

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- NOAA Weather Radio is uniquely capable, and for the foreseeable future, irreplaceable, as a nationwide warning-dissemination system. Its good-governance features are many. The network's status as a wholly government-owned dissemination system with in-home alarm capability frees citizens from any dependence on private media for critical warning information, uniquely empowering government, *autonomously*, to fulfill one of its basic, core functions: that of warning citizens against surprise disaster.
- Current statistics on market penetration of NOAA Weather Radio are almost non-existent owing to bureaucratic proscriptions on needed research. The government's under-funded, on-again-off-again initiatives to increase awareness of the service have apparently failed to cast a bright spotlight on the merits of the service. NOAA Weather Radio has existed for more than 30 years, but anecdotal evidence indicates that only a small percentage of the population makes use of the service, or is even aware of its existence.
- For several years the National Weather Service has referred to NOAA Weather Radio as an "all-hazards" warning system over which citizens can receive bulletins concerning even non-weather related emergencies. However, relay of such non-weather related bulletins requires that originating warning

agencies previously have established access agreements with the Weather Service. Today, such agreements exist only as ad hoc initiatives at the state and local levels. There exists a need for federal leadership—a standardized, national system of access arrangements and usage guidelines—to give the full range of government entities, at all levels and in all locations, access to the NOAA Weather Radio network for relay of any official warnings they originate.

- Recent breakthroughs in chip manufacturing, specifically, “radio-on-a-chip” innovations, now offer the promise of a new generation of consumer devices—car radios, televisions, cellular telephones, pagers, and personal computers—that would be capable of monitoring NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts and other information sources so that consumers could be alerted to critical warning information wherever they may be. However, technological innovation is today out-pacing government efforts to promulgate up-to-date rules and development standards. The consumer-electronics industry is awaiting federal leadership on that count before attempting the mass-marketing of these “smart” devices.