

FCC Launches Website to Keep Broadcasters Informed on Auctions

The FCC yesterday launched a website that aims to keep broadcasters informed and engaged in the upcoming incentive auctions.

The new LEARN website (www.fcc.gov/learnprogram) provides access to a range of information and resources that the FCC hopes will help broadcasters and other stakeholders make more informed business decisions about participating in the incentive auction, which the FCC anticipates holding in 2014.

One of the features on the website is an 11-page summary of the broadcast incentive auction process, prepared by the Incentive Auction Task Force staff. The summary highlights the key issues considered in the broadcast incentive auction notice of proposed rulemaking.

The FCC has repeatedly said that bringing broadcasters up to speed on the auctions will be key to getting the most of the auction, the revenues from which will go to fund a nationwide interoperable network for first responders called FirstNet.

The FCC has had its work cut out for it in getting broadcasters to participate in the auction. yesterday

Chairman Julius Genachowski told attendees at the National Association of Broadcaster's (NAB) annual conference in Las Vegas in April that selling off their spectrum through the auctions "presents an unprecedented opportunity... to improve their financial position."

Genachowski has repeatedly argued that broadcasters could get large cash infusions for selling off their airwaves and could share a channel or move to VHF if they chose to stay on the air.

As with the wireless industry, spectrum is the lifeblood of broadcasters - without it, they cannot operate. However, some television stations are struggling to remain profitable amid competition from audience-eroding online content. For them, selling off their spectrum assets could provide a viable exit from the business.

Still, broadcasters have been resistant to the idea.

During a keynote at the show last April, NAB CEO Gordon Smith voiced suspicion about the wireless industry's long-term objectives and did not encourage NAB

FCC Launches Website to Keep Broadcasters Informed on Auctions

Published on Wireless Week (<http://www.wirelessweek.com>)

members to participate in the auctions, instead warning them of further encroachment by mobile operators.

"Recent press reports quote the telecommunications industry saying the spectrum legislation passed by Congress is only the beginning - a 'down payment' of what they're seeking in terms of access to the airwaves," he said in his prepared remarks. "They want us out of this game. We can't let down our guard."

Broadcasters were wary of selling off additional airwaves so soon on the heels of the transition to digital television and pushed hard to ensure the auctions were completely voluntary.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/28/2015 - 1:49am):

<http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2013/01/fcc-launches-website-keep-broadcasters-informed-auctions>