



Do You Know?

Did you know that prior to 1927, radio was regulated by the United States **Department of Commerce** as a result of the Radio Act of 1912?

Federal court decisions limited the powers of the Department of State. In particular, the Department was not allowed to deny broadcasting licenses to anyone who wanted one. The result was that many people perceived the airwaves to suffer from "chaos," with too many stations trying to be heard on too few frequencies. Others believed the government simply wanted to control content.

After several failed attempts to rectify this situation, Congress finally passed the Radio Act of 1927 (PL 632, 69th Congress, 2nd.), on February 23, 1927.

- The Act created a five-member Federal Radio Commission (FRC) to bring order to the chaotic situation that developed as a result of the breakdown of earlier wireless acts passed during the formative years of wireless radio communication.
- The Commission's primary duty was to solve the interference problem which developed after the Radio Act of 1912 became unenforceable

The FRC was given licensing authority for only one year, after which licensing authority was to revert back to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor. Other technical duties remained the responsibility of the Radio Division of the Department of Commerce.

While much of the focus of the FRC was on broadcasting, the FRC carried out provisions of the Radio Act of 1927 to license persons operating amateur and commercial transmitters.

- It also complied with new treaty obligations to assign U.S. stations ITU prefixes.
- In 1932, the FRC issued many licenses for radio services other than radio broadcast stations including about thirty thousand amateur radio stations, about two thousand ship radios, and about one thousand fixed-point land radio stations.

The following year, the President caused the creation of the FCC.

Now you know