

Remarks of Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
FCC Excellence in Engineering Award- December 7, 2007

It is my pleasure to recognize the recipients of the FCC's 2007 Excellence in Engineering Award. This award recognizes engineers, scientists and other technical staff for outstanding contributions performed in the course of their work at the Commission.

The engineers, scientists, and technical staff are truly the Commission's unsung heroes. While the attorneys tell us how to follow the law, and the economists tell us what will or will not be efficient, our technical experts tell us ultimately what can and cannot be done. Without them, very little would be done.

The projects on which our engineers, scientists, and technical staff work cover – to mix metaphors a little – the full spectrum. They help ensure radio transmissions do not exceed safe levels. They help represent the interests of the United States in international negotiations. (Having recently participated at the World Radio Conference in Geneva, I know the importance of being supported with technical information when negotiating the U.S. position.)

In addition, one cannot imagine our DTV transition succeeding without the expertise of many of the people in this room. In my role as a Commissioner, I do not give a speech without telling my audience about the DTV transition and recommending they check out our website, www.dtv.gov (see, I just recommended it again). In so doing, I am directing the public to learn more about an important change that will make spectrum available for new and innovative commercial services as well as broadband for public safety service, all of which is a direct result of your efforts.

Finally, many of our fine technical staff from the Enforcement Bureau and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau were involved in Project Roll Call, which is a system that enables the Commission or FEMA to determine which radio-based systems in an area are operational and which are not. This can be a powerful tool in the event of a major disaster, attack, or power failure, because it enables federal emergency response personnel to maintain real-time situational awareness of radio communications systems.

To all recipients of the 2007 Excellence in Engineering Award, you have my deep respect and gratitude. The American people may be less aware of the good work you do, but they are no less indebted to you. Thank you.