



## UPDATE ON THE 2 GHZ BAS RELOCATION PROJECT

On February 12, 2009, Sprint Nextel, the Association for Maximum Service Television, NAB, and the Society of Broadcast Engineers (referred to as the Joint Parties) filed with the FCC a Supplemental Joint Request to waive until February 7, 2010 the deadline by which Sprint Nextel must complete the relocation of the Broadcast Auxiliary Service (BAS) licensees in the 1990-2025 MHz band. The request cites numerous circumstances beyond Sprint Nextel's and broadcasters' control, which will prevent completion of the BAS transition by the current deadline.

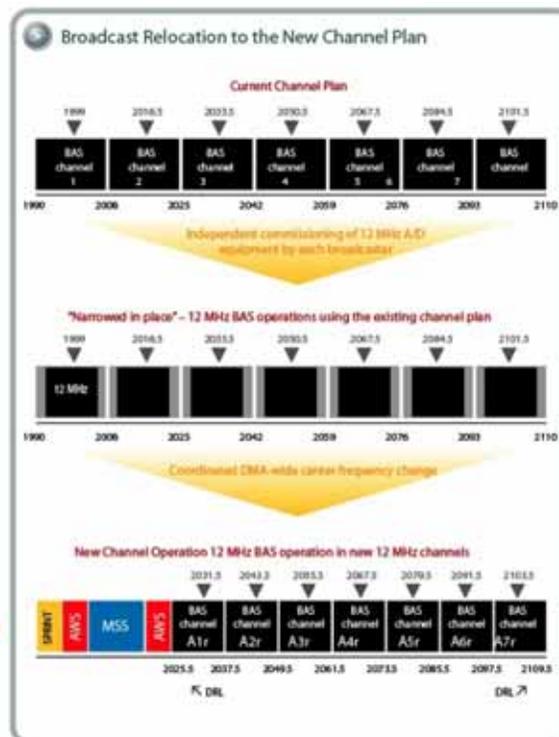
The BAS relocation project started in 2005, when Sprint Nextel committed to the relocation of BAS incumbents in the 1990-2025 MHz band, with planned completion in 2007. The FCC subsequently granted the parties a waiver to provide additional time to complete the project, extending the relocation deadline to March 5, 2009 and holding in abeyance an original waiver request, which asked that the relocation deadline be extended to February 7, 2010.

The purpose of the relocation is to free up 35 MHz of spectrum, previously assigned for BAS, now allocated to the 2 GHz Mobile-Satellite Service (MSS), of which a portion (5 MHz) was assigned to Nextel Communications for cell phone services. This is being achieved by shrinking the existing seven 17 MHz BAS channels to become 12 MHz channels, and moving the channels to new frequency assignments. This is a two-stage process for each DMA, as shown in the following chart.

**ORDER**  
new equipment

**INSTALL**  
new equipment

**CONVERT**  
to new channel plan  
on market cutover  
date



**Engineers:**  
**How to be**  
**Ready for**  
**HD and 3Gb/s**



[<click here>](#)

**ENSEMBLE**  
DESIGNS  
NAB N4023

Edited extracts from the Supplemental Joint Request follow, with graphics taken from a subsequent *ex parte* communication submitted on February 26.

## Introduction and Summary



In a March 2008 order, the Commission granted a waiver request filed by Sprint Nextel, MSTV, NAB, and SBE to provide additional time to complete the transition of BAS licensees to the new 2 GHz band plan. The Commission found that numerous complexities beyond the control of Sprint Nextel and BAS licensees prevented completion of the BAS relocation within the Commission's original timeframe. The Commission extended the deadline until March 5, 2009 and expressly held open "the option of extending this waiver upon further consideration." The Commission also held in abeyance the Joint Parties' waiver request for additional time beyond March 5, 2008 to complete the BAS transition. By this filing, the Joint Parties respectfully renew their original request to extend the BAS relocation completion date to February 7, 2010.

Since 2005, Sprint Nextel has funded an increase of at least 1,000 American workers across manufacturers, integrator vendors, and service providers. These engineers, technicians, tower climbers, machinists, welders, metal workers, laborers and others have made great progress in clearing the 1990-2025 MHz band of incumbent BAS operations. To date, more than one-third of BAS licensees have completed the transition. The transitioned licensees span 76 television markets that cover approximately 104 million Americans. More than 99 percent of all eligible BAS licensees have signed frequency relocation agreements (FRAs) that specify the equipment, labor, terms and conditions necessary for their transition to the new band plan. And even in those markets yet to be transitioned, hundreds of licensees have already installed replacement BAS equipment or are actively working with vendors and manufacturers to complete the equipment ordering and installation process. In short, BAS relocation is well on the road to completion.

In their original, September 2007 waiver request, the Joint Parties requested that the Commission extend the BAS completion date to February 7, 2010. In December 2007, the Joint Parties supplemented their waiver request after conferring with numerous parties, including Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) licensees, who will occupy more than half of the cleared spectrum and wanted the Joint Parties to reprioritize previously scheduled market transitions. In their supplemental filing, the Joint Parties proposed streamlining measures, faster transitions in specified markets to accommodate the MSS licensees' testing and service requirements, and a tentative schedule that potentially could accelerate the BAS transition by up to five months. The Joint Parties emphasized the tentative nature of the accelerated schedule due to the inherent complexities of BAS relocation and "the fluid nature of a relocation process that depends on the cooperation of scores of different suppliers, integrators, contractors, programmers, installers, and consultants.

Since the *Extension Order*, Sprint Nextel and the broadcast community have used their best efforts to meet the accelerated schedule. These efforts have made the transition more efficient in a number of respects and fully met MSS market-access demands; nonetheless, the BAS transition remains a complex undertaking with new challenges and obstacles seeming to arise at every turn. For example, Congress's recent extension of the digital television (DTV) transition deadline will affect the BAS relocation process due to interdependencies between the two transitions. Thus, despite the good faith efforts of Sprint Nextel and the vast majority of broadcasters, it is now clear that completing the BAS transition will require until February 2010 as described in the Joint Parties' original waiver request.

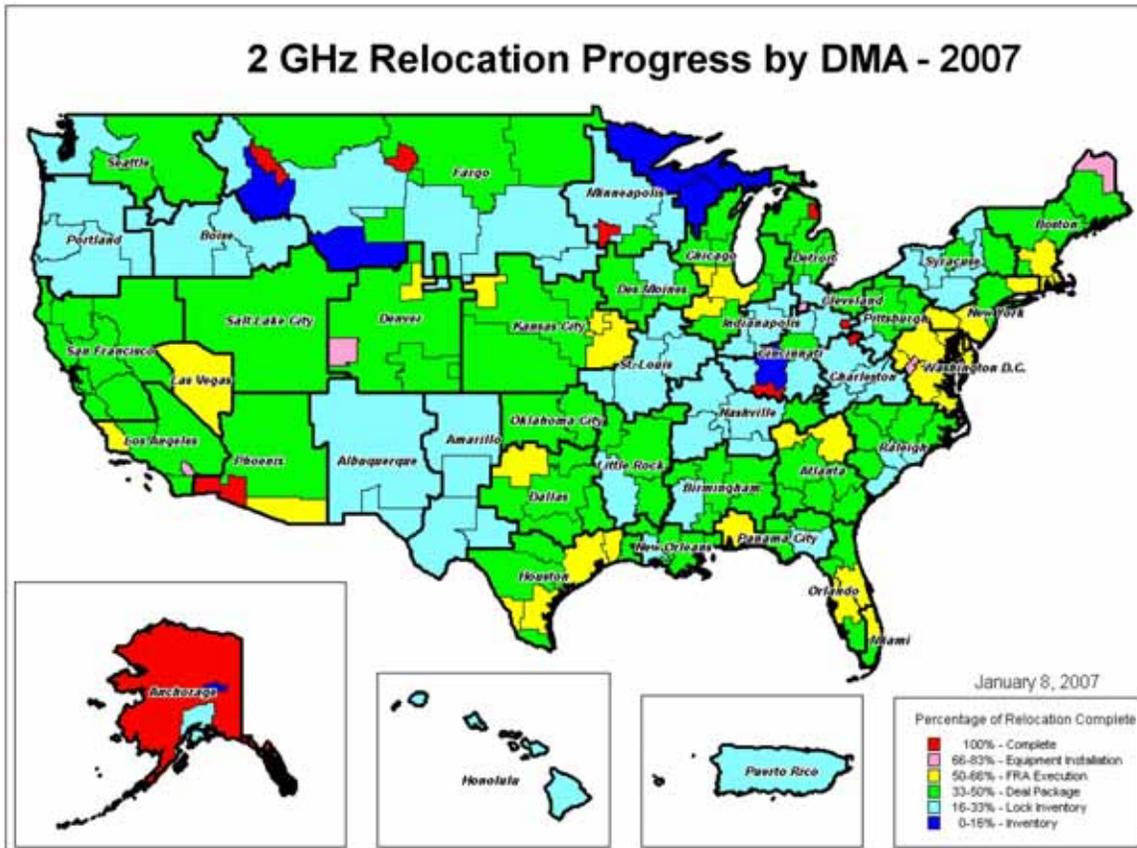
## Work to Complete the BAS Transition

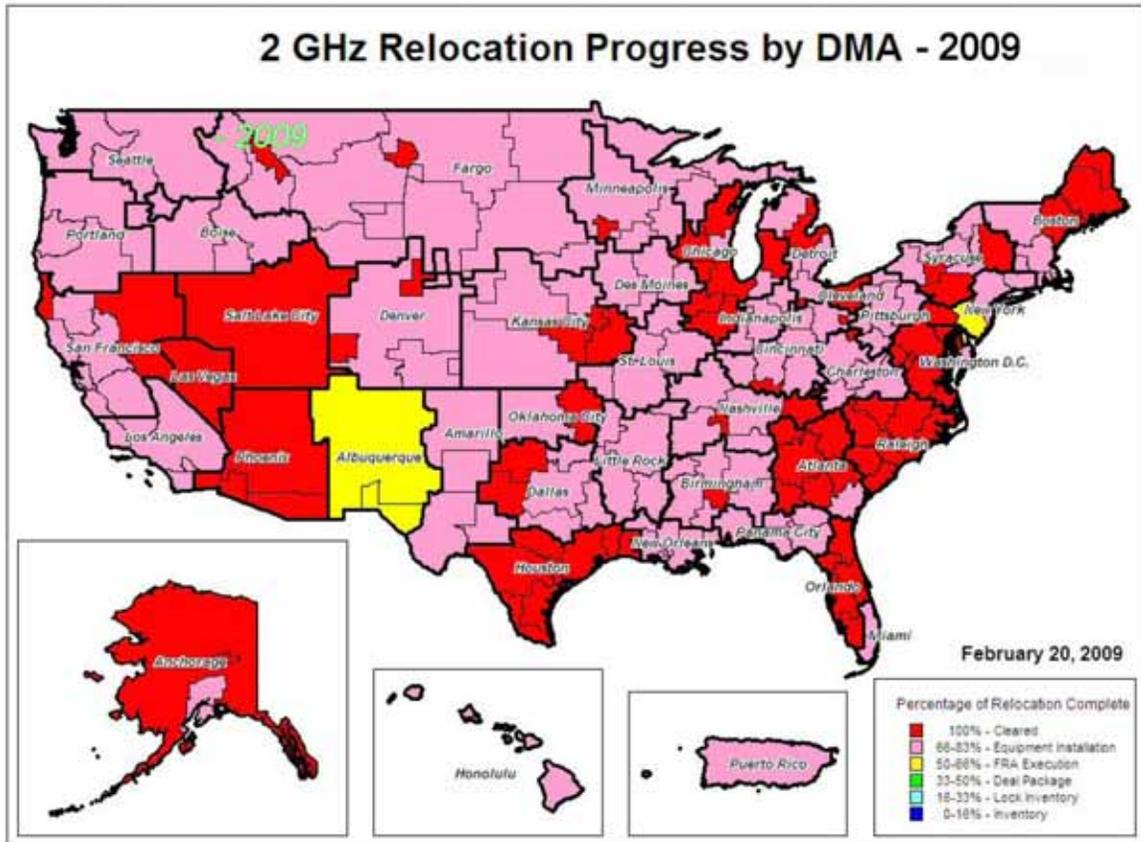
The Joint Request goes on to document the substantial progress made in compiling inventories, obtaining quote packages for virtually all eligible BAS incumbents, and executing frequency relocation agreements for 99% of eligible BAS licensees. It also states that nearly all licensees have submitted purchase orders for their BAS replacement equipment, and more than 70% of equipment has been delivered to licensees. At this time, 46% of licenses have installed their equipment and 36% of primary BAS operators have completed the transition. The Request confirms that the new BAS equipment and band plan meets broadcaster newsgathering needs and that markets can be transitioned without materially disrupting BAS operations. It also states that the success to date "could not have been achieved without the good faith efforts and commitment of the nation's broadcasters" and explains the efforts that are underway to complete the transition by the date requested, noting that Sprint Nextel has a powerful incentive to complete the BAS relocation as soon as possible.

The chart and maps below showing this 2 GHz transition process and progress from 2007 to 2009 were included in the ex parte filing.



Phases	Jan 2007	Feb 2009	Percentage Increase
Phase 1: Market Kickoff	100%	100%	Complete
Phase 2: Inventory Submission	97%	100%	Complete
Phase 3: Inventory Verification	71%	100%	Complete
Phase 4: Quote Packages Submitted to Sprint Nextel	29%	100%	Complete
Phase 5: Frequency Relocation Agreement Execution	14%	99%	707%
Phase 6: Order Fulfillment	3%	61%	2033%
Phase 7: Equipment Installation	1%	47%	4700%
Phase 8: Retune DMA	1%	34%	3400%





### Relocation Challenges

The Joint Request provides an analysis of the many challenges that Sprint Nextel and the broadcaster community continue to face in the BAS transition, including those listed below.



- Complexity of BAS Transition
- Delays Caused by Weather and Other Emergencies
- Market-Prioritization Demands of MSS Licensees
- Avoiding Material Disruptions to Broadcaster Operations
- Delay in TV Transition
- Competing Priorities for Vendors
- Bankruptcy Filings:
  - Pappas Telecasting – thirteen BAS systems
  - Tribune Company – nineteen BAS systems
  - Young Broadcasting – thirteen BAS systems
- Tower Climbing Hazards
- State Contracting Requirements
- Helicopter Constraints
- Aviation Disasters and Capacity Limitations
- Competing Priorities for Vendors
- Capacity Limitations
- Helicopter Constraints

- State Contracting Requirements

### Live News Coverage Must be Protected

The request stresses that the Joint Parties believe that it is extremely important that BAS operations remain free from interference until the transition is complete. It states that, "Broadcast television serves as an important source of news for local communities and the entire country. As both Congress and the Commission have recognized, the provision of local news and emergency information is a cornerstone of communications policy in the United States. This goal will be undermined if the key element in the provision of local news, *i.e.*, live reporting using electronic newsgathering, is subject to interference. Accordingly, combined with the Joint Parties' commitment to work with MSS interests in satisfying their independent obligation to relocate BAS, the Joint Parties request that the Commission take such actions as are necessary to prevent interference to both ENG and fixed operations on BAS frequencies until this transition is complete."

### Status

On February 27, 2009, the FCC waived the relocation deadline for a period of 45 days, until April 19, 2009, in order to provide the Commission with time to consider the issues raised by the Supplemental Request. On March 9, opposition to the Request was filed by ICO Satellite Services, one of the MSS licensees, with further comments from Terrestar, the other licensee. Reply comments from the Joint Parties were filed on March 19, rebutting the objections to the extension. The matter currently rests with the Commission.

Click [here](#) for the full text of the Supplemental Joint Request Concerning the BAS Relocation. Further information on the 2 GHz relocation project is at: [www.2ghzrelocation.com](http://www.2ghzrelocation.com).

