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News Brief

FCC Commissioners Consider Order Outlining ERIC Specifics (4/22/10)

By Sandra Wendelken

An FCC official said Wednesday that an order detailing the planned Emergency Response Interoperability Center (ERIC) is being circulated among the commissioners and assured public-safety officials the commission has no plans to manage networks.

“The FCC through its rulemaking procedures will adopt minimal necessary technical requirements to ensure network interoperability,” said Jeff Cohen, senior legal counsel for the FCC’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB). “There will be flexibility at state and regional levels regarding network buildout so agencies will have the ability to formulate what they need for their networks.”

Cohen said there is an order circulating now with the five FCC commissioners that limits what ERIC does and is concise and to the point. “The FCC will ensure everything about the network and equipment is interoperable. I want to reassure you that the ERIC will not manage networks. I know that some public-safety officials are concerned that this may be going in another direction or that the ERIC’s role will go beyond setting requirements for a number of issues, but I can assure you that this is not going to happen.”

Cohen said that ERIC will have a public-safety advisory committee, but “we’re still figuring out what that’s going to be.”

FCC officials were vague about the specific timing of the order’s release. “We are working as quickly as possible to stand up the ERIC, but we still need to work through some things, and it is of course all predicated on the FCC commissioners approving the order to permit this to move forward,” said Robert Kenny, FCC spokesman.

The comments came [during discussions](#) in Boulder, Colo., Wednesday regarding the federal Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) plans for a 700 MHz public-safety broadband demonstration network. The meetings touched on who would take ownership of the requirements that are developed as part of the PSCR work

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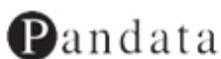
and who would represent public-safety interests at the Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) standards meetings.

“We saw the success of Broadband Task Force (BBTF) model (developed through the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC), and that’s what we’re emulating,” said Dereck Orr, PSCR program manager.

Chris Essid, director of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), said OEC will fund travel for public-safety practitioners to work with PSCR staff on the demonstration network.

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