



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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HOMELAND SECURITY: COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY HOLDS FINAL MEETING IN TWO YEAR INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE NETWORK RELIABILITY AND SECURITY IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY

Washington, D.C. – Leaders from the telecommunications, ISP, satellite and cable industries today held the final meeting of a two-year initiative designed to enhance the reliability and security of the nation’s telecommunications networks in times of emergencies.

“As a consequence of this Council’s work I believe our Nation’s communications infrastructure will be better fortified against threats, both natural and man-made,” said FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell. “The set of homeland security Best Practices adopted by the Council will guide the industry in fulfilling its commitments with its customers and with one another – to engineer and operate the most reliable, robust communications service network in the world. This is something we can all be very proud of.”

The meeting was the sixth and final meeting of the FCC’s Network Reliability and Interoperability Council (NRIC) VI. NRIC was originally established by the FCC in 1992 to bring together telecommunications leaders to explore and recommend measures to enhance network reliability and security. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell chartered NRIC VI on January 7, 2002, to focus on homeland security. Specifically at today’s meeting the Reliability, Interoperability and Broadband focus groups made their final recommendations which were voted upon by the Council.

During the meeting Chairman Powell also acknowledged Richard C. Notebaert, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Qwest Communications International, Inc. who served as Chairman of NRIC VI. “I would like to acknowledge at the outset your service to this group. Your leadership in this area is greatly appreciated,” said Chairman Powell.

NRIC VI’s priority initiative has been to develop measures to ensure the security and sustainability of the nation’s telecommunications networks in the event of a terrorist attack or national disaster. During its charter NRIC VI’s accomplishments include:

- Adopting more than 300 best practices to protect the nation’s communications against attack. In addition, the Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity Focus Group presented 70 best practices the industry should consider to help sustain critical business activities in a crisis. Also, the Cyber Security Focus Group identified over 200 best practices the communications industry should consider to restore service in a timely and secure manner.

- Adopting a Mutual Aid Agreement which provides the means by which industry carriers and service providers can elect to enter agreements to collaborate to restore service in the wake of an emergency.
- Adopting industry emergency contact procedures and protocol to provide detailed contact information, procedures and protocol to members in times of emergency and to identify communications industry representatives who are essential to effective communications and Internet service restoration efforts.

The FCC plans to recharter NRIC with new priority initiatives sometime in early 2004.

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