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***2008 Annual Meeting & Conference  
National Educational Broadband  
Services Association (NEBSA)***

***BRIDGING THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE***  
Newport Beach, CA (Feb. 19, 2008)

**Welcome, and thank you for the chance to speak with you again. I  
have two goals this morning.**

- **The first is to celebrate with you the past 30 years, with all the accomplishments and old friends.**
- **Second is to lend a voice – and willingness to help – to future endeavors so that the National ITFS Association under its new name – the National Educational Broadband Services Association – continues to play a vital leadership role in education.**

**The latter is the heart of my remarks, but obviously it makes sense to start with a brief look back at what we've accomplished together.**

**Let's start with your longtime president Ted Steinke, whom I got to know in early 1994, a few months after I came to the association as vice president. We helped tell the ITFS story in our newsletter *Spectrum* at the time, creating our own news channel in a publication we had hand-delivered to every member of Congress and the U.S. Senate each month to keep up the profile. What a guy! I've never met anyone so dedicated through the years to a volunteer cause. Proof positive is the enduring success of this organization. In a smaller way that I saw first hand was the way he's work on thoughtful edits to WCA By-Laws when he served on our WCA Board of Directors. Talk about thankless work! Well, Ted, thank you! But I must say you've been blessed. I'll call him the Sophia Loren of our industry – he looks the same, or even better, the more the decades pass!**

**Let me touch also – but briefly only because it's such a familiar story – of the more recent successes of Ted's successor Dr. Patrick Gossman in helping save the spectrum from confiscation in the battles nearly a decade ago, and then the consensus process at the FCC whereby licensees won the right to mobile flexible use. What a battle that was! And what an effective leader Patrick was! He could turn around a high-level discussion with one of his apt arguments, delivered**

so authoritatively in his radio-announcer voice. The most memorable and pivotal time was at a big meeting at the U.S. Department of State about this time in the year 2000 just, as the U.S. devising its positions before the every-three-years *World Radio Conference 2000* that year in Turkey. Knocking down the old “spectrum sharing” argument that’s often raised by interlopers on such occasions, he got up and told the assembled U.S. leaders (including the *U.S. World Radio Conference* Ambassador Gail Schoettler) a story about a house. It went something like this: “Someone says, ‘I see you’ve got a nice house, and I see that you’re not using all of it right now while you undergo renovations. I’d like to move in, and will plan to be doing so soon.’” That helped change the momentum, and win the day, big time.

Looking ahead, however, no one can rest on the laurels. You’re only as good as your next project. I’d like to challenge those in the room – both educators and commercial providers alike – to think big, and prove to the world that it was right to maintain an educational vision for vital advanced services with the help of this spectrum. There’s a variety of ways that so many of you are already working on. But I think it apt to affirm right at the outset of this anniversary convention that nothing less than clear commitment and visible success

is required, especially given the magnitude of the educational needs of the country.

It was at this convention a year ago that Monsignor Michael Dempsey described to me the serious problems afflicting urban educators in parochial and public schools alike in New York City. The old labor-intensive educational methods aren't work, and cannot work going forward, he said. I invited him to share these views more broadly at WCA's annual convention last June along with Dr. O'Neal Smitherman, the pioneering VP and CIO from Ball State University in Indiana, in a session moderated by former FCC Commissioner Susan Ness. It provided extraordinary insights into problems – and solutions – that are enabled by broadband, much as your own convention keynote last year did in describing a pioneering laptop-only high-school in Arizona.

Monsignor Dempsey described his hope of establishing a blue-ribbon panel of educators, industry leaders and general thought-leaders to address these kinds of problems on an ongoing basis. I'd like to support that concept, with the view that we need new missions – and few are more worthy or exciting than harnessing the power of these advanced services.

**None of this is easy, however, and we have to avoid in particular the dangers of high-flown rhetoric. That obscures the difficult choices that are always present in any endeavor.**

**Therefore, I've followed closely the controversy surrounding the One Laptop One Child program designed to provide inexpensive laptops instead of textbooks to large numbers of children, both in the U.S. and internationally. It turns out that one company was undercutting the program by trying to convince government officials to buy \$300 computers instead of those for about \$150 under the One Laptop One Child program.**

**We plan to explore in depth that and other similar issues at WCA's annual convention, which is from April 21-23 in Washington, DC. At new time aimed to coincide with the launch of mobile WiMAX in that region by Sprint Nextel, we're aiming to take WCA to a whole new level of focusing on these kinds of exciting applications. They include not just education, but also health IT, public safety, disaster relief. The possibilities include almost the entire range of how we live and work, and I think it's the future of WCA (and perhaps similar organizations) as illustrated by this chart.**

**If our organizations simply deliver government relations largely supported by membership dues we missing a lot of the purpose – and excitement of what we’ve worked so long and so hard to achieve in our many battles together. Whatever the specifics, let’s pick the right issues and the right fights. We’ve got winning tradition, and let’s not rest on our laurels when there’s so much that’s so worthwhile still to be done!**

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