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FCC MEDIA BUREAU MARKS ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Washington, D.C. - The Media Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is marking its first year anniversary. The Media Bureau commenced operations on March 25, 2002 as part of FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell's modernization plan promoting a more efficient, responsive, and effective organizational structure. The Bureau is responsible for policy and licensing programs for cable television, broadcast television and radio, and post-licensing direct broadcast satellite matters.

Bureau Chief W. Kenneth Ferree said, "I congratulate the staff on a job well done over the past year and on meeting the many challenges set before them. The converging technologies of the broadcasting and cable television industries increasingly raise policy issues that require expertise in both areas. The evolution of the Media Bureau reflects today's dynamic media marketplace."

Highlights of Media Bureau actions in during the last twelve months include facilitating the transition to digital television through several actions including:

- Notice of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs) involving a Broadcast Flag copy protection mechanism for digital broadcast signals; the "Plug and Play" agreement between the cable and consumer electronics industries; and the Second Periodic Review of the DTV transition;
- Special temporary authorizations and construction permits for full power DTV stations;
- Review of hundreds of TV stations' requests for time extensions to construct DTV facilities.

The Bureau also prepared a Report & Order adopting In Band – On Channel (IBOC), which will permit terrestrial radio to transition to digital, and authorization of the first digital radio stations.

In the area of Media Ownership, Media Bureau staff produced the 2002 Biennial Review of Broadcast Ownership Rules NPRM and is currently reviewing the more than 15,000 comments that have been filed in this record. Staff also produced eight papers in the Media Bureau Working Paper series as part of an effort to produce theoretical and empirical analysis supporting the FCC's 2002 Media Ownership Biennial Review.

In addition, the Bureau completed the review of two major industry mergers. The FCC approved the Comcast-AT&T transaction and denied approval of EchoStar's acquisition of DirecTV by issuing a hearing designation order. The Bureau also continues work on "flagged" radio transactions.

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In the area of Homeland Security, Chairman Powell formed the Media Security and Reliability Council (MSRC), a Federal Advisory Committee, following the events of September 11, 2001, in order to study, develop and report on best practices designed to assure the reliability, robustness and security of the broadcast and multichannel video programming distribution industries. As part of this effort, more than 40 media industry CEO's, organization executives and public safety officials met in May and November 2002 to discuss how to coordinate both internal and public communications in future emergencies.

Reflecting additional FCC modernization efforts, the Media Bureau expanded electronic filing capabilities to make it easier for multichannel video programming distributor services to submit applications, reports, and other documents. This will allow the agency to conduct effective and timely licensing activities and respond to Congress, consumers, and the communications industries in a timely manner.

The Bureau also continues its work developing policy guidelines for broadband over cable, implementing the Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act, and processing audio and video licenses.

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For more information about the Media Bureau visit www.fcc.gov/mb.