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NOTE: Slide 1 (Overview on Emergency Communications - Opening Slide)

Good Morning. I would like to thank Dick Wiley for the invitation to join you this morning. It is a pleasure to be with you to present an Overview on Emergency Communications and discuss some of what we are working on at the Federal Communications Commission's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau.

Protecting the American Public and this country is something that we must do together, working toward a common goal of putting policies, guidelines and rules in place that further strengthen our response capabilities in the face of any type of disaster, terrorist attack or public health emergency.

I believe that partnering with the public safety community, other government agencies and the communication's industry is the best way to protect our country's communications infrastructure.

NOTE: Slide 2 (Bureau's Mission)

I accepted the position as Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau with a purpose and vision in mind -- to help shape and advance initiatives that provide the public safety community with the tools they need to do their jobs and save lives. This goes to the heart of the Bureau's mission as set forth in the Communications Act of 1934: "To Promote Safety of Life and Property Through the use of wire and radio communications."

NOTE: Slide 3 (PSHSB Structure)

I'd like to start today by providing you with information on the organizational structure of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau.

In response to the horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Katrina in the Nation's Southeast region, FCC Chairman Kevin Martin led the FCC in the creation of our Bureau to ensure that the Commission would have the capacity to take swift, coordinated and comprehensive actions in the event of a regional, national or international incident.

The Bureau's structure consists of my office and three divisions: Policy; Public Communications Outreach and Operations, and Communications Systems Analysis.

The Policy Division drafts, develops, and administers regulations and policies, including those pertaining to 911/Enhanced 911 (E911) services, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), operability and interoperability for public safety communications, communications infrastructure protection, as well as network security and reliability.

The Policy Division also handles the licensing of public safety spectrum for state and local governments, municipal and volunteer first responder organizations, and health care facilities at the Bureau's field office in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. In the first 15 months since the Bureau was formed, we've renewed the licenses of more than 10,000 public safety organizations nationwide.

The Public Communications Outreach & Operations Division takes a lead role in coordinating the Commission's emergency response procedures and operations. The Division coordinates the Commission's public safety, homeland security, national security, disaster management and related functions on a day-to-day basis.

To accomplish this, the Bureau staffs a 24/7 Communications and Crisis Management Center. This Center serves as a central point of contact for the public and private sectors to coordinate with the Commission during crisis situations.

And, the Communications Systems Analysis Division oversees and analyzes network outage reports submitted by the communications industry to identify trends in network disruptions and delays. The Division also works with the communications industry to develop and implement improvements that help ensure the reliability, redundancy and security of the Nation's communications infrastructure.

NOTE: Slide 4 (PSHSB Priorities)

I would now like to discuss the Commission's priorities in the areas of Emergency Preparedness and Response, Public Safety Communications, Legislative Tasks and Outreach.

I will provide you with brief updates on the creation of a nationwide interoperable broadband network for public safety and new wireless Enhanced 911 location accuracy requirements, among other initiatives. We will also discuss the work of two important advisory committees and will close with a review of the Bureau's outreach and clearinghouse efforts.

NOTE: Slide 5 (Emergency Preparedness and Response)

An emerging and effective concept in the area of emergency preparedness, and one that is gaining momentum at all levels of government, is the design and implementation of an “All Hazards Approach” in response to emergencies and disasters.

This philosophy looks at existing government and community resources and builds on those assets to ensure that comprehensive, robust and effective response capabilities are put in place. This certainly is a concept that we are putting into action at the FCC and in our Bureau as we find new ways to build on existing resources and tap into the knowledge and expertise of FCC staff.

Much of what we do in this area is set forth under the National Response Framework in coordination with our federal, state, tribal and local partners. We partner to make sure that the communications needs of first responders are met so that they can do their jobs effectively.

NOTE: Slide 6 (Bureau Takes Lead Role in Disaster Response)

To expand on this, our Bureau takes the lead role for the FCC in Disaster Response. When the federal government declares a state of emergency in a state or region, we immediately activate a Senior-Level Task Force to direct and oversee the Commission's actions.

In emergencies, one of our top priorities is to ensure that the communications industry has access to the impacted area to assess and repair their communications networks. As part of this effort, we provide Special Temporary Authority and waivers to carriers to provide emergency communications and assets to state and local governments, first responders, hospitals and others in the community to perform emergency response functions.

And, under the Federal Response Plan and, specifically, Emergency Support Function-2 (or ESF-2), the Commission reaches out to the communications industry during disasters, emergencies or extraordinary times and deploys national and field-level teams to impacted areas to obtain situation reports and analyze communications requests.

Our goal is to ensure that we effectively meet the communications needs of first responders and coordinate our response efforts at all levels of government.

These efforts enable the Commission to provide situational updates and other important information to the public during, and in the aftermath, of the emergency.

NOTE: Slide 7 (Public Safety Communications)

This leads me to one of the most critical missions of the FCC, the development and implementation of policies, rules and initiatives that help advance public safety communications throughout America.

I would like to highlight several timely spectrum management issues and provide an update on Enhanced 911 Service, the Nation's Emergency Alert System and the work of two advisory committees created respectively to address legislative mandates as set forth under the WARN Act and the 9/11 Commission Act.

NOTE: Slide 8 (Spectrum Management - 700 MHz Band)

Earlier this year the Commission adopted a 700 MHz band rulemaking that sets forth the regulatory framework for the creation of a nationwide, interoperable, broadband communications network for public safety.

This initiative will be supported by a public/private partnership that will bring together the Public Safety Broadband Licensee, and the eventual winner of the commercial 'D' Block spectrum in the upper 700 MHz Band.

The commercial auction for the 700 MHz spectrum, which will commence on January 24, 2008, is being conducted as part of the digital television transition, and will free up what is considered to be 'beach front spectrum' for public safety's use.

To ensure that the broad interests of public safety are represented as part of this endeavor, the Commission approved the Public Safety Spectrum Trust Corporation to serve as the Public Safety Broadband Licensee.

This licensee will negotiate with the Commercial 'D' Block licensee, culminating in a Network Sharing Agreement that will be submitted to the Commission for approval.

The network will be built to public safety specifications, and keep pace with the commercial networks' state-of-the-art technologies. In this respect, public safety will have access to a number of applications including off-the-shelf radios and newly designed equipment at more affordable prices.

The commercial licensee will support the cost of building this nationwide network, which will ultimately allow for the roll-out of Next Generation voice and data services to the Nation's public safety community and help enable first responders to better deliver services to people in emergencies.

NOTE: Slide 9 (Spectrum Management - 800 MHz Rebanding)

On another important spectrum management issue, I'd like to highlight the significant progress that has been made in the 800 MHz rebanding process for public safety. We are working with Sprint, manufacturers, public safety and the Transition Administrator to accelerate negotiations, planning and implementation of new 800 MHz band plans for public safety organizations by the 36-month transition deadline of June 26, 2008.

The Transition Administrator has been leading regional meetings around the country and they have been very effective in moving the process forward.

In addition, we've clarified what Sprint is expected to pay as part of public safety's transition in the band to help reduce radio interference issues for first responders using the spectrum.

In addition to new benchmarks that require Sprint to vacate portions of the 800 MHz band, the Commission has taken this aspect of the transition process further by ordering Sprint to clear the spectrum as public safety organizations request its use.

We've also made progress regarding border issues. We are working hard on negotiations with both Canada and Mexico so that we can move forward on rebanding in our Nation's border regions.

With respect to Canada, we've reached an agreement with them on a framework that allows us to proceed with rebanding in America's northern Border States. Based on this agreement, we issued a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on a specific Canadian border band plan proposal.

The comments are due this week and we will be reviewing them. We hope to have a final band plan for our northern Border States early next year. Negotiations with Mexico have also been productive and are ongoing.

NOTE: Slide 10 (Spectrum Management - Digital Television Transition)

The Digital Television Transition in America will be completed by February 17, 2009. This day is significant, because as a nation, we will leave analog television behind forever. Television Broadcasters will only deliver digital signals to televisions. And, as I noted earlier, it is also an important transition that will free up the spectrum in the 700 MHz band for the public/private partnership to build a nationwide, interoperable, broadband network for public safety.

Although approximately 85 percent of Americans have digital televisions or subscribe to cable or satellite services and will have to do nothing to receive digital broadcasts, we do not want anyone to be left in the dark as a result of this transition.

In our every day lives it is easy to take for granted the value of the television to provide us with access to the latest news, including emergency alerts and warnings.

To preserve access to this important information, it is essential that the American Public be aware of the conversion to digital television and take steps to ensure that their televisions will continue to work after the deadline.

To help ensure this, the Commission has initiated a full-court press on public education and awareness. We are requiring retailers to include point-of-sale labeling on analog-only televisions that will not work without a converter box after the transition.

We are also holding regional workshops to reach people living in rural areas of the nation, as well as those whose first language is other than English who may be disproportionately affected by the change from analog to digital television broadcast signals in 2009.

NOTE: Slide 11 (Wireless Enhanced 911 Service)

On another important public safety initiative, the Commission recently adopted an Order that requires wireless carriers to meet 911-caller location information at the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) level.

Today, people are relying more than ever on cell phones for their calls, including calls to 911. The advances in wireless technology allow us to call for help more quickly and from more remote places than ever before.

Our goal is to ensure that the American Public receives the maximum benefits of wireless enhanced 911 service and they have reasonable assurances from the carriers that the information provided to public safety on their whereabouts during a 911 call is meaningful and drills down to a more precise location so that help can get to them as soon as possible.

To put this in perspective, providing location accuracy information on a multi-state or statewide basis does not provide public safety with the information it needs to do its job effectively.

And, as Chairman Martin has said in the past, and I certainly agree, meeting location accuracy standards on average in the entire state of New York by providing enhanced 911 capability in Manhattan does not help first responders in Buffalo.

The new requirements tackle this issue head-on and will hold wireless carriers accountable for the reliability and accuracy of meaningful caller location information.

Wireless carriers will have five years to come into compliance and will be required to meet interim, annual benchmarks along the way to ensure that they have appropriate policies, protocols and facilities in place to measure the accuracy of enhanced caller location information. They will essentially be required to provide data on caller location information to PSAPs at their service area level by the compliance deadline of September 11, 2012.

Carriers are being provided sufficient time to achieve compliance, while also meeting benchmarks leading to appreciable and swift improvements to E911 service that will result from compliance at the appropriate geographical area defined in the benchmarks in the first, third and fifth year of implementation of the requirements.

In order to ensure that carriers are making progress in this area, basic requirements include meeting location accuracy measurements at the:

- “Economic Area” level by 2008;
- “Metropolitan Statistical Area” and “Rural Service Area” levels by 2010; and
- PSAP level by the 2012 compliance deadline.

We are committed to working with the wireless carriers, PSAPs and the public safety community to ensure that any issues that arise are addressed and progress is being achieved.

NOTE: Slide 12 (Emergency Alert System)

EAS is a vital part of this Nation's emergency preparedness and response efforts and we must do everything we can to move this system forward with the digital technology that we are beginning to see.

Our Number one priority in this area is to set policies that will advance Next Generation EAS so that Americans continue to receive timely and accurate alerts, warnings and critical information regarding impending disasters and other emergencies as technologies and services evolve.

And, not just in the case of national warnings. Thousands of EAS messages are sent out by States and localities each year and those efforts have undoubtedly saved lives. The Commission recently took significant steps to encourage the use of EAS by state governors.

Next Generation EAS promises to provide better integration of state-of-the-art digital message and delivery systems nationwide, as well as a wide variety of information designed to better assist Americans during emergencies.

For example, when we mention Next Generation EAS, we're talking about a technological transformation that will make it possible to simultaneously transmit emergency warnings and information in English as well as a host of other languages.

This digital technology will also allow messages to be geographically targeted to listeners wherever they live in the broadcaster's service area – including targeted messages to people with disabilities.

These are just some of the improvements that Next Generation EAS makes possible, and that's why moving to the next level is so important.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is now in the process of developing and implementing a Common Alert Protocol/ Next Generation EAS system that will be capable of doing what I have described for you. States are also hard at work designing upgrades to their EAS delivery systems, including efforts to move to CAP-formatting for all messages.

In the meantime, the Commission issued its Order setting forth new policies and rules for EAS participants earlier this year, and announced comment dates for its Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on November 2, 2007. The Bureau is working extensively with broadcasters, community leaders and advocacy groups to develop potential solutions to address the complex issues presented by multi-lingual messaging under the EAS system.

This work is ongoing and we expect to advance rulemakings in this area in the coming months.

NOTE: Slide 13 (Advisory Committees)

I'd now like to provide you with an update on two federal advisory committees that were established by the Commission to address public safety communications issues.

The first is the Commercial Mobile Service Alert Advisory Committee which was established by the Commission under the Warning Alert and Response Network Act (WARN ACT) in December 2006 to study and develop recommendations regarding technical standards for the voluntary transmission of alerts and warnings via cell phones by carriers.

We received the Committee's recommendations on October 12th and have since drafted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that is currently on circulation at the FCC and expected to be considered by the Commission in the very near future. Our goal is to adopt technical standards for commercial wireless carriers to voluntarily transmit alerts by next spring.

This will be followed by additional work at the Commission to adopt implementation requirements by August 2008.

In the end, we anticipate that wireless carriers will inform the Commission of whether they intend to participate in the system by next fall.

Additionally, the FCC and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has established the Joint Advisory Committee on Communications Capabilities of Emergency Medical and Public Health Care Facilities under the 9/11 Commission Act.

This 25-member committee is charged with assessing the communications capabilities and needs of hospitals, emergency medical organizations and the public health community. The committee is tasked with providing a report to Congress addressing the integration of emerging communications services and systems used by the health care and public health sectors.

This committee, Chaired by AT&T, has held two meetings thus far to pull together information and dissect the issues, with the intent of presenting its report to Congress by February 2008.

NOTE: Slide 14 (Outreach)

Now that I've highlighted our key initiatives, I'd like to touch on the Bureau's Outreach mission and activities.

We promote emergency communications preparedness through outreach, exercise planning and training, and field deployment.

The Bureau serves as a clearinghouse for public safety and homeland security information. Our clearinghouse focuses on the development of dedicated web pages that highlight 'best practices' in emergency communications for first responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

We are hopeful that first responders and health care facilities will be able to utilize this emergency communications 'Clearinghouse' information to further improve their preparedness plans and training programs in response to natural and man-made disasters.

For more information on our ‘Clearinghouse’ and guidance in emergency communications, please visit the Commission web site at www.fcc.gov – go to the ‘Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau’ web page and click on ‘Clearinghouse.’

Hosting public safety-related summits is another aspect of our outreach and clearinghouse mission. We've hosted summits on emergency communications, spectrum management and interoperable communications for first responders and the health care sector.

We believe that these summits will contribute to an enhanced dialogue on important issues and improve emergency preparedness and information-sharing capabilities among first responders, the communications industry and government. For more information on these summits, please visit the FCC web site and click on “PSHSB Events.”

We invite each of you to attend future summits and would welcome your interest and participation.

Finally, I want to highlight three important priority services for public safety that the Bureau continually promotes: the Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP), the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) and the Wireless Priority Service (WPS) programs.

In brief, TSP provides qualified organizations with assurance that if their communications circuits are damaged due to disasters or other disruptive events they will receive priority restoration or installation.

WPS subscribers receive priority access to wireless networks and GETS provides the same level of access for wireline communications.

These programs are highly effective. For example, in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, use of the WPS program resulted in call completion rates of approximately 95 percent for all calls made by participants in the program.

Our goal is to increase awareness and enrollment in these programs by public safety. For more information on TSP, WPS and GETS, please visit the FCC's web site and go our Bureau's web page and click on "Priority Service Programs."

Note: Slide 15 (Contact information - Closing Slide)

In closing, I am sure that we all agree that there is no greater calling than protecting our Nation from natural and man-made events, and responding quickly to meet the needs of our citizens in crisis.

When firefighters rush into burning buildings to save children, when police officers arrive on the scene of mass casualty events or when public health officials sweep into communities to identify the origin of disease outbreaks that have paralyzed regions, it is absolutely imperative that they have complete information on these situations and are then able to communicate effectively with one another in these critical situations.

You can rest assured, the FCC and our Bureau are committed to helping first responders in every community across America meet the communications challenges they face.

It has been a pleasure being with you today and I wish each of you the very best in the future. Thank you.