

FCC urged to save spectrum for safety net

A U.S. wireless industry firm Thursday urged the FCC to reserve spectrum for creation of a nationwide network for public-safety communications.

The proposal was contained in a filing made with the agency by Cyren Call Communications and called for establishment of a public trust to control a portion of the 700 megahertz MHz band that would be reserved for a seamless, nationwide network for public-safety use.

The 30 MHz segment of the 700 MHz block is currently allocated for commercial use and is scheduled to be auctioned to private industry by the FCC in 2008.

Cyren Chairman Morgan O'Brien, who was a co-founder of Nextel, said the 700 MHz spectrum carries great distances and can penetrate buildings and trees better than most other bands, which makes it ideal for use by first responders and agencies operating in large areas.

Integrating communications among the myriad of law enforcement, firefighters and other safety agencies during major emergencies has been a major and sticky problem since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

O'Brien said standardized spectrum would make standardized communications much easier to accomplish but requires prompt action by the FCC.

"This spectrum represents America's best opportunity to foster state-of-the-art public safety communications," said O'Brien. "If this spectrum is auctioned to the private sector, the nation forever loses its best shot at fixing this issue once and for all."

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