

**FCC CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI**  
**PREPARED REMARKS FOR APPS FOR COMMUNITIES LAUNCH EVENT**  
**STRIDE CENTER – OAKLAND, CA**  
**APRIL 14, 2011**

Thank you to Mayor Quan for that kind introduction. Thanks to Rachelle Chong and the California Technology Agency and Sunne Wright McPeak of CETF for hosting us here at the Stride Center.

I thank you all for what you're doing at the state and local level: harnessing the opportunities of communications technology for the citizens of all our communities. It's exactly what we're focused on at the federal level.

As this group knows, the most transformative technological breakthrough of our time is high-speed Internet. Broadband has as much potential to fuel innovation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as electricity did in the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Broadband is an indispensable platform for economic growth and job creation, and for addressing major national challenges like education, health care, energy and public safety.

Broadband isn't a luxury. It's a necessity for full participation in our economy and democracy.

And as everything goes digital, the costs of digital exclusion are large and growing.

As job postings move increasingly online, for example, if you're not online, you can't find a job.

Yet, over 100 million Americans aren't online. About one-third of our population, and even higher percentages among low-income Americans, people with disabilities, minorities, and those whose first language is not English.

That broadband adoption rate -- 67% -- compares to 90% in Singapore and South Korea. We've got to improve these numbers to compete effectively in today's global economy.

Our research shows that several factors contribute to the digital divide in America, including the availability and affordability of broadband service.

And more than half of those who aren't online say that they haven't signed up for broadband because they don't think it's relevant to their lives.

The FCC has been working with others inside and outside of government to get the message out: in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, there are few innovations more relevant to our lives. We must overcome these barriers and increase broadband adoption and use.

That's why at the FCC we're working to modernize programs like the Universal Service Fund and Lifeline/Link-up. These programs are still focused on 20<sup>th</sup> century telephone service – when we know we need to transform them to efficient programs driving 21<sup>st</sup> century broadband deployment and adoption.

It's why we're working to seize the opportunities of wireless Internet access, by freeing up more

spectrum -- our airwaves -- for mobile broadband.

And that's why I'm here today: to highlight the excellent work you are doing here in California and the Stride Center. You're showing first-hand how technology can make a difference.

While there's much good that government can do to help tackle our broadband challenges, government can't meet these challenges alone. Success is going to require sustained attention and effort from community organizations, like this; non-profits like the Knight Foundation; and private companies including broadband providers and technology companies.

I had an opportunity to tour the Stride Center this morning. This is a great example of how people from the private and public sector can come together to make real change in people's lives using technology.

This area provides huge opportunities for a win-win. Every new broadband subscriber helps increase our national adoption rate, benefitting the new subscriber and the company offering service, helping drive our economy and global competitiveness.

Today, we hope to spur this opportunity with an innovative approach.

We are launching Apps for Communities, a joint initiative sponsored by the Knight Foundation and the FCC.

The Knight Foundation is offering \$100,000 in prizes for the best apps that engage people who are less likely to be online.

This national competition is the first of its kind. It's a contest to make local public information more usable and more actionable, making the benefits of broadband more tangible for all Americans.

We expect big things and great apps. Here are a couple of ideas generated during the planning process for the competition:

- An app that can connect people living in underserved communities to urgent care facilities via public transportation.
- An app that delivers seasonal and contract job postings by text message

We encourage states, cities, and townships to open their public databases to developers.

And we challenge developers to build great apps with that data, apps that can make a real difference to real people – and in doing so, demonstrate the relevance that broadband and the opportunities it can unleash.

Check out [appsforcommunities.challenge.gov](http://appsforcommunities.challenge.gov), where you can find out more about this challenge, sign up for updates, and submit an app.

Let's show people what broadband can do.

Thank you.