

**Remarks of
FCC Chairman Michael Powell
At the
FCC Rural Satellite Forum
January 27, 2004
Washington, D.C.**

Thank you for attending today's Rural Satellite Forum.

Broadband deployment is a major communications policy objective in America today. The Commission is committed to bringing the benefits of 21st Century communications to all Americans. In November, the Commission held a forum on rural "Wireless Internet Service Providers" (WISPs). Today's Rural Satellite Forum elaborates on the message from the November forum: that affordable satellite technology is now available to deliver enhanced broadband services in rural areas.

The ubiquity of satellite signals has long held the potential to deliver advanced communications anywhere and everywhere in America. Today's Rural Satellite Forum is intended to showcase the technology and significant progress that has been made to realize its full potential.

I place a high priority on ensuring that Americans living and working in rural and remote parts of our Nation have access to the same kind of high quality, advanced communications services as do Americans living in cities and suburbs.

At the same time, I recognize that this great country of ours covers vast geographic distances.

But there is one communications technology – satellite – that is capable of reaching each and every single American, in every spot of the country, no matter how rural or remotely located they might be.

Satellite entrepreneurs are developing strategies to package and resell satellite capacity to create communications services that are economically and technologically within the reach of rural Americans and their farms and businesses.

You will hear a number of success stories today; examples of how satellite technology has been used to enhance the lives of rural Americans in the areas of: distance learning; telemedicine; public safety; farming; broadband Internet service, and mass media entertainment.

Today, we salute the progress of the satellite industry in helping to reach that goal. I hope that the stories told today will raise awareness of these developing services throughout rural America.

I expect that the unequaled reach of satellite technology will continue to make satellites a natural medium for delivering communications services to rural America.

I want to especially thank our colleagues at the Rural Utility Service of the Department of Agriculture for their participation and cooperation in today's Forum. We share with the

Department of Agriculture a joint responsibility to bring the best possible communications to rural America. I thank Ed Cameron of the RUS for joining us today to explain USDA's grant and loan programs.

I also would like to thank my fellow Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein for their participation in today's Forum.