FCC Lays Out Timeline for Incentive Auctions

Ben Munson

The FCC today laid out its timeline for the 600 MHz Broadcast Incentive Auctions [1] taking place in mid-2015.

In its plans for 2014, the FCC set aside the most time for the rulemaking process and the development and testing of the auction system.

The first half of 2014 will see the progress of the Report & Order as well as public notice periods for auction points like geographic areas, repacking and feasibility checking and inter-service interference. Rulemaking in the second half of 2014 will be focused on auction comment and procedures with the application process for both the reverse and forward auctions beginning in early 2015.

The FCC plans to conclude TV testing before the first half of 2014 but development and testing of feasibility checkers, forward auction systems and reverse auction systems will continue throughout 2014. Demonstrations of the auction software are expected to begin in 2015.

Should everything proceed as planned, actual bidding will begin in mid-2015 and eventually give way to the payment and licensing period that will continue until the end of 2015.

Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel outlined [2] the FCC's need for transparency throughout the process and pushed for one-to-one outreach from the Incentive Auction Taskforce in order to maximize broadcaster participation.

CTIA issued a statement cheering on the Commission's solidification of the Incentive Auctions timeline.

"While we are eager to see this spectrum brought to market as soon as possible, we recognize the complexity of this undertaking and commend Chairman Wheeler and the FCC's Incentive Auction Taskforce for their efforts to advance this important proceeding and their commitment to conducting this significant auction by middle of 2015," CTIA President and CEO Steve Largent said in a statement.

During the meeting, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler and the rest of the Commission took turns strongly praising CTIA's new channel sharing pilot program involving two over-the-air TV stations in Los Angeles. The consensus was the initiative will yield important data on how broadcast spectrum can be efficiently relinquished for auction to mobile broadband providers with minimal or no impact on service.

http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2014/01/fcc-lays-out-timeline-incentive-auctions

Links:
[1] http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-325343A1.pdf
[2] http://www.fcc.gov/document/incentive-auction-task-force-presentation