



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Association of Public Television Stations and DHS  
Put Digital Emergency Alert and Warning System to the Test**

*Pilot Project Will Use Public Television's Digital Infrastructure to  
Enhance the Delivery System for Presidential Alerts and Warnings*

WASHINGTON – The Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) and the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today tested Phase Two of its Digital Emergency Alert System (DEAS). This project demonstrates how the Department of Homeland Security can improve and disseminate public alerts and warnings during times of national crisis through the use of local public television's digital television broadcasts.

John Lawson, president and CEO of the Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) said, "This project demonstrates how the capabilities of America's public broadcasters can be utilized to dramatically enhance the ability of the President of the United States to communicate with the American public during a national crisis."

"The partnership between APTS and the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA is a major step forward in laying the foundation for a new generation alert and warning system," said Lawson. "The current EAS has its roots in the Cold War, and still relies on technology from that era. You had to be watching one of the major networks or listening to a radio station to have a chance of receiving the alert. What we are announcing today is an alert system for the mobile, networked, and digital America of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

"Digital capabilities will improve the reliability, flexibility and security of the emergency alert system," said David Paulison, Director of FEMA. "This more efficient system will better serve first responders and government officials, as well as provide the American public timely information so they can safeguard themselves and loved ones in times of emergencies."

APTS demonstrated the capabilities of digital broadcasting through a two-year project in the National Capital Region. The initial phases of this project included PBS, WETA, twenty-five other public television stations across the country, the FCC and NOAA. APTS and FEMA were also joined by partners in the commercial television, cable, cellular, paging and radio industries. SpectraRep, a professional services firm, provides technology and management consulting services to the television stations.

Lawson continued, "Public television is dedicated to public service. Our stations and the communities that support them, as well as state legislatures, foundations and the federal government, have raised over one billion for digital conversion. Our stations are using the powerful digital technology to bring new services to those they serve, including HDTV, new standard definition channels and rich media content delivered directly to PC's. Today, we take a major step forward in using this same digital infrastructure to enhance public safety. The public will be safer because of this project."

Lawson concluded, “Public service is in the DNA of public television. Digital television is allowing us to roll out a new generation of content and services for the American people. We’ve always been about enhancing lives. Now we can help save lives as well.”

**About DHS-FEMA**

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA’s continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

**About APTS**

The Association of Public Television Stations is a nonprofit membership organization established in 1980 to support the continued growth and development of a strong and financially sound noncommercial television service for the American public. APTS provides advocacy for public television interests at the national level, as well as consistent leadership and information in marshaling support for its members: the nation’s public television stations.

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