



**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **WHUT-TV Becomes First TV Station in Nation's Capital to Support New Mobile Emergency Alert System**

*Mobile DTV Broadcasting to Deliver Rich Media Alerts: Video, Audio, Photos, Maps*

**WASHINGTON, Sept. 20, 2012** – WHUT-TV today became the first television station in the Nation's Capital to commit to launching the new Mobile Emergency Alert System (M-EAS), a life-saving application of mobile digital TV that delivers rich media emergency alerts to mobile and handheld devices.

Announced at a Capitol Hill event celebrating the commercial launch of mobile TV, WHUT's role is significant because its signal reaches more than 2 million area viewers, providing a lifeline to citizens and first-responders alike during times of natural and man-made disasters. Howard University Television's participation in the implementation phase of M-EAS also is noteworthy because of WHUT's status as the only Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) member station licensed to and operated by a predominantly African-American institution.

The new M-EAS is designed to leverage mobile digital TV broadcasting to deliver reliable, rich media alerts anywhere, anytime. Prototype LG mobile phones demonstrated on Capitol Hill today offer not only audio and visual indications of emergency alerts, but also include a vibrating mode to notify all users (including those who might be visually impaired) about an emergency

Jefferi K. Lee, 30-year industry veteran and general manager of WHUT-TV, called M-EAS a "prime example of our strategic mission to serve the community." He added, "For better or worse, Washington DC is at the epicenter of emergencies from time to time, including both man-made events and natural disasters like the derecho storm and "Snowmageddon." M-EAS, with its one-to-many broadcast architecture, will give area residents access to immediate alerts at home, at school, at work and on the go, even when the power's out and the cell network is down."



## WHUT-TV Supports Mobile Emergency Alert System

WHUT's plans to launch the M-EAS service follows a year-long, successful M-EAS pilot project where enhanced emergency alerts were transmitted and received through prototype equipment deployed in Massachusetts, Alabama and Nevada. Local TV stations in those markets showed how additional data transmitted with TV signals through digital TV broadcasting could deliver multimedia alerts to the general public and to first responders in times of natural or man-made disasters. Fisher Communications' KOMO-TV in Seattle also supported the pilot project with a compelling tsunami alert simulation.

The M-EAS pilot project was conducted by PBS with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, LG Electronics (which developed M-EAS receivers), its Zenith subsidiary (which provided technical support and co-funding for the project), and Harris Broadcast (which equips TV stations with the necessary equipment). PBS, LG and Harris are working closely with Howard University to support WHUT's M-EAS launch.

The announcement by WHUT-TV follows last week's groundbreaking announcement by WRAL-TV in Raleigh, N.C., which became the first U.S. commercial station to commit to launching M-EAS service. Other commercial and public stations are expected to also begin M-EAS service following final standardization early next year.

### *Avoiding Cellular Congestion in Emergencies*

Using conventional TV broadcasts enhanced with data and mobile Digital TV transmissions, the M-EAS project shows the system's capabilities for delivering multimedia alerts (utilizing video, audio, text, and graphics) to mobile DTV-equipped cellphones, tablets, laptops, netbooks, and in-car navigation systems in order to avoid the potential roadblocks and chronic congestion of cellular systems during emergencies.

"WHUT's important role in M-EAS implementation builds on our work over the past year proving the viability of our concept – that mobile television can be an effective way to reach millions of people with a single highly-robust broadcast, without relying on access to an overburdened mobile wireless network. We believe that the new ATSC Mobile DTV system can be harnessed to do far more than just the delivery of linear TV channels," said PBS Chief Technology Office John McCoskey, who notes that the proposed M-EAS system would also complement the current cellular-based system that transmits up to 90-character text messages to mobile phones.

The new alerting application developed during the pilot project capitalizes on existing standards for implementation. The U.S. broadcast standard for mobile TV, the ATSC A/153 Mobile DTV Standard, uses Internet Protocol (IP) at its core. Using IP allows the new application to be flexible and extensible. Data delivery, non-real-time delivery, and electronic service guides are all included. M-EAS is compliant with the international Common Alerting Protocol and designed for full incorporation into the U.S. Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.

WHUT-TV, Washington, DC, was the first public broadcasting station licensed to a predominantly African-American organization, Howard University. Founded in 1980, WHUT-TV reaches more than 2 million households in the greater Washington metro area annually. The Emmy award-winning station airs more than 3,500 hours of public affairs, educational and original programming each year including the flagship public affairs program "Evening Exchange."

## WHUT-TV Supports Mobile Emergency Alert System

Howard University is a private, research university that is comprised of 13 schools and colleges. Founded in 1867, students pursue studies in more than 120 areas leading to undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. Since 1998, the University has produced two Rhodes Scholars, two Truman Scholars, a Marshall Scholar, 24 Fulbright Scholars and 11 Pickering Fellows. Howard also produces more on campus African-American Ph.D. recipients than any other university in the United States. For more information on Howard University, call 202-238-2330, or visit the University's Web site at [www.howard.edu](http://www.howard.edu)

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