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Press Contact: Todd Sedmak, (202) 482-7002

Commerce Department Report Encourages Commercial Technologies for First Responders

Washington, D.C.'s WARN System Model for Nation's Public Safety Needs

Washington – The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in a report released today encourages the federal, state and local public safety community to consider utilizing commercial technologies in satisfying broadband interoperable communications among first responders. The report also recommends agencies consider commercial broadband services, when feasible.

NTIA's report, "A Public Safety Sharing Demonstration," analyzed the District of Columbia's Wireless Accelerated Responder Network (WARN). The WARN pilot is a city-wide broadband wireless public safety network. The system uses commercial broadband technology for remote surveillance, chemical and biological detection and several other emergency related services. The WARN has been used by more than a dozen federal, District and local agencies during events such as the Presidential Inauguration, International Monetary Fund demonstrations, and Fourth of July celebrations to provide the agencies access to critical data.

"Our nation's Capital has the potential to be the template for satisfying the nation's public safety broadband needs," said Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez "By leveraging state, local and federal resources and using readily available commercial technology, the WARN system delivers cutting-edge technology to first responders."

The report fulfills part of the President's 21st Century Spectrum Policy Initiative for improving management of the nation's airwaves, and is available on the NTIA Web site at www.ntia.doc.gov. The report addresses planning, usage and sharing of spectrum, and the feasibility of using commercial services to meet the increasingly complex, public safety, wireless, broadband communications needs.

Later this year, NTIA is expected to award \$1 billion in grants to assist public safety agencies in the acquisition of, deployment of, or training for the use of interoperable communications systems. This funding may be used by state and local public safety officials in utilizing the report's recommended commercial technologies and broadband services in satisfying their own public safety needs.

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