

NIST Seeks Comments to Help Build Public Safety Communications Network

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is seeking advice on possible key features of a new broadband communications network for the nation's emergency services agencies. The network will use a portion of the 700 megahertz (MHz) radio frequency spectrum.

In a Sept. 12, 2011, *Federal Register* notice, NIST proposed four characteristics critical to the success of the future network—resiliency, reliability and availability, security, and affordability and compatibility with commercial systems—and asked for comments, suggestions and other input to help realize them. Among other things, NIST seeks to understand the extent to which these features and requirements can be satisfied, either with existing technology or with technology that could become available in the relatively near future.

This request for information coincides with the ongoing development of a demonstration testbed of the network by the joint NIST-National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program. The testbed will provide a common site for manufacturers, carriers and public safety agencies to evaluate advanced broadband communications equipment and software tailored specifically to the needs of emergency first responders.

Comments are requested by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Oct. 12, 2011, to Dereck Orr at dereck.orr@nist.gov. The complete *Federal Register* notice, detailing the four key features and the specific traits desired for achieving each one, may be retrieved from www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/retrieve.html. Select "2011 Federal Register, Vol. 76" and then enter "56165" in the search box.

The PSCR program is a partnership of the NIST Law Enforcement Standards Office and NTIA's Institute for Telecommunication Sciences. PSCR provides objective technical support—research, development, testing and evaluation—in order to foster nationwide public safety communications interoperability. More information is available on the [PSCR web site](http://www.pscr.gov) at www.pscr.gov.

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