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NIST, NTIA Seek Collaborators for Emergency Communications Demo Network

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) are seeking partners in the telecommunications industry to help create a demonstration broadband communications network for the nation's emergency services agencies.

The demonstration network, currently being developed by the joint NIST-NTIA Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program, will provide a common site for manufacturers, carriers, and public safety agencies to test and evaluate advanced broadband communications equipment and software tailored specifically to the needs of emergency first responders. The network will use a portion of the 700 megahertz (MHz) radio frequency spectrum freed up by last year's transition of U.S. broadcast television from analog to digital technologies (see *NIST Tech Beat*, Dec. 15, 2009, at www.nist.gov/oles/network_121509.cfm).

Alcatel-Lucent is the first vendor of public safety broadband equipment to formally join the PSCR demonstration network project, signing a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with NIST and NTIA in September, 2010. The two agencies hope that other companies will follow suit, creating a truly multi-vendor environment for testing and evaluating the demonstration network, as well as the eventual building of the system. Partners may participate in many ways, such as donating equipment, providing access to infrastructure or supporting tests.

Alcatel-Lucent has supplied the demonstration network with Long Term Evolution (LTE) Bandclass 14 equipment. LTE is the technology chosen by the public safety community to be used in the 700 MHz band (Bandclass 14) allocated to it by the Federal Communications Commission.

Vendors and other telecommunications companies wishing to become CRADA partners on the demonstration network project may contact Dereck Orr at (303) 497-5400, dereck.orr@nist.gov, or Jeff Bratcher at (303) 497-4610, jbratcher@its.bldrdoc.gov, for information.

The PSCR program is a partnership of the NIST Law Enforcement Standards Office and the NTIA's Institute for Telecommunication Sciences. PSCR provides objective technical support—research, development, testing and evaluation—in order to foster nationwide public safety communications interoperability. More information is available on the PSCR Web site at www.pscr.gov.

Media Contact: Michael E. Newman, michael.newman@nist.gov, (301) 975-3025

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