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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH 29 CO-SPONSORS AND OVER 50 TELECOMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS FOR THE INDIAN TELECOM TRAINING INITIATIVE

Washington, DC -- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announces a historic partnership with 29 co-sponsors and over 50 telecommunications experts for the Indian Telecom Training Initiative (ITTI 2000). ITTI 2000 is a four-day tribal leader telecommunications seminar that will be held September 25-28, 2000 at the Radisson Hotel, St. Paul, Minnesota. The FCC in cooperation with the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA), is hosting this historic training event to provide tribal leaders with the best and most up-to-date information available to help increase telecommunications services in native communities.

“We all must work to bridge the telecommunications divide separating tribal lands from the rest of America,” said FCC Chairman William E. Kennard. “All Americans should have equal access to the opportunities of the Information Age. This training event is an important step in the right direction.”

There is currently a telecommunications divide that exists between areas within Indian Country and the rest of the United States. Telephone penetration rates on tribal lands are extremely low. ITTI 2000 is one of the FCC’s initiatives aimed at bridging the telecommunications divide for tribal residents. The goal of this seminar is to provide tribal leaders with information to increase their options for finding telecommunications service solutions and to make decisions about telecommunications services for their tribal residents. ITTI 2000 will also identify programs and resources available to tribal residents and governments to assist their efforts and to secure access to and improve the affordability of telecommunications services on tribal reservations. Over 50 experts from U.S. government agencies, tribal communities, the private sector, and foundations will provide technical, financial and regulatory information to enhance the knowledge of tribal leaders about the telecommunications industry.

Co-sponsors include: ALLTEL, AT&T, BellSouth, CHR Solutions, CIRI, DAKOTA 2000, Ericsson Inc., Globalstar LP, Lucent Technologies, Lukas, Nace, Gutierrez & Sachs, Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce, National Indian Telecommunications Institute, National Science Foundation, National Telephone Cooperative Association, Northcoast Communications LLC, Public Service Telephone Company, QWEST, Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative, SBC Corporation, TACHYON, TAMSCO, Telecordia Technologies, Inc., U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. General Services Administration, U.S. Small Business Administration, Verizon, Western New Mexico Telephone, and Western Wireless Corporation.

For more information on the seminar and on the availability of scholarships for tribal governments please call (888) CALL FCC / (888) 225-5322; (717) 338-2888; or email the FCC at ITTI2000@fcc.gov. Additional information is available at the FCC Indian Initiatives website at: www.fcc.gov/indians

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