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MEDIA CONTACT
Gail Norris
202-296-6650
gnorris@comptel.org

COMPTEL Names Former Congressman Chip Pickering as New CEO

WASHINGTON, D.C. – COMPTEL, the leading trade association for the competitive communications industry, today announced that former Mississippi Congressman Chip Pickering has been named as its CEO, effective January 2, 2014. Jerry James, who has served as COMPTEL’s CEO for the past six and a half years, plans to pursue new ventures in the telecom private sector.

"On behalf of the Board of Directors, I applaud Jerry for his great dedication to the mission of COMPTEL. I look forward to working with Jerry in the future, as I know he will continue making valuable contributions to our dynamic industry," said Dale Schmick, COMPTEL chairman and COO of YourTel America Inc. "We welcome Chip to COMPTEL, and are confident that his experience and knowledge of the telecom sector will offer a strong foundation as the association continues its leadership in advocating for pro-competitive, pro-consumer policies and legislation."

"For more than 30 years, COMPTEL has been a significant force for change in the communications industry – from the break-up of AT&T, to the passage of the ’96 Telecom Act and ushering in of the information age," Pickering said. "COMPTEL’s advocacy work has been responsible for creating an environment that fostered billions of dollars of investments, product and service innovation and hundreds of thousands of new jobs."

"I commend Jerry for his stewardship, leaving the association in a strong position to continue its advocacy and support its members’ business development activities. I am looking forward to joining COMPTEL as the industry embarks on another great era of change, and hope that by working with policymakers and other industry stakeholders we, together, can develop a path for fostering greater competition and sparking new innovations in the way consumers communicate, learn and receive the vital services they need," Pickering added.

"I am proud of our accomplishments over the past six years as we have expanded our membership and strengthened COMPTEL’s reputation as the effective voice for the competitive industry. COMPTEL is well positioned and on a clear path to accomplish its goals for the future with Chip at the helm," said James. "I am sincerely grateful for the support I’ve received from the Board of Directors, our members and our employees. I wish COMPTEL and this group continued success in the endeavors that are on the horizon."

Elected in 1996, Pickering was a six-term Congressman, representing Mississippi’s Third District. During this time, he served on the House Energy & Commerce Committee, where he was vice chairman from 2002 to 2006 and a member of the Telecommunications Subcommittee. He also
was co-chairman and founder of the Congressional Wireless Caucus and an assistant minority whip of the House. Previously, Pickering worked for Sen. Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and served as a staff member on the Senate Commerce Committee, where he helped shape the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Because of his role in drafting the 1996 Act, he became well known as a Congressional leader on telecommunications issues.

Currently, Pickering is a partner with Capitol Resources LLC, a public affairs and government relations firm based in Jackson, Miss., with offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Tennessee. In this role, he has represented an array of telecom clients, including wireless, cable and competitive broadband providers, as well as non-profits and companies specializing in education, energy, technology and defense. He also played a vital role as one of the principal negotiators in developing a wireless industry agreement for interoperability in the 700 block.

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About COMPTEL
Based in Washington, D.C., COMPTEL is the leading industry association representing competitive communications service providers and their supplier partners. COMPTEL members are entrepreneurial companies driving technological innovation and creating economic growth through competitive voice, video, and data offerings and the development and deployment of next-generation, IP-based networks and services. COMPTEL advances its members’ interests through trade shows, networking, education, and policy advocacy. COMPTEL works to ensure that competitive communications providers can continue to offer lower prices, better service, and greater innovation to consumers.