

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Captioned Radio Broadcast to Enable Millions of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing to Experience NPR's Live Coverage of Presidential Election for the First Time

Election Night Broadcast Will Be Part of NPR, Harris Corporation and Towson University Effort to Make Radio Accessible to the Deaf

WASHINGTON, DC, October 21, 2008—On election night, millions of deaf and hard-of-hearing people will be able to experience live radio coverage for the first time, when NPR, Harris Corporation and Towson University simulcast the first-ever live, captioned radio broadcast. NPR News' extensive election night coverage will be simulcast in the new captioned radio format, providing accessible news and journalism to deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. Captioning for the historic broadcast is being provided by WGBH's Media Access Group.

The broadcast will be coordinated by NPR, Harris Corporation and Towson University as part of an initiative to make radio more accessible to the millions of individuals with sensory disabilities around the world. Nearly seven million people in the United States are either deaf or hard of hearing, and more than 28 million Americans report having trouble with their hearing, according to Gallaudet University.

The broadcast will be shown at private demonstrations at NPR's international headquarters in Washington, DC, and at three NPR Member stations around the United States. Stations hosting these broadcasts include: WTMD in Baltimore, WGBH in Boston, and KCFR in Denver. WGBH in Boston will be acting as a technical resource for monitoring and caption production. The demonstration taking place at NPR's headquarters in DC on election night will use WAMU's HD transmission of the captioned radio coverage. The election broadcast also will be carried simultaneously on the Internet for anyone, anywhere, to view at NPR.org.

The broadcast will leverage cutting-edge digital HD Radio™ technology to enable deaf people to experience NPR's election coverage through viewing live radio content on specially equipped receivers. WGBH's expert "stenocaptioners" will be monitoring NPR's live coverage and feeding instantaneous speech-to-text transcriptions to the participating NPR stations and NPR.org, which will stream the caption text. (WGBH will also be providing live captioning for numerous local and national TV broadcasters on election night). Nearly 1,800 radio stations are currently broadcasting in the HD Radio format.

"NPR is proud to play a role in bridging the gap that exists between the deaf and hard-of-hearing community and the unique experience that radio provides," said Mike Starling, chief technology officer and executive director of NPR Labs. "This

presidential election will not only be historic because of its diversity of candidates, but because of the diversity of people who will be able to access radio broadcasts. The deaf and hard-of-hearing population will finally be able to enjoy NPR's extensive coverage of a presidential election."

The election broadcast is the latest event coordinated by the International Center for Accessible Radio Technology (ICART), which is headquartered at Towson University in Towson, Maryland. Founding members also include NPR and Harris Corporation. Towson houses the primary administrative and academic research office for the initiative; NPR Labs in Washington, DC, provides the technology R&D and software development; and Harris Corporation supplies the transmission and research support at its radio broadcast technology center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

ICART was launched in January of this year at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, when the organization conducted a live, local over-the-air broadcast of captioned radio for an audience at the show.

"The election broadcast will clearly demonstrate how far digital radio technology has come in a very short period of time," said Howard Lance, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Harris Corporation. "The HD Radio transmission systems that Harris is installing in radio stations nationwide make it easy for broadcasters to provide captioned radio content to HD Radio receivers in the homes of people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. We hope this soon will become as commonplace as the closed-captioned content that is available to virtually any television viewer in America."

"This broadcast will not only provide deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers with accessibility to radio content but it will also allow us to assess their reactions to the prototype service," said Dr. Ellyn Sheffield, assistant professor of psychology at Towson and co-director of ICART. "We plan to conduct assessments with consumers watching this telecast to gain critical insights into how we can make display radio even better. We will also collect information from people viewing NPR's election coverage over the Internet feed. All of this feedback will add to our growing understanding of what consumers want and need when they turn on their digital radio."

HD Radio enables station operators to split their broadcasts up into multiple channels, providing several CD-quality channels for their audiences. Through this accessible radio initiative, a small amount of the total data capacity will be used to carry textual data that will be shown live on a screen on new versions of HD Radio receivers, essentially providing a closed-caption transcript of live broadcasts for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Another aspect of the project is designed to serve people who are blind or visually impaired. Specially equipped HD Radio receivers are in development

with several features to provide the visually impaired audience with better access to broadcasts, such as audio prompts that notify which direction the tuner is going, what channel the radio is on, and larger, easier-to-read text on the radios.

More information on the initiative can be found at www.i-cart.net. In addition to NPR, Harris Corporation, and Towson University, ICART member organizations include iBiquity Digital Corporation, Delphi, NDS, Radiosophy, Helen Keller Institute, Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family National Center for Accessible Media at WGBH (NCAM), Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Persons, and the G3ict, an Advocacy Initiative of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development. NPR's Accessible Radio project is funded by a grant from the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research (NIDRR).

About NPR

Since its launch in 1970, NPR has evolved into a leading multimedia company, award-winning primary news provider and dominant force in American life. NPR produces and/or distributes 1,500 hours of programming weekly, including more than 150 hours of news, information, talk, entertainment and cultural shows for the 800-plus NPR Member stations around the country, attracting 26.5 million listeners weekly. NPR also programs two 24/7 channels for Sirius satellite radio and five 24/7 music multicast channels for digital HD Radio, having served as an industry leader in HD research and development; additionally it produces nearly 90 podcasts, making it the biggest podcaster among American media companies. NPR.org offers extensive original video and audio content, hourly newscasts, concerts and free audio streaming of current and archived NPR programs.

About Harris Corporation

Harris is an international communications and information technology company serving government and commercial markets in more than 150 countries. Headquartered in Melbourne, Florida, the company has annual revenue of \$5.3 billion and 16,500 employees—including nearly 7,000 engineers and scientists. Harris is dedicated to developing best-in-class assured communications™ products, systems, and services. Additional information about Harris Corporation is available at www.harris.com.

About Towson University

Founded in 1866, Towson University is recognized among the nation's best regional public universities, offering more than 100 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences, and applied professional fields. Located in suburban Towson, eight miles north of Baltimore, the university's beautifully landscaped, 328-acre setting offers a pleasant environment for study and a diverse campus life, as well as easy access to a wealth of university and community resources. With more than 20,000 students, Towson University is the second-largest public university in Maryland. As a

metropolitan university, Towson combines research-based learning with practical application. Its many interdisciplinary partnerships with public and private organizations throughout Maryland provide opportunities for research, internships and jobs. The university's radio station, WTMD, will soon convert to digital format and will serve as the initial testing ground for the initiative. Towson University is a founding member of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU); TU President Robert Caret holds the office of president. Additional information can be found at www.towson.edu.

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