

**Remarks by Randall Stephenson
Accepting The Media Institute's
American Horizon Award
October 18, 2011**

Thank you, Ben, for those kind words ... and for the passion you bring to equal opportunity and social justice.

Those comments mean a lot coming from you.

And good evening, everyone ... it's great to be here.

Let me start by thanking Dick Wiley and the Media Institute for this award. I admire the work of this organization to promote free speech and the free exchange of ideas.

And I appreciate all that you do to support communications policies that look to the future ... policies that promote investment, innovation, and growth.

Finally, I'm pleased to share a stage with Commissioner McDowell ... a man who understands how these policies drive investment, which is the underpinning for broad-based prosperity and equal opportunity for everyone.

So ... to Dick Wiley, The Media Institute, and all our distinguished guests tonight ... thank you for this honor. It means a great deal to me.

As Ben suggested, these are exciting times across the communications ecosystem. We're seeing innovation cycles at a pace that we just haven't experienced before.

And so much of that explosion has come from the mobile Internet.

Everyone in this room uses one or more mobile devices to access news and information, entertainment, messaging, our social networks ... virtually everything ... and it all fits right in the palm of your hand.

It's hard to think of another technology shift that has had such an impact ... in so short a time.

But the fact is, we're only just getting started. We're now beginning the next stage, combining next-generation networks with the cloud.

The smartphone revolution has been a lot of fun ... but I expect the next five years to be off the charts.

We'll see services like mobile high-def video conferencing. Remote medical imaging will be commonplace. And we'll move to a world where access to content is seamless across networks and devices.

I suspect all the companies here tonight are busy creating business models to take advantage of these new capabilities.

At the same time, this new world will further democratize access, so that people in inner cities, small towns, and rural areas do not get left out of this era of broadband.

And it will accelerate social change.

We all saw the role of the mobile Internet in the Arab Spring ... in Tunisia and Egypt ... largely through texting.

Imagine the potential of smaller, inexpensive devices ... with built-in video streaming.

That's why I believe the combination of next-generation networks and the cloud is revolutionary ... it will change our world and how it operates.

So how do we make this future a reality?

It starts with investment. These kinds of large-scale mobile network deployments take massive amounts of private capital. And that require rational tax policies and a forward-looking regulatory system.

And the second building block for mobile broadband is spectrum. This vision takes lots of it, which is why the FCC and Congress have made spectrum a priority ... and I applaud their work.

At AT&T we've invested aggressively in our network. In fact, over the past four years, we invested more in the United States than any other public company.

But we're already approaching spectrum exhaust in key markets.

Despite everyone's best work, it takes years to get new spectrum ready for use. Meanwhile the need is now.

And so, as you know, we've agreed to merge with T-Mobile USA, because the combination creates additional capacity in the near term, beyond what we have today operating separately.

But above all else ... it's also because we believe it's important to accelerate the future of mobile broadband.

Let me close by saying that I've never been more excited about the future of the communications ecosystem.

We're at the start of the next big wave of mobile innovation ... one that will have dramatic and positive impacts for customers, for our economy and for society.

And I know I speak for everyone here when I say I'm proud to be part of an industry that is investing and innovating to help drive this revolution.

Thank you again for this honor.