

John L. Nau, III
ACHP Council Meeting
Chairman's Award Presentation
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It is now time to present the Chairman's Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation.

Today it is our pleasure to present the award to the Federal Communications Commission for its successful effort to conform in an exemplary manner to the review process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

This is particularly significant in regard to the creation of innovative electronic systems to support the activities covered under the terms of the nationwide Programmatic Agreement executed for wireless telecommunications facilities.

This may seem an unusual recognition to some in the preservation community. We know that cell towers are ubiquitous and sometimes intrude upon historic settings. However, cell towers and associated telecommunications systems are essential to contemporary society.

Under Section 106, an opportunity is afforded to stakeholders to engage consulting parties and thoughtfully and appropriately attempt to offset adverse effects. In this regard, the FCC is to be complimented as it has worked closely with the telecommunications industry to formalize a review process that is balanced and predictable.

This award suggestion came from Javier Marques, our ACHP counsel, and Charlene Vaughn, Assistant Director for Federal Permitting, Licensing, and Assistance, both of whom know a challenging Section 106 effort when they encounter one. Both worked with the FCC in helping create the nationwide agreement, and I'd like to recognize their efforts.

The FCC's efforts include:

- Putting in place a Programmatic Agreement regarding the collocation of wireless antennae on existing towers or structures. By streamlining the Section 106 process for collocations, the Programmatic Agreement seeks to reduce the need for the construction of new towers and therefore limit impacts on historic properties.
- Executing a much broader 2004 nationwide Programmatic Agreement to expand oversight for tower site placement.
- As part of its implementation, the FCC created innovative technological filing systems that expedite reviews and markedly improve involvement of stakeholders, most notably Indian tribes. Accomplishments in this regard include the FCC's creation and management of the Tower Construction Notification System, perhaps the most sophisticated system in operation within the federal government to ensure that relevant tribes are routinely notified about FCC undertakings of interest to them.
- The development of the Electronic Section 106 System, that automates and expedites communications among consulting parties, is also an innovative system that greatly enhances the

coordination and transparency of Section 106 reviews. Although in its early stages, E-106 filing has the potential to serve as a prototype for other federal agencies, including the ACHP.

The ACHP also applauds the FCC's decision to maintain a full-time preservation professional to deal with its Section 106 issues and assist stakeholders with implementing the terms of the nationwide agreement.

Considering the likelihood of FCC coordinating its Section 106 compliance in a manner that will intersect with various Recovery Act telecommunications projects involving other agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Rural Utilities Service, and the Department of Commerce, the meritorious efforts of the FCC are a welcome and encouraging preface to future federal actions.

So, for improving Section 106 compliance for wireless communications facilities, I am delighted that Michael J. Copps, acting chairman, is with us today to accept this award on behalf of the FCC.