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Hello, everyone. This is Liz Neiman, senior director of communications and public relations at the American National Standards Institute. On behalf of ANSI, I'd like to thank you for your interest in World Standards Week.

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It's always a priority for ANSI to get new stakeholders engaged in our activities – and not solely with ANSI, but with all aspects of standardization... from every interest group – industry, government, companies, consumers, academia, legal professionals... in addition to standards developers and conformity assessment bodies, both domestic and international. Every one of these groups is a critical component of a strong and effective consensus-based standardization system, where all interests are represented, so ANSI strives to reach out and engage as broad a group as possible. And one of the key ways in which we do that is through our annual World Standards Week celebration.

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Hopefully, if you're listening you're considering attending World Standards Week 2015 – and we'd love to have you – so I'd like to give you a quick overview of what World Standards Week is, why ANSI hosts it, and what you can expect as an attendee. There are numerous events to choose from – many of which have registration that is open to all – so I'll be brief in sharing some highlights. But you can get further details, including individual event agendas as they are available, at ansi.org/wsweek.

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So what is World Standards Week? In the most general sense, it's the standardization community's annual main event! More specifically, it's an annual event hosted by ANSI, to bring together our members and other stakeholders in the standards and conformity assessment community, for cooperative information-exchange on cross-cutting issues.

As you may be aware, cooperation is at the core of the U.S. standardization system. It's a market-driven, what we call "bottom-up," system that relies upon close collaboration between diverse interests in both the public and private sectors. So while government is significantly involved, it doesn't control standards development overall, nor does any other entity. Instead, marketplace and societal needs drive technology sectors to seek out and assemble relevant experts to develop responsive standards. But ensuring the integrity, fairness, and effectiveness of such an open system does require coordination – and that's where ANSI comes in.

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ANSI is a non-profit organization that coordinates the U.S. private-sector standards and conformity assessment system, and serves as a bridge to the public sector. To be clear, ANSI is not a standards developer, nor are we part of the government. Rather, we are a mission-based, non-profit organization working to ensure the integrity of the U.S. standardization system in the service of our members, the greater standardization community, and the nation.

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Some of our key roles include:

- Accrediting standards developing organizations that comply with our *Essential Requirements*, which include openness, balance, and consensus. We also approve those organizations' documents as American National Standards, or, as you may often hear, "ANSI standards."
- Providing a neutral forum where all stakeholders can come together to coordinate, discuss, and work toward consensus on standardization issues.
- Representing the U.S. in all the major regional and international standardization forums, including ISO and IEC, and accrediting U.S. Technical Advisory Groups to develop U.S. positions.
- And accrediting conformity assessment organizations of all types, like certification bodies for products, systems, and personnel.

While very diverse, all of these roles have one thing in common, and that is a reliance on broad participation and collaboration...

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...which is why World Standards Week is such an important event for ANSI. It's designed to foster open exchange among a wide range of standards-setting and conformity assessment organizations, and representatives of government, industry, and consumer interests in nearly every sector and product line, and to help them identify and strategize on common priorities. And it's intended to allow all those affected by standards and compliance measures to gain insight into current standardization issues, and learn how to get more engaged in the process.

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This year's World Standards Week will be held September 28–October 2, at the FHI 360 Conference Center in addition to a few other venues in downtown Washington, DC. All location information is available at ansi.org/wswweek, including details on the full lineup of meetings and special events, many of which are open to all.

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One highlight among them is this year's unique conference on *Standards and the Service Economy*, scheduled for Tuesday, September 29, from 1 pm to 6 pm. Leaders from international standards bodies and service providers will share their thoughts on how domestic and international standardization can meet the evolving needs of the service sector – which is showing nonstop growth. Panelists will include representatives of Disney, Citi, Oracle, the Los Angeles Department of Power and Water, ISO, and the national and regional standards bodies for the UK, Germany, Singapore, and Europe. Interactive Q&A sessions will allow for audience engagement, as will a networking reception that will follow the discussions, from 5 to 6 pm. This great event is open to all, and it's totally free of charge. You just need to pre-register at ansi.org/wswweek by September 18.

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Earlier that same day, from 9 am to 12:30 pm, ANSI will host a Legal Issues Forum focused on the top legal issues that non-profit organizations need to avoid. We'll be talking about tax issues, governance, employment compensation, and how to manage volunteers. This is always a very popular event, and this year should be no exception. This one is \$295 for ANSI members and \$350 for nonmembers. And if

you stick around for both events Tuesday, you can also take advantage of a free networking lunch in between.

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Also open to all is ANSI's Annual Business Meeting luncheon, on Wednesday, September 30, from 12:30 to 2 pm. Registration is free for ANSI members, and \$95 for non-members. Following a great buffet lunch, we'll have a guest speaker, and then ANSI chairman and president and CEO will present a brief overview of ANSI's priorities and accomplishments over the past year. This is a terrific opportunity to learn about ANSI's diverse activities and opportunities for you to get involved – whether through standards networks or collaboratives focused on priority areas; directly with standards development work; as part of a U.S. Technical Activity Group for international forums; or through ANSI accreditation, membership, various committees and forums, and a ton of other opportunities. Attending World Standards Week, and particularly the Annual Business Meeting, gives you a great chance to find out more about a broad range of ANSI's activities, talk to the leadership, network, and get involved.

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Later that day, from 6 to 9:30 pm, ANSI will host its Annual Awards Banquet and Ceremony. This is our opportunity to honor select members of the standardization community who have made a significant impact in their field and strengthened our system through their leadership or expertise. And it's our chance to put on some fancy clothes, have a beautiful dinner and drinks, and celebrate. The Awards Banquet is open to all, with a fee of \$95 for ANSI members and government employees, and \$120 non-members. Award winners and their guests, of course, are complimentary.

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If you are completely new to standardization, I encourage you to sign up for our free standards simulation event, which is taking place all day on Wednesday, September 30. The event will make use of two standards simulation exercises that are designed to gain a better understanding of what standards are and how they are developed through consensus-building processes.

Because of the interactive nature of the event, attendance at the event is limited to students or new professionals who have been involved in standardization work for five or fewer years.

This event is a great opportunity to learn more about standards and the standardization community. And by co-locating the simulation with World Standards Week, students and young, emerging professionals will have a great opportunity to meet people and learn even more. Even those of you who have been part of the community for a long time have something to gain – bring your new employees to World Standards Week so they can be part of this free training workshop, and then throughout the week they will have many opportunities for greater exposure and hands-on learning.

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The handful of events I've mentioned is just the tip of the iceberg for World Standards Week, and for the sake of brevity I won't go into detail on all the rest. But I invite you to take a look at the full lineup at ansi.org/wsweek – you'll find collaborative forum meetings for each category of ANSI membership, open to all members; specialized policy committee meetings that help guide the Institute's policy and procedures; and details about the U.S. Celebration of World Standards Day dinner, a partnership event held in tandem with World Standards Week. Pre-registration is required for all events, and the website has all the details on who can register, any costs, venue locations, and how to register online, in addition to sponsorship opportunities for interested organizations.

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I hope you've heard enough to pique your interest, and I encourage you to take a closer look at our full World Standards Week schedule. I invite you all to join us for what is sure to be an interesting, productive, and enjoyable series of events. Thank you for your time today, and see you in September!

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