we in the wireless industry will do everything within our power to fully restore service to people in the region as quickly and as effectively as possible.

Iridium Satellite LLC Testimony
Federal Communications Commission Open Meeting
September 15, 2005
Greg Ewert, Executive Vice President

At the outset, I would like to express my thanks to Chairman Martin, the Commissioners, and the staff of the FCC. Your tireless efforts have greatly assisted our efforts in supplying critical telecommunication resources to the Gulf Coast Region.

Further, I greatly appreciate your kind invitation to discuss our efforts in the Gulf Coast and our hopes for the future. As the Executive Vice President of Iridium Satellite, I have seen first hand the critical function that networks such as ours play in emergency planning and disaster relief.

As the tragic events in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi have played out over the past two weeks, one element that has been dramatically clear is the critical importance of immediate and universal communications following a catastrophic event such as Hurricane Katrina. In the days, hours and minutes after such a disaster, telecommunications give emergency personnel the vital ability to respond, react and coordinate their efforts. It is during these critical 'golden hours' that this ability to communicate literally determines whether or not victims are saved and entire communities survive. More than at any other time, the value of a functioning communications network is crystal clear.

Unfortunately, the very events that can so adversely affect our communities – whether they be natural or man-made, hurricanes and floods, or bombs and bullets – also disrupt the basic systems with which we communicate.

Hurricane Katrina triggered catastrophic infrastructure collapse in the City of New Orleans when levees protecting entire communities failed. The storm also caused another infrastructure breach: The entire telecommunications network for a broad swath of the Southern United States was, in the space of a few hours, eliminated. Telecom switching stations were submerged; cell phone towers tore from their moorings; wires blew down; network servers flooded; electrical power grids failed. Along the entire Gulf Coast, the communications systems residents depend on in their daily lives and turn to in times of emergency were dramatically and definitively removed from service.

In the weeks since Hurricane Katrina made landfall, telecom crews across the South have been working diligently to repair and rebuild this broken infrastructure. However, this effort takes time. Even temporary solutions such as fixed-line phones on vehicular platforms, trucked-in cell towers and hastily-wired

emergency shelters take days and sometimes weeks to deploy. And of course there is never enough equipment for all affected communities.

In the midst of this catastrophe Iridium has provided, and continues to provide, an immediate and unwavering solution. Within minutes of the disaster, those with satellite phones along the coast turned to Iridium for immediate telecom access. As those minutes turned to hours and then to days, more and more first responders found that Iridium provided dial tone and data access when other networks simply could not [Explain slides here].

As a result, over the past few weeks, we have seen our traffic increase exponentially across the area affected by the hurricane. This is not, of course, something we take comfort in. The human tragedy and the manifold destruction sadden all of us. But we do take pride in the vital role that our network serves when so many are in such great need.

The reason for this role is clear. Our network floats several hundred miles above the planet, where it is always on and always ready. We do not rely on ground infrastructure for switching, routing, or call completion. We are fault redundant to the most extreme degree conceivable. Widespread and catastrophic damage on the ground simply does not impact our network in the sky.

Iridium's reliability is by design, and our design is unique: Inter-satellite links seamlessly route calls across the constellation. Connections between our phones require no ground stations for communication. And, of course, the Iridium system is the only truly global network in existence. This means that every state, territory, and protectorate is covered by Iridium, as is, for that matter, every landmass and body of water on the planet. No matter where disaster occurs, Iridium is immediately and unquestionably available for the most critical communications. This ensures that America is served by Iridium whether disaster strikes her citizens at home or abroad. And it assists American efforts to help others in need when crisis hits on the far reaches of the globe.

This role in disaster management mirrors the one Iridium has so successfully played in military operations around the globe. The Department of Defense has seen the value of a network that can be accessed from anywhere and deploys everywhere, as rapidly as any front line forces. A large volume of US military traffic is reliably and immediately transported across the Iridium constellation each day and brought to Earth at our secure gateway in Hawaii. These calls -- like all made over the Iridium network -- are routed without relying on any foreign ground stations. This proven reliance was recognized by the Commission's recent decision to grant Iridium additional spectrum.

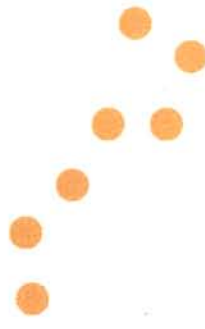
As you, the expert agency, participates in the process of reviewing communications networks in this tragedy and in preparing plans and offering advice to the Administration, Congress, State and Local Officials, I would ask that you take into account the critical role that satellite played. The larger the installed base of satellite telephones, the faster recovery operations can begin.

Chairman Martin, Commissioners, FCC Staff: I can assure you that each Iridium employee takes seriously this vital role that we play as the piece of the nation's communication infrastructure that never goes down. To that end, we continue to add additional functionality based on the lessons learned from each disaster recovery and military operation.

The Role of Mobile Satellite Networks in Disaster Management



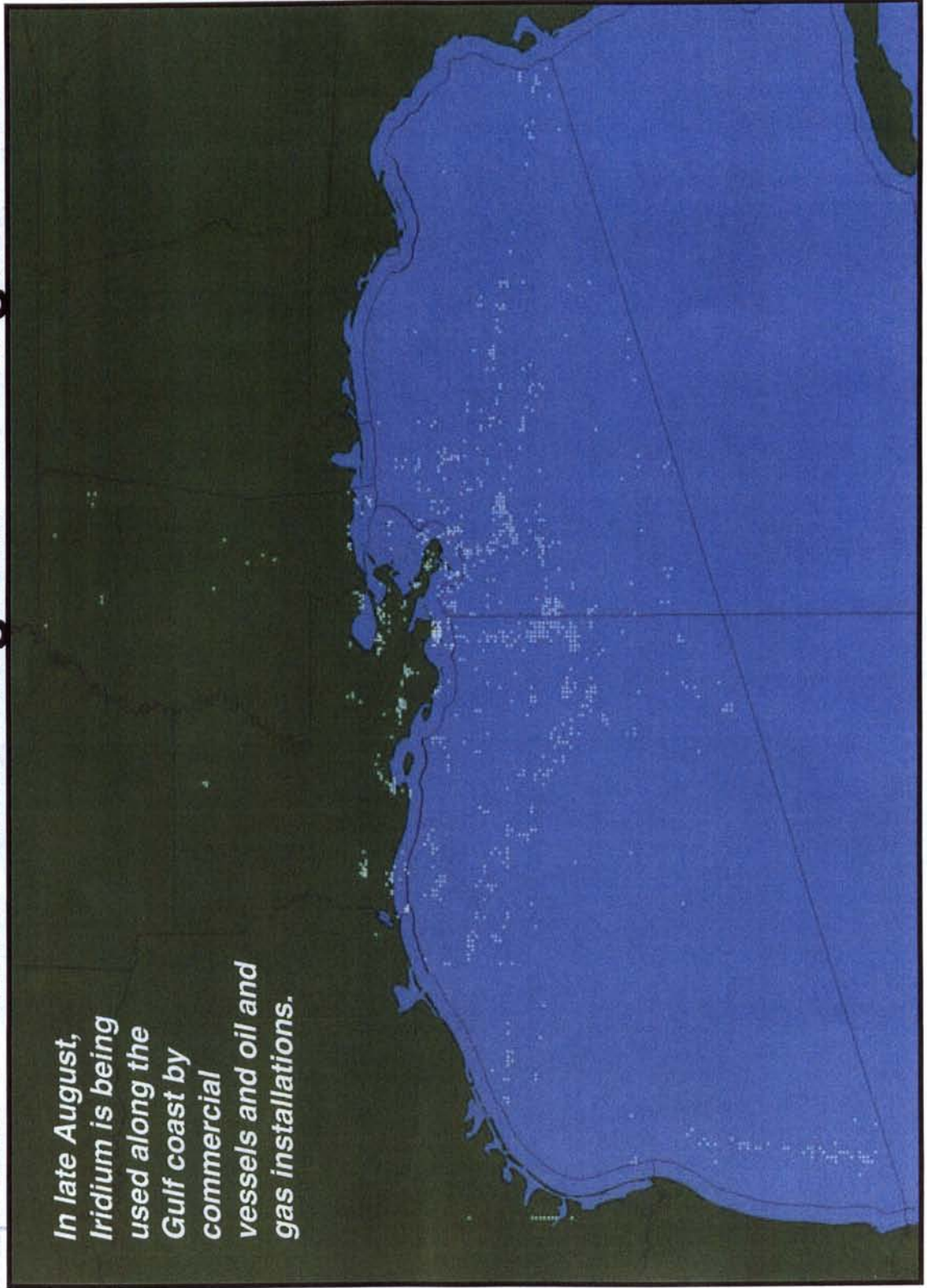
Greg Ewert
Executive Vice President
Iridium Satellite LLC



IRIDIUM

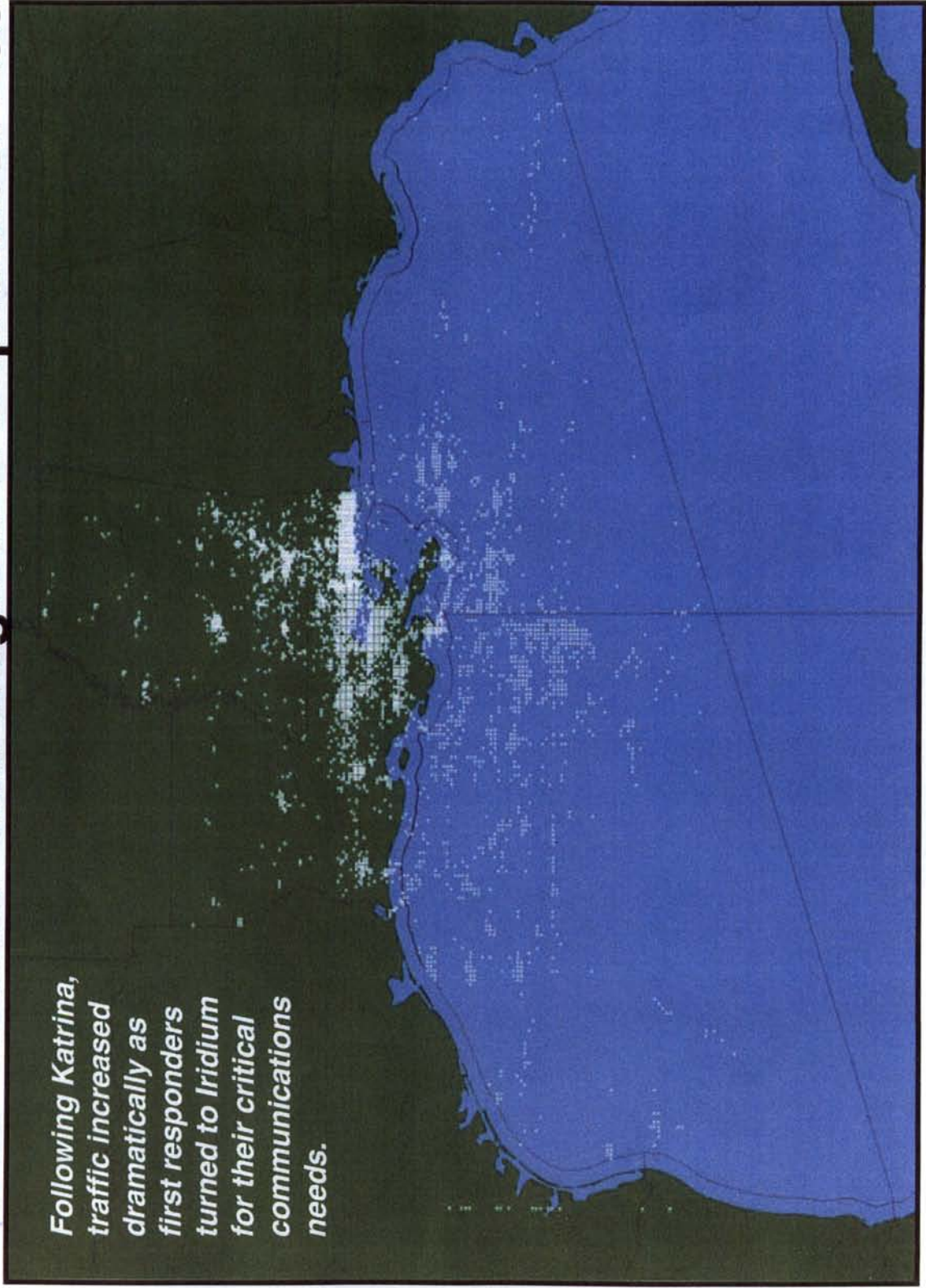
Iridium Voice Traffic: Gulf Region: 19 August 2005

In late August, Iridium is being used along the Gulf coast by commercial vessels and oil and gas installations.



Iridium Voice Traffic: Gulf Region: 2 September 2005

Following Katrina, traffic increased dramatically as first responders turned to Iridium for their critical communications needs.



Iridium Satellite LLC

- Ready for immediate deployment anywhere



**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554**

Open Meeting
September 15, 2005
Atlanta, Georgia
“Hurricane Katrina and Communications Services in the Gulf Coast States”

Statement of

CHIEF WILLIS CARTER
First Vice President
ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS-
INTERNATIONAL (APCO)
and
Chief of Communications
Shreveport Fire Department
Shreveport, Louisiana

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Abernathy, Commissioner Copps, and Commissioner Adelstein for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Willis Carter and I am the First Vice President of APCO International, the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials. I am also Chief of Communications for the Shreveport, Louisiana Fire Department, serving a total of 34 years with the department, the last 20 of which have been in my current position.

First of all, I want to thank the Commission for its efforts to facilitate emergency communications in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. The dedication of your staff is to be commended.

APCO International has been working closely with the public safety agencies in the affected areas, first to provide whatever assistance we can to the individuals and agencies involved, and second to gather information so that we may learn from this

disaster and be better prepared in the future. Through a variety of mechanisms, our members from across the nation have also been coming to the aid of their colleagues in the hardest hit areas, providing both professional and personal assistance whenever possible.

Through its role as a FCC-certified frequency coordinator, APCO International has been closely involved with securing radio communications capability for emergency response agencies in the affected areas, and has worked with public safety agencies in those areas to restore communications operations that were disrupted by the hurricane. I note that APCO International has done so while waiving its normal frequency coordination fees.

Fortunately, my home town of Shreveport, which is in northwest Louisiana, escaped the wrath of Katrina. However, last week, I had the opportunity to go on a fact-finding mission to many of the affected areas. I have also had extensive communication with my colleagues from other public safety agencies throughout Louisiana. My statement today will summarize some of my observations, offer other information that APCO International has gathered, and present some general concerns that APCO International has as we move forward to improve public safety communications capabilities.

On Monday September 5, I traveled to St. Tammany Parish, which is located on the north side of Lake Pontchartraine. There I toured seven dispatch centers. The devastation that I witnessed was unimaginable. Public safety call takers and dispatchers were working and living in their communications centers. Some had lost their homes, and most had suffered significant damage, but all were on the job and still attempting to

provide help and assistance to the thousands of citizens in need. Communications capabilities were at best very limited. The primary tower site which supports the parish radio system had been damaged, but was still affording limited service. The entire area of Slidell, Louisiana was without power and relying on emergency backup power sources. The Covington area had some power restored. 9-1-1 was totally out of service.

I departed St. Tammany Parish on Tuesday, and traveled to St. Charles Parish, which is adjacent to Jefferson Parish and on the west side of New Orleans proper. This area did not endure the direct blunt of the storm, and although sustaining somewhat less damage than what I had seen the day before, they were nonetheless facing significant challenges with limited radio communications, and a total outage of 9-1-1. I was to find that the worst was yet to come. The Jefferson Parish Communications Center was in much more dire circumstances. Communication to field units was very limited, access to 9-1-1 was completely out, and the call takers and dispatchers were experiencing the impact of the stress of working, sleeping, and eating in their dispatch center since the storm hit five days earlier. The Fire Dispatch Commander told me that he had lost five dispatch personnel since the storm due to the fact that the stress associated with this tragic event had prompted them to simply walk out. My attempts to reach the New Orleans Police dispatch center and the New Orleans Fire dispatch center were unsuccessful. Flooding prevented access to either of these centers which had both been evacuated. 9-1-1 was totally inaccessible, and the majority of public safety communications were not functioning.

There were several factors that contributed to the public safety communications outages in all of these areas. The damage caused by the hurricane winds either destroyed

or seriously damaged many primary tower and transmitter sites. The ensuing power outage which engulfed the area required the use of emergency power generators, many of which had been damaged or destroyed by flying debris and rising water. Many of those that remained in operation were faced with exhausted fuel supply either by disruption of natural gas supply lines, or the fact that there was no way to get diesel fuel into them as the result of flooding. Some communications sites were simply swallowed up by the flood waters. Bell South central offices, which served as 9-1-1 tandems, were flooded, which created outages of 9-1-1 service in as many as thirteen parishes.

In all, I visited four parishes and had the opportunity to visit a total of nine communications centers. I saw devastation and despair in every direction, and I also saw the same basic problems in all areas. Lack of coordinated incident command and control, lack of direct support for communications centers and their personnel, and the inability to communicate were obvious problems in every area that I visited.

Today, most of the area's emergency communications are operating at least in a limited capacity. However, there is still much to be done to restore full communications capabilities which in some cases will require the rebuilding of total networks.

Much attention has been given to the communications problems that occurred in the wake of Katrina. We are still gathering information from the field, but a few observations can be made, even at this early date:

- PSAPs and other emergency communications centers must be considered as core elements of the first response structure, and the staff of those facilities needs the support of all levels of government.

- Planning and training for disasters are essential, and plans need to be properly executed when disasters strike.
- There must be common incident command structures at all levels of the emergency response effort. A disaster is no time to question who is in charge.
- Funding must be available to ensure that public safety communications networks are built and maintained to withstand worse-case scenarios. Plans must also be in place to restore facilities that, despite best efforts, are disrupted.
- Telephone central offices supporting 9-1-1 tandems must be “mirrored” in locations sufficiently remote to allow for quick restoration of 9-1-1 services.
- Reserved, interoperable radio spectrum should be available for disaster related deployment of supplemental and replacement radio systems.
- Public safety agencies must have adequate funding and radio spectrum to operate robust, interoperable radio communications systems with state-of-the-art capabilities.

Mr. Chairman, just as September 11th, 2001 helped to focus the nation on the communications issues facing our first responders, Hurricane Katrina has revealed that much still needs to be accomplished to provide public safety personnel with the communications tools they need to protect the safety of life and property. We look forward to working with you, the Congress, and other parties in this critical effort.

BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C.
September 15, 2005

Statement of

DIANE NEWMAN

Entercom New Orleans

Operations Director of WWL 870-AM New Orleans, LA

Good Morning, I am Diane Newman, Operations Director of Entercom's Station WWL 870. - AM, New Orleans, LA. I want to thank the Commission for this opportunity to tell the story of the importance of local radio to our local communities, especially in times of a devastating crisis like Hurricane Katrina. Before I discuss what happened in New Orleans, please allow me to share how important I believe it is that I appear before the Commission today. David Tyree was one of the people I loved most—a dear friend and long-time host for WWL. He is being buried today in his hometown in Oklahoma after a long battle with cancer. David exemplified the heart and soul of WWL. I know that rather than grieve at his funeral, David would want me here today to tell the story of how his beloved WWL so valiantly served the New Orleans he loved.

WWL is a 50-kilowatt news talk AM station, licensed to New Orleans, LA. In addition to WWL, Entercom New Orleans operates four FM stations and one other AM station in the New Orleans market. All of these stations remained operational, as Hurricane Katrina raged through the city Sunday night and Monday; as levies broke from her fury; as New Orleans filled with

water. To conserve generator fuel we shut down two of the FM stations Tuesday and were forced to operate the stations remaining on the air at reduced power due to generator capacity and to conserve fuel. Knowing the threat that hurricanes posed to the City, Entercom New Orleans had developed and followed a detailed emergency preparedness plan that worked. Throughout the crisis our staff was committed to doing whatever was necessary to serve our community in this time of crisis. At one point on Monday during the storm, WWL's emergency generator shut down and could not be restarted remotely. Knowing that WWL was the lifeline to the community, Dave Cohen, our News Director, and Dominic Mitchum, one of our engineers, - who were stationed at the Jefferson Parish Emergency Operations Center where WWL maintained an emergency studio - drove several miles to the WWL transmitter site, which is outside the levy system, waded through a snake and alligator infested swamp to restart the generator and get WWL back on the air.

As Hurricane Katrina tore the city apart and the subsequent flooding unfolded, WWL and our sister Entercom stations became one of the few and at times possibly the only reliable means of communication throughout the City. Local authorities, including the Mayor of New Orleans and the President of Jefferson Parish, relied on WWL to get critical information out to their own staffs as well as to their citizenry. Mayor Nagin made his passionate plea for help during an interview on WWL.

After the 17th Street Canal broke and extreme flooding began on Tuesday, conditions deteriorated to a point where it became apparent that we would not be able to remain in our studio downtown next to the Superdome, even though we were on the fifth floor of an office

building. We began discussions with Clear Channel. We needed studios and they needed the news and information capabilities of WWL. Logic, necessity and the mutual respect of broadcasters resulted in an unprecedented cooperative arrangement that allowed Entercom to set up studio operation at Clear Channel's facilities in Baton Rouge and bring the signal into our stations in New Orleans via satellite. Our engineers, with local cooperation including police escorts were able to set up satellite-receive capability at the Jefferson Parish Emergency Operations Center where, as part of our emergency planning Entercom had existing microwave facilities to reach our transmitter sites. Louisiana Network let us use their satellite uplink. Clear Channel assisted in the programming and simulcast the programming on their two FM's that remained operational. United Radio Broadcasters of New Orleans was born. We gave permission to retransmit our signal to any radio station that asked. We believe that dozens of radio stations were carrying the WWL signal during the worst of the crisis, and many continue to do so now. In addition, the WWL programming was carried on short-wave station WHRI.

Meanwhile on the air, we were the stage...the platform...the lifeline for local officials, breaking news, live press conferences -....the voice of the voiceless...the voice of the authorities trying to reach them...the voice of family and friends worried about loved ones. We brought in additional news reporters from other markets as far away as Seattle, Buffalo, Boston and Cincinnati to help. The on-site emergency responders were regularly monitoring WWL. Ultimately, WWL became a form of a backup 911 system for New Orleans. In many ways Radio became a "first responder."

All of this was done by the extremely dedicated and brave group of people who placed the needs of the community above their own personal needs. Many of our radio family members lost everything they owned. Many didn't know the fate of their parents, brothers, sisters, friends. But, we did the work. We do the work. Local radio was an invaluable connection for listeners throughout Greater New Orleans, the Gulf South and cities across America. We are the touchstone for the community during the hurricane and the devastation that followed. We are the connection as the story continues to unfold. Our close working relationship with people like New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin; Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard; NOPD Chief Eddie Compass; Sheriff Harry Lee; Emergency Managers - Dr. Walter Maestri & Terry Ebert & Tab Troxler; St. Tammany Sheriff Jack Strain; St. Bernard Parish President Junior Rodriguez; Plaquemines Parish President Benny Roussell; Senators David Vitter and Mary Landrieu; Congressman Bobby Jindal and William Jefferson; and so many more - relationships developed through the years - proved invaluable during this - the worst natural disaster in the history of America. We - WWL and United Radio Broadcasters - believe our efforts helped save many lives.

As a compelling indication of the importance local officials place on WWL being in the heart of the community, the City of New Orleans has told us that they would do whatever it takes to expedite the return of WWL operations to its studios in downtown New Orleans. We are working on that return as I sit here today.

I am proud to be part of WWL and Entercom New Orleans. I am proud to be a broadcaster and I am proud to be a native of New Orleans. And, as a Hurricane Betsy survivor... I believe when

bad things happen - good things come from it. Now, as a Hurricane Katrina survivor, I believe when devastating things happen - extraordinary blessings will come from it. Although it will take extraordinary efforts, New Orleans will recover and we intend to do our part to aid in those efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I will be happy to answer any questions you have.

CLEAR CHANNEL – CLEAR RESPONSES IN TIMES OF EXIGENCY.
September 15, 2005

I. INTRODUCTION.

Hello, my name is Dick Lewis, I am Regional Vice President for Louisiana and Southern Mississippi for Clear Channel. I oversee 27 radio stations with about 350 employees throughout the region. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. I will go through Clear Channel's experience, our interactions with fellow broadcasters and lastly, but no less important, the role of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Like most broadcasters, Clear Channel takes seriously its role a local broadcaster – and indeed as a life-line -- in each community where we operate. Clear Channel programs and operates our radio and television stations in a locally decentralized manner. Despite this diffused management structure, in times of emergency, the Clear Channel family comes together in full cooperation to ensure that all of our financial, technical and human resources are brought to bear on a situation. Hurricane Katrina was such a time and serving as an equal partner in helping our stations and the communities they serve was the FCC. Clear Channel wishes to thank Chairman Martin for his personal commitment to the broadcasting community during this emergency. Clear Channel sincerely appreciates the real-world solutions offered by the FCC during and after Hurricane Katrina. Clear Channel was in constant communication with Mr. Peter Doyle, Chief, Audio Services Division, of the Media Bureau, speaking with him and other staff no less than ten times over the course of eight days. Mr. Doyle's assistance was invaluable during this extremely trying period and we wish to thank him publicly for his dedicated public service.

II. TEAMWORK INSIDE CLEAR CHANNEL.

On Thursday, August 25th, after it was determined that we were likely to have a hurricane event in Florida, we held a preparation conference call with over 140 of our Clear

Channel employees in the state of Florida and along the Gulf Coast. On that call, we discussed how to continue to provide live, local news without the normal studios. We identified where important equipment and supplies such as fuel, generators, transmitter and studio trucks, etc. could be located and began planning for swift transport. We also distributed our "Hurricane Preparation Checklist" which we update each time we weather another storm. In addition, we were able to identify and later utilize our Outdoor Division employees who had commercial truck drivers' licenses or hazardous materials permits, which are a prerequisite to transporting much-needed fuel.

In addition to relying on our employees, we were able to rely on the technical and equipment capital at Clear Channel to assist in this time of need. Given Clear Channel's long presence in the media marketplace (and experience dealing with natural disasters like hurricanes), Clear Channel has amassed a considerable stockpile of resources that were invaluable in helping our stations (and our fellow broadcasters) stay on air in these devastated communities. Before the hurricane, we directed satellite phones, satellite uplinks, a portable transmitter and antenna, some generators and fuel to southeast Florida, where landfall was expected. And on Saturday after learning from our TV weather people that the storm was likely to re-intensify and hit the Gulf Coast, we immediately held a Gulf Coast preparation conference call, and redirected all the resources that had been directed to southeast Florida to Mobile, Alabama.

On Sunday August 28th, it became clear that the situation was grave and we would have to abandon our New Orleans studios. We made plans to evacuate, but not without first ensuring that we could feed live local, pertinent news and information from other markets such as Baton Rouge into our New Orleans stations. The Governor of Louisiana ordered evacuation midday and the New Orleans staff turned over control to Clear Channel

Baton Rouge and evacuated the studio. However, the resources and interconnectivity of Clear Channel Radio ensured that specific local New Orleans news and weather programming originating from various Clear Channel stations via satellite made it into the community. We started a caravan to New Orleans and Biloxi with more generators, RVs, technicians, and our Outdoor Division people with trucks, cranes and other heavy equipment which we would need in a real disaster.

After the storm passed we had various outages stemming from satellite dishes being blown out of alignment, generators stopping, and other events. We hired a helicopter and flew engineers in to our remote tower sites and studios. We rescued our local DJ who helped us get back on the air and make repairs. Then we re-tasked the helicopter to a rescue effort ferrying out Entercom employees who had become trapped in their downtown New Orleans studios. We were able to secure generator service and later thousands of gallons of diesel fuel to the ATC site which Clear Channel shares with other broadcasters, radio and TV. This enabled us to help our fellow terrestrial broadcasters stay on the air. This ensured that the city of New Orleans was able to receive important, critical lifesaving information on a constant basis.

In Biloxi, Mississippi our studio roof was damaged and we had no power, but we had generators on the way from Raleigh, NC and had those installed not long after the power went out. This enabled us to originate local programming for our listeners, provide shelter and air-conditioning for our staff who were living there (most of whom have lost everything), and keep three of our four local Biloxi radio stations on the air with local news and information.

Other markets in the surrounding areas were adversely impacted as well. In Mobile, Pensacola, Meridian, MS and Hattiesburg/Laurel areas, our engineers worked tirelessly to get

generators up and running, antennas fixed so our stations could continue to provide local programming.

III. TEAMWORK WITH COMPETITORS

Broadcaster response nationwide to Hurricane Katrina was **immediate** and **massive**. From helping fellow broadcasters who were knocked off air, to filling 18-wheelers with relief supplies at station studios, to broadcasting 24/7 without commercial interruption to raise funds for victims, stations responded with an unprecedented outreach effort.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this response was the number of creative partnerships formed among broadcasters who are often fierce competitors. In New Orleans – where the devastation was the worst – we have created the URNO (United Radio Broadcasters of New Orleans) which is run out of our facility in Baton Rouge. This is a cooperative effort between Clear Channel, Entercom and independent stations 1470 KLCL in Lake Charles and 1290 KJEF in Jennings whereby we created one very rich information stream. We simulcast this information on all frequencies owned by the stations that are on the air at any given moment. This continues to this day. It is manned by a combination of Clear Channel announcers and Entercom news personnel from WWL. The URNO broadcast is originating from Clear Channel studios in Baton Rouge. We have constructed a whole new broadcast center and are linked up with the Louisiana Emergency Operations Center. We are delivering programming via AM, FM, Internet and satellite.

IV. TEAMWORK WITH THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.

When the situation became dangerous it was difficult for Clear Channel employees to transport the fuel over the flooded roads and our people were unsafe. The FCC was there to help. Through the FCC, we received a FEMA escort for our fuel deliveries which provided a closer source of fuel for the shared ATC tower site. This action helped enable

many broadcasters in New Orleans to stay on the air to reach the scared and confused public. In addition to this concrete help the FCC also was instrumental in helping us obtain security passes and clearances, securing federal protection for transmitter sites and studio locations, providing contacts with NCS, and most of all helping to get needed waivers and special temporary authority to continue our operations.

V. CONCLUSION

Clear Channel is extremely proud of the tireless work of so many in its family to assist communities in need during Hurricane Katrina. Even stations not located in those communities stood ready to help... and did. Again, Clear Channel thanks the FCC for its commitment to helping our stations during this difficult time. Thank you.

Testimony of David Duitch, Vice President, Belo Capital Bureau
Before the Federal Communications Commission
Field Hearing on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts
Thursday, September 15, 2005

Good morning. My name is David Duitch. I am the Vice President of Belo Corp.'s Capital Bureau in Washington, D.C. Belo is the parent company of WWL-TV, the market-leading CBS affiliate in New Orleans. I am standing in for my WWL colleagues today as they are continuing their comprehensive local coverage of one of the most tragic stories in American history. During this disaster, I coordinated sending Belo employees to the New Orleans area to help cover the story and to provide much-needed relief for WWL staff. As such, I have been in constant contact with WWL personnel.

I am pleased to report that WWL-TV has remained on the air continuously -- before, during and after this disaster -- providing critical news and information to the New Orleans community and those affected by this terrible tragedy. Our 24-hour-a-day, non-stop hurricane coverage continued for nine straight days, commercial free for all but the first few hours, from noon on Saturday, August 28, until 10:35 p.m. on Tuesday, September 6.

The employees of WWL-TV have shown heroic measures of dedication and fortitude in covering this story despite their own extreme personal losses and separation from their family and friends. They have worked tireless hours to provide this public service. And yet, WWL employees do not see themselves as heroes. In their eyes, they were just doing their job. Serving the local community is their job.

WWL-TV is a provider of *local* news and information; and, as such, our focus was on serving the New Orleans community and all the constituencies of that community wherever they were located or relocated. Due to strong winds, floods and lack of electricity throughout the area, cable, satellite, and other modes of communication were not an option. Over-the-air television and radio were the only ways that many people could get information, and were often the best ways for local authorities to communicate with each other and the public.

WWL-TV and other local television and radio stations were a critical part of the first alert system. When it became evident that the storm was headed toward New Orleans, WWL began wall-to-wall hurricane coverage, alerting the local community about the impending

dangers and urging New Orleanians to evacuate. We provided critical information about traffic routes, informing them of the safest and least congested ways to leave the city. Our traffic reporter was crucial to safe evacuation, and our meteorologist provided critical, timely updates on the coming storm. Mayor Nagin praised WWL and other local broadcasters for helping the city achieve an 80 percent evacuation rate, much higher than the typical 50 percent or less.

It was pre-planning with a catastrophe in mind as well as the dedication of our employees that kept WWL-TV on the air.

As the severity of the storm and its potential impact became clear, WWL management asked their 85 news, production and engineering employees who could stay to cover the storm, and 80 of the 85 employees volunteered to do whatever was necessary to provide this public service. The five who left were the sole caregivers for their children. Other non-news employees volunteered to stay as well to help.

Because of the hurricane, flooding and looting, WWL originated coverage from four different facilities over the first five days of the disaster. Two years ago, WWL's management set up an arrangement with LSU to use their broadcast facilities for such an emergency. And in 1999, when WWL replaced its transmitter for digital conversion, the site was selected and the transmitter facility was built with a Category 5 hurricane in mind. The transmitter site in Gretna, Louisiana is 18 feet above sea level which is one of the primary reasons we have been able to stay on air throughout this disaster. The transmitter building includes an emergency broadcast facility able to withstand hurricane-level winds. We knew WWL needed to be there for the New Orleans community. For much of the first few days, live coverage switched between LSU, the transmitter site and our primary facility in the French Quarter, which was habitable until the flooding began. By Wednesday, August 31, we had made arrangements to broadcast from the larger facility of Louisiana Public Broadcasting's KLPB-TV in Baton Rouge.

Many dramatic moments have occurred as we have played out our role of public service. You may have seen the compelling footage of one of WWL's technical employees running through the rising water to rescue a man out of the window of his quickly-submerging car. In another location, a woman handed her baby to one of our reporters, asking her to take her child to safety.

WWL is still airing hurricane coverage supplemented with network and syndicated programming. We continue to provide critical local information to the New Orleans community. Viewers turn to WWL to find out if and when they can return to their parish to check on their houses and belongings. We tell them exactly what identification they need, who they need to see, where they need to go to gain access and how they can safely reach these locations. Because of their personal connection to WWL, hundreds of New Orleanians have stopped by our facilities in Baton Rouge to ask for help and information.

As we've covered this story, WWL's local roots have been very important. We've received access to places because police and other officials in New Orleans know who we are and know we're committed to the people of New Orleans. And our long-term commitment and news leadership in New Orleans has provided us valuable access to Mayor Nagin of New Orleans and other local and state officials. We have provided them an open door to our facility, wherever we are located, to speak directly to the community. We have worked hand-in-hand with the first responders and all other governmental authorities, providing a lifeline to the citizens of New Orleans. Also, Mr. Chairman, the FCC stood ready to help us, and we thank you.

The support of WWL's Belo family has been critical to the success of this operation. Belo employees in Dallas worked tirelessly to secure adequate communications, housing, security, fuel for our generators at various locations, food and clothing, and set up an employee relief fund. The Company sent in Belo news, production and technical staff from around the nation to help cover the story. In addition, Belo television stations and newspapers have raised more than \$16 million in their local communities so far for the Red Cross and other relief organizations.

This has been a long and weary road, but one we have traveled with an incredible sense of purpose. We were determined to keep WWL on the air for the good of the New Orleans community. We know of many that accessed WWL from battery-operated televisions or used generators to view our coverage. Many scattered evacuees watched WWL's live streaming of its coverage on the station's Web site (wwltv.com). Importantly, the content provided for internet streaming was only available because of the infrastructure of our over-the-air television station. Others listened to radio stations that were streaming WWL's television coverage, or watched on the local PBS and cable channels carrying WWL

in Louisiana and Mississippi. Thousands of displaced New Orleanians watched WWL in evacuation centers in Texas. Policymakers should specially note that evacuees and others throughout the nation were able to access WWL's coverage on the digital multicast channels of more than 30 television stations (see attached list). Clearly, the role of free, over-the-air television cannot be underestimated in times like these. A small sampling of emails that reinforce this point are attached to our testimony.


This short tape shows the importance the local community places on the role of local broadcasters like WWL-TV and why we're fiercely committed to this high level of public service. We're going to show two successive clips – one from a New Orleans police superintendent and another from a viewer. [Play tapes.]

Thank you for the opportunity to be here.

Mail Message

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From:
To: Sandy Breland
Date: Tuesday - September 6, 2005 9:48 PM
Subject: Just a Note of Thanks
 Mime.822 (2466 bytes) [\[View\]](#) [\[Save As\]](#)

To you and the staff at WWL for doing such a fantastic job of reporting the stories and events following Katrina. I am a south Louisiana transplant in Dallas as are many, many of my friends. And without your reporting my New Orleans relatives (who fled to numerous cities) and I would have been without critical and valuable information. Indeed, know that even while power was lost in New Orleans and Baton Rouge untold numbers were able to get important information about the status of the disaster by streaming your video on the internet and then talking to our families via the sporadic cell service. The national news coverage paled in comparison to the detailed information and meaningful local coverage your team provided around the clock under the most difficult of circumstances.

So, once again, thanks to you and WWL and WWL.com for broadcasting tirelessly for New Orleans and her citizens in our time of need.

Regards,

Dallas, Texas 75201

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 4:48 PM

To: ameadows@belo.com

Subject: Fwd: Thanks to WWL

> Amy:

>

> I would like to commend Belo for their efforts to
> assist WWL employees and their families. I must
> comment the employees of WWL. As a former resident
> of
> New Orleans who still has a tremendous amount of
> family and friends in the area I have constantly
> been
> monitoring the WWL site. I was only recently able
> to
> reach family who evaluated to Hattiesburg, MS and
> they
> too have been receiving their news from a radio
> broadcast of WWL.

>

> The dedication of your staff to stay on air even
> after
> having to relocate to Baton Rouge has been a

sacrifice

> I know many more like me appreciate. National news
> coverage has been focusing primarily on the heart of
> New Orleans. But there are millions of others who
> made their home in the many towns that surround the
> city itself and make up Greater New Orleans. It is
> on WWL that you can find information about these
> surrounding areas. As a local station, they
> understand the true picture of the city and its wide
> variety of residents.

>

> Belo should be extremely proud of the hard working
> people ... I know many viewers are as we continue to
> closely monitor the situation and reach loved
> ones!!!

>

> Regards,

>

>

>


>

>

Mail Message

BELO

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From:
To: Sandy Breland
Date: Monday - September 5, 2005 10:08 PM
Subject: Thank you all
 Mime.822 (2705 bytes) [\[View\]](#) [\[Save As\]](#)

I cannot adequately express my admiration and respect for you and your team for the work you have done throughout this disaster. I began watching your station online before the hurricane even hit. Your team has been nothing short of superhuman... and yet so basically human.

So many folks around the world have a deep, soft spot in their hearts for New Orleans (I among them), and your team's clear love of their city came shining through, even as they found their own lives and own homes turned upside down.

Your stories, large and small, your dispensing of RELIABLE information and insights when none was seemingly available from our federal and even many state officials, should earn you and your staff the very highest of journalistic honors.

But even that will never be enough for the work you've done.

I continue to be moved by the stories you uncover. I think of your cameraman (I cannot recall his name) who simply went out to the levee and shot footage of survivors, just letting folks speak while barely being able to contain his own grief.


Thank you, again. You are as much heroes as those who rescue survivors from rooftops. Communication is critical during such calamities (as proven by this event), and you and your team have gone above and beyond.

Evanston, IL 60202

Mail Message

BELO

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From:
To: Sandy Breland, Mike Schaefer, Mark Swinney, Chris Slaughter, x.smtp."tbordelon@wwltv.com"
Date: Friday - September 9, 2005 8:37 PM
Subject: Your staff, coverage of H. Katrina and observations
 Mime.822 (3770 bytes) [\[View\]](#) [\[Save As\]](#)

Just wanted to say I have watched your program almost since the hurricane blew through. I have found your coverage uplifting and encouraging on so many levels, finding good where ever you could find it, even when it was thin pickings for a while. Your people have shown an awesome amount of restraint, falling to fall victim to rumor, criticism, and finger pointing. You reported, updated, and informed all everything you could find that directed others to hope, to resurrect, to carry on and thanked those who were giving everything they had to the efforts to save, rebuild and just in general, show the people of your area how strong you could be. I know most of your staff has suffered deprivations, houses flooded or non existant, concern for their families, pets and loved ones. I know more than one worked and trudged on despite their own personal tragedies. I want to thank you, from the heart of Tennessee and to let you know, you, your communities and your people are being prayed for here. Our hearts and donations of food, water, people to assist and homes for your people displaced have poured out to you in your time of need. Please know we will make any you send us welcome, till they can return to their homes. We will comfort them and pray for them until your community is restored and your people can return! God bless and keep you to fight another day! Keep on putting one foot in front of the other! You are a source of comfort, promise, and sanity in a sea of back biting, finger pointing, depravity and chaos. Hold your heads high, you are making a difference in your community and to those of us following you from far away! I pray blessings for all of you and your communities!
Sincerely,

Bristol, Tennessee
"A good place to live!"

Click here to donate to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.
<http://store.yahoo.com/redcross-donate3/>

Here is more (from general manager in Beaumont - - kfdm)

Peter, I don't mean to add to your email stack, but I'm going to send you a couple of these kinds of notes to let you and the folks at WWL how well their coverage is being received here in our market.

Larry

From: .
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 4:25 PM
To: larryb@kfdm.com

9/2/2005

Subject: Channel 21 Coverage

KUDUS to you and your organization for making it possible for WWL TV to continue to serve their base (and us) on Channel 21...we have nearly stopped watching other channels for hurricans news because WWLTV is so good! Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Orange TX


.....
From:
To: <hdtv@kfdm.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 4:30 PM
Subject: WWL

> I would like to thank you for broadcasting WWL TV of New Orleans on
> digital
> 6.2. I have family in my home from New Orleans and they have enjoyed
> keeping
> updated more so than with CNN, MSNBC or FOX News.
>
>
> Orange, Texas 77630
>

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From:
To: Sandy Breland, Mike Schaefer, Mark Swinney, Chris Slaughter, x.smtp."tbordelon@wwltv.com"
Date: Sunday - September 4, 2005 9:49 PM
Subject: Storm Coverage
 [TEXT.htm \(871 bytes\)](#) [\[View\]](#) [\[Open\]](#) [\[Save As\]](#)
[Mime.822 \(3637 bytes\)](#) [\[View\]](#) [\[Save As\]](#)

I know the times have been tough for all WWL employees, but thank you for being so dedicated to your job and keeping us New Orleanians updated on the storm. What a terrible tragedy.

This extended family of 20 has spent the last week huddled up by the computer in Texas watching your continuous coverage. We have especially been moved by the coverage provided by Lee Zurik. He has helped us deal with this awful event by his honesty, insight, and passion for our city. I have cried, laughed, and been inspired about the future after watchingg his coverage.

Thank you WWL. You are true New Orleanians!

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WWL Carriage on Other Multicast Channels

Market	Multicast Channel
Albany, New York	WRGB
Austin, Texas	KVUE
Beaumont, Texas	KFDM
Beckley / Bluefield / Oak Hill, West Virginia	WVNS
Birmingham, Alabama	WBMA
Boston, Massachusetts	WHDH
Chicago, Illinois	WCIU
College Station, Texas	KAMU
Dallas, Texas	WFAA
Detroit, Michigan	WDIV
Detroit, Michigan	WDWB
Eastern Shore of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia	WBOC
Hartford / New Haven, Connecticut	WFSB
Houston, Texas	KHOU
La Crosse / Eau Claire, Wisconsin	WQOW
Lubbock, Texas	KJTV
Mankato, Minnesota	KEYC
Miami, Florida	WPLG
Minneapolis / St. Paul, Minnesota	KSTP
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	KFOR
Orlando, Florida	WKMG
Paducah / Cape Girardeau / Harrisburg, Illinois	WSIL
Panama City, Florida	WJHG
Portland, Oregon	KGW
Richmond, Virginia	WTVR
Rochester, New York	WXXI
Salt Lake City, Utah	KTVX
San Antonio, Texas	KENS
Sarasota, Florida	WWSB
Shreveport, Louisiana	KTBS
Springfield / Holyoke, Massachusetts	WSHM
Springfield / Holyoke, Massachusetts	WWLP
Syracuse, New York	WTVH
West Palm Beach, Florida	WPEC

Internet Carriage

cbsnews.com / yahoo.com

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Atlanta, Georgia**

**Comments of Fred Young
Vice-President for News
Hearst-Argyle Television Inc.**

September 15, 2005

Good morning. My name is Fred Young, and I am the Senior Vice-President of News for Hearst-Argyle Television, Inc. Hearst-Argyle owns or manages 28 local broadcast television stations throughout the country. The most critical public service our stations provide is the broadcast of local emergency and public safety information. So I am honored today to share with you how our television stations in New Orleans, Jackson and Orlando joined together to provide a virtual "information lifeline" to Gulf Coast residents before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina.

The Katrina warnings came early and often at WDSU-TV, our NBC affiliated station in New Orleans. As the storm approached the mainland on Saturday and Sunday, we were in constant contact with local law enforcement officials in every affected Parish, with national weather service officials, and with the mayor of New Orleans (who addressed our viewers three times on Saturday). Our newscasts repeatedly relayed critical emergency preparedness information, including the projected path and impact of

the storm, the pressing need for all persons to evacuate the city, and the safest places to seek shelter.

Starting at 5 a.m. Saturday morning, we were broadcasting nothing but news and weather—with accompanying warnings, evacuation routes, detailed weather coverage and on-the-spot reporting throughout our viewing area. By 5 o'clock Saturday afternoon, WDSU-TV was operating a Hurricane hotline inside the studio. Station employees and community volunteers came in to answer telephone calls from anxious residents asking where to go, how to get there, and how to prepare for the worst. We, and our colleagues at other broadcast stations, are the “first informers” in times of local emergencies and natural disasters.

There were no NASCAR races on WDSU-TV that weekend. No sitcoms. No movies. No golf. WDSU-TV allocated every minute of the broadcast day to weather warnings, flood information, evacuation information, relief information and interviews with emergency management personnel.

On Monday morning, at the height of the storm, our transmitter took on water and shut down. Our staff, though, did not shut down. Within 45 minutes, we were streaming continuous news coverage to viewers on WDSU-TV's web site and offering it to any other station available. We evacuated much of our staffs to another Hearst-Argyle station—WAPT-TV in Jackson, Mississippi—where our combined staffs worked tirelessly (and without electricity or running water) to develop comprehensive and

continuous hurricane coverage that was broadcast over-the-air from WAPT-TV, Jackson and also streamed over the Internet from our station in Orlando, WESH-TV. (To date, more than 25 million page views have been recorded on our web site.)

Our efforts to keep our viewers informed did not come without personal risk and loss to our staff. The final WDSU-TV personnel evacuated our building on Tuesday morning after the levees broke. Our news crews, however, remained behind to cover the story. Some were stranded on a rooftop for two days. Others were stranded in a hospital where the doors were locked to protect patients against looters and rising floodwaters. Many of the staff members at WDSU-TV and WAPT-TV—all of whom have now been accounted for—suffered great loss, including the loss of their homes, their cars, and innumerable personal possessions. We are eternally grateful for their tireless public service during these trying times.

After the storm subsided, we continued to provide critical relief and recovery information to our viewers—even to those who had been displaced to different cities. We quickly returned to the air in New Orleans thanks to WPXL-TV, the local PAX station, which allowed WDSU-TV to broadcast hurricane coverage and relief information throughout the New Orleans market. We also began broadcasting to residents in Houston on KPXB-TV, another PAX station and to residents in Baton Rouge on WBTR, a local independent station. And in Jackson and Monroe, Louisiana we are broadcasting on local Time Warner Cable channels and on DirecTV and the DISH network. WDSU-TV is producing 17 hours of news a day from Orlando and Jackson, with photographers and

reporters on location in New Orleans. Our company has retained the services of a private security firm to protect our staff members as they go about gathering and reporting public safety information.

As a local broadcaster with 40-plus years in the business, I am disappointed when the critical role the broadcast industry plays in times of natural disaster may not be fully understood by those who advocate premature return of the analog spectrum to the government. Fast forward to a time we are broadcasting in digital with multiple—not just one, but multiple—streams of news and public safety information to our viewers around the clock. It is essential that the TV sets of all viewers be able to receive this information. We have, and always will, work successfully with public officials and first responders to assist in rescue, relief, and recovery efforts—making sure emergency information flows freely between public safety officials and our viewers. Our role in communicating information during a disaster reveals, time and time again, just how critical it is that *all viewers*—not just those who can afford to pay for television service—have access to the program content of local broadcast stations.

Given the critical role broadcasters play as “first informers” in times of emergencies, the private sector and government must work together to strengthen the broadcast media’s transmission and reception infrastructure. Hearst-Argyle CEO David Barrett serves as chairman of the Media Security and Reliability Council, an advisory group formed by the Commission after September 11 to develop a strategy for securing and sustaining the nation’s broadcast, cable, and satellite facilities system during terrorist

attacks and natural disasters. We look forward to continuing that effort to mitigate the impact on the public of future disasters.

I'll close by praising Norman Robinson, the longtime anchor of WDSU. As the flood waters rose, Norman paced the halls of our station in Jackson, weeping over the well-being of his 8-year old granddaughter who was among those missing in New Orleans. Moments later, he would pull himself together, walk into the studio and present the news to the people of New Orleans. His heartache was not visible to those watching. Fortunately, the beautiful young granddaughter was found alive and well, and Norman continues to be a comforting and confident voice of information and support for the people of New Orleans still reeling and recovering from their own losses.

Thank you again, Members of the Commission, for allowing me the honor to speak to you today on behalf of Heart-Argyle and its continuing efforts to provide the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region with critical public safety and public service information.
