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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 TWO CONFERENCES TO ENHANCE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Washington, DC – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) announce two conferences targeted at increasing telecommunications services in Indian Country. These two conferences are:

ITTI –Industry Conference
“Doing Business In Indian Country”
June 3 – 5, 2001
Radisson Hotel
St. Paul, Minnesota

ITTI 2001
Indian Telecom Training Initiative
September 23-26, 2001
Bally’s Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

The ITTI-Industry Conference, “Doing Business in Indian Country”, is targeted to business leaders in the areas of marketing, finance, sales and business development in the telecommunications and utility industries. Speakers at the conference will include tribal government leaders, tribal elders and tribal college professors. This interactive conference will address industry’s questions on initiating contact and developing programs with tribal governments. It will cover tribal priorities and business opportunities in telecommunications, how to work with tribal governments, tribal sovereignty issues, and community protocols and concerns as they relate to building telecommunications and utilities infrastructure and markets. It will also cover special government programs related to telecommunications development such as the FCC’s tribal land bidding credit program. This conference is being offered in conjunction with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) and with program support from the National Indian Telecommunications Institute (NITI).

ITTI 2001 is the second annual conference aimed at providing information to American Indian Tribal Leaders and other interested parties to help increase telecommunications services to tribal residents. Last year’s conference was the largest gathering of Native American tribal representatives ever assembled to address telecommunications issues. The nearly 600 seminar participants included representatives of 135 tribes. In addition, the Exhibit Hall had 32 booths from 27 different business and government entities and over 35 different organizations helped to sponsor the event.

At ITTI 2001, the FCC and NECA will bring together their own experts, along with representatives from other federal government agencies, telecommunication companies and emerging technology firms, to inform tribal governments about various facets of telecommunications services and how different technologies, regulatory rules, and government programs can be used to benefit tribal communities. The seminar 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.

“Knowledge about telecommunications – in terms of infrastructure, equipment and service providers, and capital resources – is a key to economic development in Indian Country,” said Thomas Sugrue, Chief of the FCC’s Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. “The ITTI conferences provide unique opportunities for tribal governments and leaders from the telecommunications industry to meet and work together to increase access to telecommunications services to Native Americans.”

Robert Anderson, President of the National Exchange Carrier Association, stated, “NECA is pleased to be working with the FCC to produce these two conferences. All Americans should have access to telecommunications services and we believe these conferences allow all parties interested in enhancing telecommunications services in Indian Country to work together to achieve that goal.”

“The American Indian Higher Education Consortium is privileged to join the Federal Communications Commission in presenting the ITTI Industry Conference,” remarked Dr. Gerald Gipp, Director, American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). “This excellent educational program brings together American Indian elders and educators with the nations foremost CEO's and business leaders.”

The FCC and NECA welcome your interest for these very valuable conferences. For additional information or to provide support for this event, please call (888) CALL FCC (888)225-5322, and select option 2 after the recorded message; (717) 338-2888; or email the FCC at ITTI2001@fcc.gov.

For more information on these initiatives and other matters concerning telecommunications services for Indian Country, please visit our website: www.fcc.gov/indians.

FCC ITTI Seminar Contact: Kathy Garland at (717) 338-2888 or Nancy Plon at (202) 418-2899; TTY at (202) 418-8233.