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Q&A: 700 MHz Demo Broadband Network

February 03, 2010



In December, the federal Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program [announced](#) it will establish a demonstration 700 MHz broadband network for public safety by mid-2010. The network will be established at the PSCR facilities in Boulder, Colo. *MissionCritical Communications* interviewed Dereck Orr, PSCR program manager, about the new network.

MCC: What will be the main goal of the network?

Orr: Our goal is to test and demonstrate the behaviors of the 700 MHz network, including the applications that could run on top of it. We'll demonstrate interoperability over the network, as well as provide a hands-on experience for participants to see how these 700 MHz broadband systems will function. Features and system performance that commercial carriers may not be testing but are of importance to public safety will also be a primary area of evaluation. This includes multicast/broadcast capabilities, priority access, pre-emption, short message service (SMS) and voice. Public-safety user education is a key objective of this project.

MCC: What's the next step for the network?

Orr: We're still in the planning phase. Our next step is to get the stakeholders — first responders, vendors, carriers and academia — together and talk specifically about how

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to move forward and what the specific focus and goals of the demonstration network will be.

MCC: Will public-safety licensees be involved, and if so, how?

Orr: Public-safety practitioners will be involved from the start. One of the main goals of the network is to allow the public-safety community to have access and see how this new equipment will work. We'd like them to see and analyze test cases, as well as run specific scenarios.

MCC: Do you have interest from vendors in the demo network?

Orr: Yes, we have seen significant interest from a number of vendors and carriers.

MCC: Are there any requirements for a company or agency to participate?

Orr: This information will be released at a later date.

MCC: Will recommendations from the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) broadband task group be incorporated?

Orr: PSCR actively participated with NPSTC in the creation of two documents that are directly applicable to broadband use in the 700 MHz spectrum. The documents include the public-safety 700 MHz broadband statement of requirements published in November 2007 and the more recent broadband task force final report published in September 2009. Recommendations from these documents will be used as applicable in the network.

MCC: Does the new demo network relate to the

[emergency response interoperability center \(ERIC\)](#) the FCC is planning as part of its national broadband plan ?

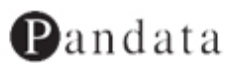
Orr: Though discussions of ERIC are still preliminary, we know that any information gleaned from this demonstration network would be of value to whatever interoperability center is established by the FCC. Our intention is to work closely with the FCC and our other federal partners to ensure that they can take advantage of the information this demonstration network will provide, and the information is useful and accessible.

MCC: Does the network involve Project Mesa, the combined United States and European broadband standards effort?

Orr: PSCR is no longer actively involved in Project MESA. The 700 MHz public-safety spectrum is specific to the United States, and therefore, has unique requirements that will be addressed by the project.

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