

**REMARKS OF  
MICHAEL K. POWELL  
CHAIRMAN, FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
AT THE  
THIRD E911 COORDINATION INITIATIVE  
APRIL 27, 2004  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

I am pleased to be here today to welcome you to the third meeting of the Commission's Wireless E911 Coordination Initiative.

First, I want to take a moment to applaud the efforts of the state coordinators, the public safety community, and wireline and wireless carriers to accelerate E911 deployment. We recognize that this is a complex process that involves many stakeholders. Coordination, communication, and cooperation are the keys to success in the rapidly changing communications landscape. From the personnel at the PSAP who first receive the call for help, through the dispatcher, to the EMS team that responds on the scene of the emergency, there must be a common purpose, an ability to communicate and work together as part of one network and one team. I recently traveled to Johnson County, Kansas, where I met with PSAP staff and the local police and sheriffs departments, including Colonel Walter Way, who will be participating in one of our roundtables tomorrow. I was able to see first hand what a difference E911 makes in the field. All of you strive every day to make certain that the vision is realized, and I just want to say, well done.

Last August, at the APCO Conference, I asked that we take the new spirit of cooperation and begin a lasting "Era of Accomplishment." I was energized then, and remain so today about the progress that is being made to deploy E911. I specifically want to thank the National Governors Association for their continuing efforts on E911 deployment. Last August, we had just begun our relationship with NGA on E911. I remember speaking at the APCO Conference about our new partnership with them and the integral role NGA would play in helping advance the cause. NGA has robustly answered the call to action. First, they partnered in our second Coordination Initiative last October and, I don't want to steal their thunder, but tomorrow Ray Scheppach, NGA's Executive Director, will unveil the fruits of their labor. State governments are also vital partners in these efforts and, with continued work by NGA and others, we can achieve our E911 goals.

Let me also thank my fellow Commissioners, each of whom will be participating today and tomorrow, and each of whom is dedicated to this issue.

When I first became Chairman, mobile phones were already a ubiquitous part of the personal communications landscape, and consumer expectations regarding wireless 911 services were increasing. This year, with than 150 million cell phone users, wireless minutes outpaced wireline minutes for the first time. It is no surprise, then, that in some parts of the country, more than half the 911 calls are wireless.

### **Update on Deployment**

Despite the primary obstacles to full deployment – time and money, E911 *is* being deployed, has already saved many lives, and will save many more as the pace of deployment continues to quicken. Just last month, Rhode Island told us about a young woman, Kelly Carrington, whose life was saved because wireless E911 permitted rescuers to find her after a car accident. I know that Ray LaBelle, who is Governor Carcieri’s designated contact for us on wireless E911 matters, could not be here this week, but I want to recognize him nonetheless.

When I spoke to many of you at our Coordination Initiative meeting last October, I outlined the significant progress we had made. I am happy to report that we are, indeed, in the “Era of Accomplishment.” In the past six months, deployment has grown steadily, and 900 more PSAPs out of the over 5,000 PSAPs across the country are now capable of receiving Phase II location information. Rhode Island and Vermont are the first states to report that they have implemented Phase II in 100% of their PSAPs. Tennessee is expected to join this list in June. As we look down the road, I know that there is still more to be done, and we must continue down that path to achieve these goals for the American people.

### **Building Public-Private Partnerships to Enhance E911 Availability**

As we continue to promote coordination of federal, state, and local governments, we also recognize the value of encouraging public/private partnerships that maximize local assets and we need to find better and faster paths to providing consumers’ access to E911. I would be remiss to discuss public/private partnerships, and not commend the work that ESIF is doing on E911. I am eager to hear from a newcomer to our Coordination Initiative, Christine Fischer, from the Valley Communications Center in Kent, Washington, that discovered early on -- many, many years ago, in fact – what public/private partnerships can do to enhance public safety.

As was discussed at the Commission’s IP Solutions Summit last month, the agreement between NENA and the Voice On the Net (VON) Coalition on how voice over IP providers will deliver location information to PSAPs exemplifies what can be achieved

from public/private partnerships. While the Commission grapples with this issue, it is encouraging to know that consumers are being provided some basic level of E911 capability for VoIP services.

### **Improving Accuracy**

We need to continue to improve the effectiveness of location-capability in challenging areas. To assist this process, I announced the establishment of a technical group to focus on E911 network architecture and technical standards issues. This subcommittee of the Network Reliability and Interoperability Council (NRIC), headed by Tim Donahue, Chairman and CEO of Nextel Communications, held its first meeting last month. Measuring and improving the accuracy of E911 location information will be a priority. NRIC VII will also look at the issues and the opportunities presented by IP protocol and open network architecture for E911 and public safety.

This hard work should result in more accurate and reliable E911 service to wireless subscribers across the nation, whether in small rural communities or big urban corridors. There may be deployment challenges in bringing E911 location capability to geographically challenging environments, but the lifesaving capabilities of the service are too vital not to be extended to all subscribers, including rural subscribers.

We also will continue our work on multi-line telephone systems. As we stated in the *Scope Order*, we plan later this year to find out what states have been able to do over the course of a year. While many may need more time to act, the danger associated with not having location technology for these systems is only growing, and E911 capability is just as vital to consumers in this circumstance as with wireless. I know that we will be hearing tomorrow from two states – Illinois and Washington – that are leading the way to ensure that first responders have this tool and consumers have this service.

I pledge to continue to do my part to make E911 a number one priority in our federal government. I know we will all do our part. We owe it to the American people to keep up this hard work. Thank you for your participation, and enjoy the rest of the meeting.