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TV TechCheck



The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Television Broadcast Engineers

FCC Holds Inaugural Meeting of the Video Programming Accessibility Advisory Committee (VPAAC)

On Thursday January 13, the Federal Communications Commission held the first meeting of the Video Programming Accessibility Advisory Committee (VPAAC). The committee was established by the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (see *TV TechCheck* from October 10, 2010). Its primary responsibility is to study and make recommendations on technical, operational and regulatory matters pertaining to:

- Closed Captioning of Internet programming previously captioned on television;
- Video Description;
- Making emergency information accessible to blind and visually impaired persons;
- User interface accessibility for video programming consumer devices and accessible program guides and menus.

There are forty-five members on the VPAAC with representatives of persons with disabilities, closed captioning and video description providers, device manufacturers, Internet and software companies, video programming distributors and providers and the broadcast industry including the NAB. The committee is co-chaired by Larry Goldberg, WGBH National Center for Accessible Media and Wayne Luplow, LG/Zenith Electronics.

The first meeting was largely organizational. At that meeting, the Committee was divided into four working groups, each of which will focus on specific tasks related to the Accessibility Act and the Committee's overall purposes. The working groups are listed below:

- **Working Group 1: Internet Protocol-based Closed Captioning:** Co-chairs: Larry Goldberg, WGBH National Center for Accessible Media and Vince Roberts, Disney. Identify protocols, technical capabilities and technical procedures needed to encode, transport, receive and render closed captioning of video programming, except for consumer generated media, delivered using Internet protocol;
- **Working Group 2: Pass through of Closed Captioning and Video Description:** Co-chairs: Cheryl Heppner, Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons and Charlie Kennamer, Comcast Cable. Develop recommendations to ensure compatibility between video programming delivered using Internet protocol and devices capable of receiving and displaying such programming in order to facilitate access to closed captions and video description;
- **Working Group 3: Emergency Information:** Co-chairs: Melanie Brunson, American Council of the Blind and Kelly Williams, National Association of Broadcasters. Identify methods to encode, transport, receive, render and convey emergency information provided on video programming in a manner that is accessible to persons who are blind or visually impaired; and
- **Working Group 4: Accessibility of User Interfaces, Apparatus Functions, On-screen Text Menus, and Video Programming Guides and Menus Provided on Navigational Devices:** Co-chairs: Pratik Patel, American Council of the Blind and Jeff Newdeck, Motorola. Identify and recommend standards, protocols and procedures to enable access to these various features and functions.

Within 6 months of its first meeting, the VPAAC is required submit to the FCC recommendations concerning the provision of closed captions for Internet-delivered video programming and the ability of video devices to pass through closed captions contained on Internet-based video programming. By April 8, 2012, the VPAAC must submit recommendations on the remaining issues listed above.

For more information visit the VPAAC Web page at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/VPEAAC/>.

Nominate the Best!

NAB is currently accepting nominations for the 2011 NAB Engineering Achievement Awards. Established in 1959, the NAB Engineering Achievement Award is presented each year to an individual for their outstanding accomplishments in the broadcast industry. In 1991, NAB began giving awards separately for achievements in radio and television. The award winners will be recognized at the Technology Luncheon at NAB 2011 on April 13 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Additional information and nomination form is available at <http://www.nab.org/events/awards/entryRules.asp?id=1991>. The deadline for nominations is **January 21, 2011**.

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