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Keller and Heckman LLP
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FCC Acting Chairman Michael Copps Signals Changes Ahead

Last week, Commissioner Michael J. Copps was selected as FCC Acting Chairman and immediately signaled a change in management style at the FCC. In a speech to FCC staff, Copps identified key areas for improvement at the Commission including, how the various Bureaus work with each other; how the Commissioners communicate with one another and the Bureaus; and how the Commission communicates with the public. Copps also urged prompt action from staff stating "we have sitting, in many nooks and crannies, backlogs of routine items from stakeholders seeking clarification or a license or some other non-hot button request. Some of these decisions might actually help boost our sagging economy, so they are timely and important. I would ask that you work with your supervisors to catalogue these items and develop a plan for addressing them at the Bureau level where appropriate and at the Commission level if need be."

Economic Stimulus Package Contains Telecom Funding

Politicians on Capitol Hill are moving forward with a massive economic stimulus package that apparently will contain funding provisions for new telecommunications services. On January 28, 2009, the U.S. House passed an economic stimulus bill that contains a total of \$6 billion to build out broadband infrastructure. The Senate is considering a version of its own stimulus package that includes \$9 billion to bring broadband to unserved and underserved areas. The legislation also includes \$11 billion for a U.S. Department of Energy program to assist the deployment of communications intensive smart grid technology by utilities.

Congress Moves to Delay Digital Television Switch

Congress recently attempted to delay the February 17, 2009 deadline for full power television stations to convert from analog to digital broadcasts in response to last minute concerns that the public was not ready for the switch. On January 26th, the U.S. Senate passed a bill to delay the DTV transition until June 12, 2009. Two days later, however, a similar bill failed a vote in the House of Representatives. The Senate reintroduced essentially identical legislation shortly thereafter and the House is expected to vote again this week. President Obama has indicated that he would sign the extension.

Keller and Heckman LLP at Rural Electric Cooperative Conference

Keller and Heckman LLP partners Jack Richards and Tom Magee will give a presentation entitled "Pole Attachment Developments" at Legal Seminar No. 49 sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association during its Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 14, 2009. The presentation will explain the FCC's pole attachment rulemaking proceeding, State PUC and legislative activity, and pole-related easement and ROW issues. Please contact Jack (richards@khlaw.com; 202-434-4210) or Tom (magee@khlaw.com; 202-434-4128) if you have any questions.

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