

press release

THIRTEEN/WNET NEW YORK TO BEGIN PROTOTYPE TESTING OF **SMART NETS**
EMERGENCY INFORMATION DISSEMINATION SYSTEM

Memorandum of Understanding With New York City Fire Department Sets Stage For Critical Test Phase

April 15, 2004—NEW YORK, NY – Thirteen/WNET New York, the flagship public television station of the New York metropolitan area, will begin testing a prototype of its Smart Dissemination Networks (Smart Nets) system in May 2004.

Thirteen has received a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the New York City Fire Department and is fashioning its first on-the-street demo of the system in conjunction with the FDNY.

Smart Nets, a cooperative homeland security initiative involving federal, state and local government and public television, has been in development for the past year under a contract from the National Technology Alliance (NTA), which manages and oversees the program. The project is in collaboration with Rosettex Technology & Ventures Group™. Rosettex is a joint venture between Sarnoff Corporation and SRI International.

Smart Nets, a two-way broadband emergency communications delivery system, is designed to make use of Thirteen's digital spectrum for distributing emergency alerts, emergency response information, and command and control information to the public, first responders, and homeland security personnel throughout the New York metro region.

“Our goal is to put a lifesaving communications system in the hands of our region's first-



responders as quickly as possible,” said William F. Baker, president and CEO of Thirteen/WNET. “Just a little under a year after we launched development on this groundbreaking project, we are ready to take it from concept to the streets of New York City for prototype testing. We are delighted that the FDNY has so enthusiastically agreed to collaborate with us in this initial test phase, so that we can begin to bring their needs into the equation. Later this year, we will also work with the New York Police Department and other agencies to further refine the design.”

“The FDNY is very excited about the kinds of capabilities that Smart Nets will provide our units in the field,” said Deputy Fire Commissioner of Support Services Milton Fischberger. “We have taken significant steps in improving our communications infrastructure since 9-11. The addition of Smart Nets will only further increase the scope of our ability to communicate to our members, and in turn, the ability to efficiently operate at emergencies.”

As Smart Nets enters its prototype testing phase, Thirteen will be inaugurating a new, digital ITFS (Instructional Television Fixed Service) transmitter at its Empire State Building facilities, which will be used to pioneer use of this valuable spectrum, providing an important new service for public safety agencies operating in New York City.

For the upcoming tests, FDNY is providing location assistance, vehicles and sample data. During the testing, FDNY will assess the viability of using the Smart Nets platform to distribute video, sensor data and requests for additional information to and from FDNY’s new, wireless electronic command boards in the field back to the Fire Department Operations Center (FDOC).

The Smart Nets prototype will harness Thirteen’s licensed, digital ITFS (2.5GHz) 6 MHz channel allocation to provide two-way, over-the-air communication, even with those on the move in the field of disaster, and allow the sending and receiving of live audio, visual and text data between first responders and commanders at a central location directing operations.

“We now have the overall Smart Nets design structure in place,” said Stephen Carroll-Cahnmann, director of Digital Convergence for Thirteen/WNET. “The communications flow will

enable commanders to transmit critical data to Thirteen/WNET's master control, where it will be routed through the station's primary digital ITFS downlink transmitter at the Empire State Building and then beamed to a special receiver handled by a first-responder at an emergency site.

"Emergency workers will be able to take full advantage of ITFS spectrum rules, regulated by the FCC, to communicate back to the command center over Thirteen's licensed channel, updating the situation or requesting more information," Cahnmann added. "This is the unique aspect of this system. The architecture turns a traditionally one-way communications stream into a two-way band. In the event of a failure of cellular and landline communications during a catastrophe like that of September 11, 2001 or the blackout of August, 2003, Smart Nets would enable first-responders on the scene to remain in continuous contact."

Testing on the prototype will continue in New York City for several months.

.....

About the NTA

The National Technology Alliance (NTA) is a U. S. Government program established in 1987 to influence commercial and dual-use technology development. The NTA's purpose is to discover, initiate or accelerate commercial technology development to meet U.S. national security and defense technology needs. The National-Geospatial Intelligence Agency serves as the Executive Agent of the NTA on behalf of the U.S. Government. For more information about the NTA, visit www.nta.org.

About Rosettex

Rosettex Technology & Ventures Group, based in Rosslyn, Virginia, translates research and developmental technology into solutions using a unique business model. Rosettex has assembled a team of 64 partners representing major technology consulting firms, established and new companies, independent research institutes, premier academic institutes and government contractors. Rosettex includes the Rosettex Venture Fund, a venture capital fund that invests in technologies, products, and companies that address broad national security needs. For more information, visit the Web site at www.rosettex.com.

About Thirteen/WNET

Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Stage on Screen*, *EGG the arts show*, and *Cyberchase* – as well as the work of Bill Moyers – to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as The Ethnic Heritage Specials, The New York Walking Tours, *New York Voices*, *Reel New York*, and its MetroArts/Thirteen cable arts programming. With educational and community outreach

projects that extend the impact of its television productions, Thirteen takes television “out of the box.” And as broadcast and digital media converge, Thirteen is blazing trails in the creation of Web sites, enhanced television, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, educational software, and other cutting-edge media products. More information about Thirteen can be found at www.thirteen.org.

.....

Press Contact:

Kellie Specter

Thirteen

212-560-3009

specter@thirteen.org