

NRIC VI Accomplishments

March 14, 2003

The Network Reliability and Interoperability Council (NRIC), which has been in place since 1992, has a long history of providing the industry with a collaborative forum for developing and recommending best practices for the communications industry.

Following the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001, FCC Chairman Michael Powell chartered NRIC VI on January 7, 2002, to focus on homeland security. NRIC VI's priority initiatives are to ensure the security and sustainability of the nation's public telecommunications networks in the event of a terrorist attack.

On March 14, 2003, NRIC VI completed Phase I of its charter through the following initiatives:

- Expanded NRIC membership to include senior level executives from the wireline, wireless, cable, satellite and ISP industries, as well as manufacturers and representatives of key constituents.
- Established four new working groups to address homeland security: Physical Security, Cyber Security, Disaster Recovery and Public Safety.
- Adopted an Emergency Assistant Agreement, providing the means by which industry carriers and service providers can elect to enter agreements outlining how they will provide assistance to each other in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.
- Adopted emergency contact procedures and protocol to provide detailed contact information real-time to telecommunications leaders 24x7x365 days across more than 40 companies.
- In the area of Best Practices, NRIC identified and submitted for adoption:
 - 200 Physical Security Prevention Best Practices
 - 49 Physical Security Restoration Best Practices
 - 106 Cyber Security Prevention Best Practices
 - 45 Cyber Security Restoration Best Practices
 - 68 Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity Best Practices
 - 10 Public Safety Best Practices

The Best Practices are very diverse, ranging from recommending geographically diverse emergency operations centers, to what to do when an anonymous use or theft of service is discovered, to fuel tank usage as a back-up for commercial power failures, to audits and tests of surveillance systems.

In total, these Best Practices provide guidelines for service providers and equipment manufacturers to operate an extremely reliable and secure network which prevents and mitigates outages as well as reduces significantly the impact of other outages.

- Assessed the requirements of the public safety segment and provided recommendations to both telecom providers and public safety on how to work together and ensure better disaster preparedness
- Adopted a recommendation for Voluntary Outage Reporting by communications companies – wireline, wireless and ISPs – that use data networks. This trial will help evaluate the reliability of these networks in aggregate as well as lead to specific recommendations on areas for improvement. It will assist us in providing an assessment of the reliability of all telecom infrastructure and areas for improvement, if necessary.