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VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES ENHANCEMENTS TO THE GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM THAT WILL BENEFIT CIVILIAN USERS WORLDWIDE

Washington DC--Vice President Gore today announced that a second civilian signal will be provided by the U.S. Global Positioning System.

"This new civilian signal will mean significant improvements in navigation, positioning and timing services to millions of users worldwide—from backpackers and fishermen to farmers, airline pilots, and scientists," the Vice President said.

The addition of a second civil signal represents a strong commitment by the United States to civil GPS users worldwide and is a major step in the evolution of GPS as a global information utility. Much like the Internet, GPS is becoming increasingly indispensable for navigation, positioning, and timing by users around the world. Also like the Internet, GPS has become an engine of economic growth and efficiency as businesses and consumers continue to develop new and creative applications of this technology.

The addition of a second frequency will greatly enhance the accuracy, reliability and robustness of civilian GPS receivers by enabling them to make more effective corrections for the distorting effects of the Earth's atmosphere on the signals from space. GPS has always provided signals on two frequencies for military users for this purpose. Today's announcement marks a new era in which civilians will have access to the same type of capability.

"The decision announced today demonstrates that we can successfully balance the needs of civilian users with the demands of national security," Vice President Gore said. "GPS civil signals are, and will continue to be, provided free of charge to consumers, businesses, and scientists around the world. We will continue to do everything we can to protect these GPS signals and to promote GPS applications for commercial, public safety, and national security purposes."

The addition of a second civil signal has been recommended by a number of
expert panels, the most recent of which was the White House Commission on
Aviation Safety and Security, chaired by the Vice President. Today's
announcement fulfills a pledge made last March by the Departments of Defense
and Transportation to reach a decision on a second civil frequency within a
year. The Departments of Defense and Transportation co-chair an Interagency
GPS Executive Board, created by President Clinton in 1996 to manage GPS and its
U.S. government augmentations.

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