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Federal Communications Commission
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Report No. WT 98-44

WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACTION

December 14, 1998

VHF PUBLIC COAST SERVICE AUCTION CLOSES

Today the Commission's VHF Public Coast service auction, which began on December 3, 1998, closed after 44 rounds raising \$7,459,200 in net high bids for the U.S. Treasury. The VHF Public Coast auction represents the Commission's 18th auction.

"Maritime services fulfill the unique distress, operational, and personal communications needs of vessels at sea and on inland waterways," said Chairman William Kennard. "Our flexible service rules for the VHF Public Coast licenses will allow for increased competition and the enhancement of maritime communications equipment. Bringing additional maritime licenses into the marketplace will also benefit American consumers by promoting the safety of life and property at sea."

Forty-two licenses of 3 different spectrum sizes were simultaneously auctioned. Licenses auctioned were either 350, 450 or 500 KHz. Licenses were also divided into 9 maritime and 33 inland service areas. VHF Public Coast licensees may provide fixed, mobile, or hybrid communications. Service may be provided to users on land, provided that priority is given to maritime originating communications.

"This is another success story in the history of our auctions program," said Jerry Vaughan, Acting Chief of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. "The Commission has been able to adopt new rules and offer new licenses to fulfill the communications needs of this niche maritime service."

Of the 42 licenses auctioned, 26 were assigned. A reaction of unsold licenses is likely to take place in the 2nd or 3rd quarter of 1999. Details of the next VHF Public Coast auction will appear in a future public notice.

VHF Public Coast auction license winners must make the down payment on their licenses ten business days after the release of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau's Public Notice announcing the close of the auction. Winning bidders must also file their long-form applications with the FCC within the same time period.

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