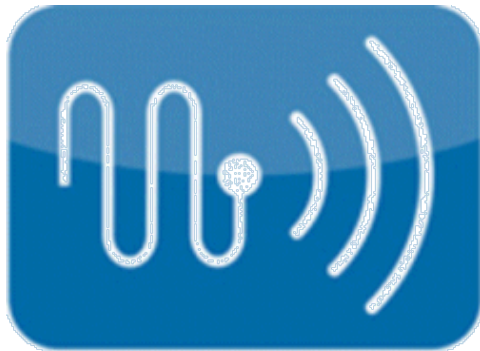




Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) Program Plans 700 MHz Broadband Demonstration Network



PSCR

In June 2009, portions of spectrum in the 700 MHz band were shifted from television to public safety as all full-service television stations shut off analog transmission and began to transmit in digital format, vacating a portion of 700 MHz spectrum for public safety's use. Since that transition, public safety agencies are eager to operate in the 700 MHz spectrum, particularly as that spectrum can provide public safety access to broadband applications that will enhance the protection of lives and property.

The FCC is developing a national broadband plan, to be released in February 2010, which will outline how 700 MHz spectrum activities will move forward. While this is in progress, several public safety jurisdictions at the city, county, and state level have already filed waiver requests with the FCC for early deployment of their own 700 MHz broadband networks.

A unified broadband system would allow public safety agencies to communicate with nationwide roaming and enhanced interoperability; however, there are currently no government or independent laboratory facilities in the United States to test and demonstrate the public safety specific behaviors of this yet-to-be-deployed 700 MHz network and the applications that could run on top of it. To address this critical gap, the Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program, a program of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), will begin building a Public Safety Broadband

Demonstration Network to provide manufacturers with a site for early deployment of their systems, an opportunity to evaluate them in a multi-vendor environment, and create integration opportunities for commercial service providers.

"The demonstration of these new technologies, implementations, and services is a critical step in successfully deploying the next generation of mission-critical systems," says Dereck Orr, PSCR program manager. "This is an excellent opportunity for NIST and the PSCR to leverage our skills and assets to ensure the successful adoption and deployment of a new, nationwide communications system for public safety."

A national broadband network could offer public safety groups around the country access to advanced communications technologies including video, mapping, and GPS applications, and more. The new system will provide a common demonstration site for manufacturers, carriers, and public safety agencies to test and evaluate advanced broadband communications equipment and software tailored specifically to the needs of emergency first responders. Emergency responders, vendors, carriers, academia, and other pertinent stakeholders also will be able to access the demonstration network.

This demonstration network is currently in the preliminary planning stages and is expected to go live in mid-2010. Interested industry and public safety representatives can contact Orr at (303) 497-5400, dereck.orr@nist.gov, or Jeff Bratcher at (303) 497-4610, jbratcher@its.bldrdoc.gov, for information on how to get involved.

The PSCR program is a partnership of the NIST Office of Law Enforcement Standards and the NTIA's Institute for Telecommunication Sciences (NTIA ITS). 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 at www.pscr.gov.

NPSTC is a federation of organizations whose mission is to improve public safety communications and interoperability through collaborative leadership.