

Remarks of  
Michael K. Powell  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
At the  
Broadband Access Network Coordination (BANC) Event  
Hotel Monaco  
San Francisco, California  
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(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you, Graham and Dan, for those impressive presentations on the Broadband Access Network Coordination (BANC) system and for the opportunity to learn more about this exciting initiative.

The FCC's goal is to make ubiquitous and affordable broadband a reality for all Americans, regardless of where they live. In order to make that goal a reality, our role is to facilitate competition within the broadband market in order to spur greater deployment. I believe wireless technology has the potential to transform the marketplace by bringing much needed competition to the existing DSL and cable-modem platforms. We also must think about broadband broadly. We at the FCC have tried to become champions and supporters of innovative efforts to develop alternative competitive platforms, including wireless broadband networks deployed in the unlicensed bands.

The FCC, however, cannot take credit for the success of wireless broadband providers operating on unlicensed bands. We used to think that these bands were limited to applications such as baby monitors and garage door openers. But the entrepreneurial efforts of WISPs have shown us the tremendous potential for providing wireless broadband services in the license-exempt space.

We've traveled around the country to learn more about the many innovative ways that wireless broadband providers are serving their communities. This is the first demonstration that I have seen of a self-organized approach to solving the interference issues. What is exciting about BANC is it represents the true spirit of entrepreneurial creation. I applaud BANC members for developing a solution quickly and independently and continuing their work of broadband deployment, rather than hoping - or asking - for the government to try to solve this problem for them. BANC demonstrates a lot of promise, and I hope that this type of cooperative effort can be replicated around the country.

On the issue of more spectrum for wireless broadband, the FCC has been aggressively hunting for it. We're happy to have recently allocated more spectrum for unlicensed uses in the 5 GHz band. In addition, we would like to be able to see more spectrum in the lower bands for wireless broadband services. We also want to aggressively explore sharing by unlicensed devices in spectrum bands in cases which would not have not possible only a short time ago. For instance, the Commission

recently adopted an NPRM looking at using the so-called white spaces in the broadcast spectrum for unlicensed use. We don't know where all these efforts will lead us, but it is worth the journey.

Unlicensed uses and WiFi have far exceeded what any one expected, and have disproved the many naysayers. In fact, during my seven years at the FCC, I have heard many predictions - most of what I was told was not possible is now in commercial production. The FCC does not want to be the arbiter of what does or does not work. Instead, we should strive to facilitate innovation, and make sure that we do not get in the way.

Again, I commend you for your thoughtful and innovative approach to addressing interference concerns and appreciate the opportunity to see it demonstrated first-hand.

Thank you.