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Public Safety National Coordination Committee Chair Briefs Federal Communications Commission on Interoperability Standards

Washington, D.C. – Today at the Federal Communications Commission's monthly open meeting, Kathleen Wallman briefed the FCC on the achievements of the Public Safety National Coordination Committee (NCC) – a Federal Advisory Committee chartered in 1999. The NCC developed technical and operational standards for the new Public Safety 700 MHz Band -- laying the groundwork for nationwide public safety interoperable communications systems that will serve the communications needs of the nation's public safety agencies well into the 21st century.

During her presentation, Ms. Wallman described recommended narrowband standards that will ensure that police, firefighters, EMS and other public safety officials using 700 MHz radios can communicate with one another instantly on common voice and data channels anywhere in the United States. She also described the capabilities of the wideband data standard recommended by the NCC. This standard gives public safety agencies a common "pipeline," on 700 MHz wideband data interoperability channels, with which to implement such applications as sending mug shots and fingerprints to police vehicles, medical telemetry from EMS units to hospitals, blueprints of burning buildings to firefighters and video coverage of incidents to the incident commander.

The NCC, whose charted term expired on July 25, 2003, had over 300 members and reached its recommendations over a four-year period using consensus-based decision-making. It was guided by an eleven-member Steering Committee and used three subcommittees, each of them having several work groups, to develop its recommendations, many of them highly technical. The NCC worked with the Telecommunications Industries Association – an accredited standards developer – to develop interoperability technical standards that are open and non-proprietary.

The NCC represented a valuable information conduit between the public safety community and the Commission. That conduit will remain open as the National Public Safety Council – NPSTC – assumes responsibility for advising the Commission on interoperability and other public safety communications issues critical to the safety of life and property and to Homeland Security.

For more information on the work of the NCC visit: http://wireless.fcc.gov/publicsafety/ncc/

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