

# **Talking Points for the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual National Reservation Economic Summit and American Indian Business Trade Fair**

Luncheon

February 11, 2004

Thank you for this opportunity to address you today. This summit has been very informative and I am pleased to be a participant. Yesterday, I sat on the Technology panel and I am very encouraged by the exchange that took place. Native American economic development is soaring and I believe that wireless technology will play an integral role in this movement. I'm excited about this anticipated growth and the Wireless Bureau's role in all of this. During my tenure as Chief, the Bureau has been actively engaged in various initiatives that lend support to the development of tribal economies.

## **WTB Regulatory Initiatives**

I would first like to briefly report on some of the Bureau's regulatory initiatives that I believe will facilitate the deployment of wireless services to all American communities. As a result of the FCC's Spectrum Policy Task Force Report, we learned that the rationing problem in spectrum is that of access as opposed to the actual quantity of spectrum. Hence, identifying opportunities for greater spectrum access is a top priority for us. In the last year, we've put out several proceedings that deal directly with this issue, including: the Secondary Markets proceeding, MDS/ITFS NPRM, 4.9 GHz R&O, Rural NPRM, Advanced Wireless Services Band Plan Order and the 70/80/90 GHz R&O.

Other core principles that we're actively integrating into our spectrum managerial efforts include technological neutrality, business plan agnostic regulations, and a roadmap toward full flexibility for licensees to meet the exacting demands of consumers.

## **Efforts to Promote Native American Economic Development**

The Bureau has also been working on developing rules and regulations to promote commercial wireless services in tribal areas. The Commission's tribal bidding credit program encourages spectrum licensees to develop wireless services in tribal areas by providing them with financial incentives in the form of bidding credits as winners of the FCC's spectrum auctions. To date, 10 out of 15 wireless spectrum auctions have resulted in 34 bidders expressing intent to seek a Tribal Land Bidding Credit. In addition, the FCC's Designated Entity program, administered by the Bureau, provides small businesses, like those operated by many Native Americans, meet threshold qualifications to receive bidding credits ranging from 5-35% from auction bids.

The Bureau is also rethinking its approach to making wireless communications available to rural communities. The Rural NPRM, initiated last year, examines ways and solicits comments on how this can be best achieved. In addition, as many of you in the audience are already aware, last July, the Bureau, in cooperation with USDA's Rural Utilities Service, hosted a kick-off event celebrating the "Federal Rural Wireless Outreach Initiative." We envision that this partnership, one of the first of its kind between USDA and the FCC, is essential in laying the groundwork for expediting the digital migration to all rural communities in this country.

In addition, just last week, the FCC and the United South and Eastern Tribes signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the development of "Best Practices" in siting communications towers. We expect the "Best Practices" to service as a model for other potential cooperative efforts with Tribes around the nation. At the signing ceremony, the FCC announced the implementation of a new communications Tower Construction Notification System. This system will assist in determining when protection of a historic property, Tribal religious site, or cultural site is warranted. We're very proud of both of these initiatives and anticipate that they will be extremely beneficial as advanced technologies become more commonplace in tribal communities. To learn more about the

Rural Outreach Initiative, the MOU with USET and the Tower Construction Notification System, please visit the Wireless Bureau's website.

Thank you for inviting me here today and I'll gladly address your questions [after lunch].