

700 MHz new spectrum –

Background:

In order to help alleviate major wireless radio congestion, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has released 60 MHz of television broadcast spectrum – channels 60-69 (746-806 MHz) for use to land mobile radios. In addition to alleviating the congestion for wireless radio systems, the FCC also hoped to provide public safety access to new technologies that may require additional use of bandwidth, and promote interoperability. To accomplish these goals, the FCC allocated this spectrum in the following manner:

- 24 MHz for public safety
- 30 MHz for commercial use
- 6 MHz for guard band

Within the 24 MHz of spectrum for public safety, the following is a breakdown of how that bandwidth can be used:

- 2.6 MHz allocated for interoperability
- 12.6 MHz allocated for general use
- 2.4 MHz state license
- 6.4 MHz reserved

The **Regional Planning Committee** (RPC) is tasked with the administration and management of the 12.6 MHz general use spectrum. Washington State has a State Interoperability Executive Committee who is tasked with the administration and management of the interoperability and state license spectrum.

Regional Planning and General Use Spectrum

What is it, how much is there, and who will administer it?

A large portion of the 700 MHz public safety spectrum, approximately 53 percent (12.5 MHz), is designated for general use by local, regional and state users. A regional planning process was adopted to govern management of this public safety spectrum. It is a similar process to that used in the 821-824 MHz and 866-869 MHz bands. Regional Planning Committees (RPCs) are allowed maximum flexibility to meet state and local needs, encourage innovative use of the spectrum, and accommodate new and as yet unanticipated developments in technology. They are responsible for creating and managing regional plans.

Who can use it?

You can – The requirement for eligibility is that this spectrum can be used only for protection of life, health or property. Non-governmental agencies and organizations may also be eligible for use of this new resource, but only if they have a letter of support from a governmental authority.

Frequency coordination

Frequency coordination is open to all four current public safety frequency coordinators. Channels will be allocated through the Regional Planning Committee. All channels will be coordinated via CAPRAD a new computer-assisted frequency program.

I've heard about this and thought it will be expensive

The FCC has established some technical parameters for the 700 MHz band that will make the equipment manufactured for this band a bit more expensive than current analog systems, but systems and equipment should be comparable in cost to digital systems in other bands. They have also established interoperability standards for operations on the designated interoperability channels (based on the Project 25 common air interface) so that all manufacturers' radios must include interoperability capabilities. Most observers believe that as more companies enter the marketplace, competition will drive the costs of equipment down.

I've heard that there are problems with Canadian TV broadcasters

In certain areas of our state, Canadian broadcasters will present additional challenges. Talks are underway between our countries to attempt to resolve some of these issues.

How about United States TV broadcasters

In our state, there are several broadcasters that use channels 60-69 as translator frequencies. As this is a secondary use, those broadcasters will be obliged to vacate those channels. Additionally, with the new FCC regulations governing the television industry, these channels should be vacated by 2005.

Sounds interesting, what do I do

The Regional Planning Committee meets regularly at locations throughout our state. Come to the meetings, add your voice and concern...most of all, help us be part of the solution.

Meeting schedule

The NCC 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee meets on the last Wednesday of each month. For times and locations, please see our Web site.

For current information and schedule of upcoming meetings, please go to our Web site: <http://www.region43.org/700.htm>

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