



MEDIA RELEASE

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APCO INTERNATIONAL RECOGNIZES WELDON FOR HIS WORK TO IMPROVE FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNICATIONS

WASHINGTON (11 Apr.) – U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), vice chairman of the House Armed Services and Homeland Security Committees, will be recognized this evening by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International, Inc. for his work in Congress to improve the interoperability of first responder communications.

“Last year, Hurricane Katrina devastated parts of our nation reminding us once again of the importance of communications in emergency response and of the issues that need to be resolved before we face anything like it again in the future,” said APCO International President Wanda McCarley. “Congressman Weldon has been a great advocate for us over the past year on several issues including the establishment of a hard date for the digital television transition.”

APCO International is the world’s oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications. Congressman Weldon will be receiving the Leadership in Legislative Service Award during the APCO International Second Annual Leadership in Policy Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C. This award is given for exemplary legislative leadership on public safety communications issues.

“I am honored to receive this award and am pleased that Congress has finally passed legislation that will require television broadcasters to allocate the spectrum promised to first responders for public safety use almost 10 years ago,” said Congressman Weldon.

In 1997, Congress mandated 24 MHz of television spectrum be set aside for public safety use to enable emergency workers to better communicate in times of disaster. A loophole in the law, however, allowed television broadcasters to put off allocating the spectrum. Since then, major national disasters like the attack upon the World Trade Center in September 2001 and Gulf Coast Hurricanes Katrina and Rita just last year has heightened awareness of the need for date certain spectrum allocation.

Founder of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus and a national advocate on first responder issues, Congressman Weldon helped lead an effort to have the broadcast spectrum freed up by a hard date, and to include funding for a \$1 billion “Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program” in the Budget Reconciliation legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year. In addition, Weldon helped introduce the Homeland Emergency Response Operations (HERO) Act, which also sets a hard date for spectrum allocation.

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