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D.C. PICKED AS SITE FOR URBAN 700 MHZ PUBLIC-SAFETY DEMONSTRATION

Feb 18, 2010 3:00 PM, By Donny Jackson

Washington, D.C., will be the location of a 700 MHz broadband demonstration network that is designed to test the public-safety capabilities that a wireless broadband network could bring to first responders in urban areas.

The D.C. testbed is the **second such network to be announced** by Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR), which previously said it would conduct similar tests for rural areas at its facilities outside of Boulder, Colo. The D.C. demonstration will use the same tower infrastructure that was deployed for the district's now-defunct 700 MHz 3G wireless system for public safety, said Bryan Spivak, with district's chief technology officer.

"We can start setting up these tests ... with public-safety agencies — locally, regionally and around the country — that can come in and try it out," Spivak said. "Then, we can get their feedback and the requirements back to the vendors, so this first generation of production versions of these [4G] units will actually meet the needs of the public-safety users.

Testing on the demonstration network — using 700 MHz spectrum currently licensed to the Public Safety Spectrum Trust (PSST) — is set to begin this summer, if vendors have prototype equipment ready by that time, Spivak said. Exactly how long the demonstration network will be used has not been determined, he said.

"My goal is to keep it up as long as it takes to make sure we get everything done the right way," Spivak said.

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