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Federal Communications Commission
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NEW FIGURES SHOW BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT ACCELERATING IN THE U.S.

FCC Adopts Fourth Report On Broadband Availability

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted today its fourth report on the availability of advanced telecommunications capability in the United States. Consistent with prior reports, it concludes that the overall goal of section 706 is being met, and that advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed on a reasonable and timely basis to all Americans.

The report demonstrates that the United States is making substantial progress in closing the gaps in access for traditionally underserved areas. Those in rural areas, those with low incomes, and those with disabilities – who stand in particular need of advanced services—are finding advanced services more available.

The report also documents the significant development of new access technologies that has taken place since the issuance of the last report. The report highlights the growth in Wi-Fi Internet access hotspots, WiMax, third-generation mobile phones, personal area networks, satellite technologies, fiber to the home, and broadband over power lines, in addition to more familiar cable modem and DSL services. The report also describes the development of new Internet-based services, such as voice communications over Internet protocol (or VoIP).

The FCC retains its existing definition of advanced telecommunications capability for purposes of this report. The terms “advanced telecommunications capability” and “advanced services” are used to describe services and facilities with an upstream (customer-to-provider) and downstream (provider-to-customer) of 200 kilobits per second (kbps) or greater. The term “high speed” is used to describe services with more than 200 kbps capability in at least one direction.

Summary of Broadband Deployment

- Subscribership to advanced services providing connections to the Internet at speeds exceeding 200 kbps in both directions has more than tripled since the FCC’s last report, from 5.9 million lines in June 2001 to 20.3 million lines in December 2003.

- High-speed lines providing connectivity of more than 200 kbps in at least one direction has almost tripled from June 2001 to December 2003, from 9.6 million lines to 28.2 million lines.
- Cable modem and ADSL service providers provide the vast majority of advanced services lines, with cable representing 75.3 percent, ADSL representing 14.9 percent, and other technologies representing 9.8 percent in December 2003. The relative position of cable and ADSL was 56 percent and 16.8 percent at the time of the last report, in June 2001.
- Looking more broadly at all high-speed lines, cable modem service represented 58 percent of lines, with ADSL representing 34 percent of lines as of year end 2003.
- With respect to advanced services lines, in December 2003, there were 18.1 million lines serving residential and small business customers, compared to 4.3 million lines in June 2001. The number of high-speed lines for residential and small business subscribers more than tripled, to 26.0 million in December 2003, from 7.8 million in June 2001.
- As of December 2003, only 6.8 percent of zip codes in the U.S. reported no high-speed lines, compared to 22.2 percent of zip codes with no reported lines in June 2001. There also has been a steady growth in the percent of zip codes reporting four or more providers of high-speed lines, from 27.5 percent in June 2001 to 46.3 percent in December 2003.

Background

Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 directs both the FCC and the states to encourage deployment of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans on a reasonable and timely basis, and instructs the FCC to conduct regular inquiries concerning whether such deployment is occurring and to take action to accelerate deployment, if necessary. The FCC previously reported to Congress on the status of advanced telecommunications capability in the United States in February 1999, August 2000, and February 2002. Additionally, the FCC publishes data on advanced and high-speed services twice a year. The FCC is currently considering rule changes that will enable it to gather more information about “next-generation” broadband networks that offer services well in excess of 200 kbps for purposes of future reports. The FCC will continue to monitor the development and deployment of broadband networks to ensure that all Americans have affordable access to them and to the significant advantages they can offer.

-FCC-

Docket No.: GN 04-54

Action by the Commission, September 9, 2004, Fourth Report, FCC No. 04-208. Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy and Martin, with Commissioners Copps and Adelstein dissenting. Separate statements issued by Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein.

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