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| Enhanced 911 Advisory Committee |
| E911 Activities in Washington state |
| Annual Legislative update - 2014 |

This 2015 summary report to the Legislature is submitted by the Enhanced E9-1-1 Advisory Committee pursuant to RCW 38.52.532

***9-1-1 Background***

Congress and the Washington State Legislature recognize the importance of modernizing emergency networks to a system using Internet Protocol (IP) based technology to deliver and process 9-1-1 traffic. Next Generation (NG) 911 is expected to facilitate interoperability and system resilience, improve connections between 9-1-1 call centers, and support both 9-1-1 voice and data. These capabilities enhance accessibility of emergency services to the public and provide Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) with information submitted by varied communications technologies so that responders can assess and respond to emergencies effectively.

Implementation of NG91-1 requires that dedicated 9-1-1 excise tax revenues collected from citizens be fully appropriated to this purpose. The taxes are intended to modernize the network and PSAP equipment to ensure the system is capable of processing data and voice technology, and supporting system maintenance.

State statute RCW 38.52.54 is a mandate by the Legislature assuring all monies from 9-1-1 excise taxes be used only to support the 9-1-1 system. Re-appropriation of dedicated 9-1-1 excise tax revenues to non-9-1-1 related purposes and projects in 2013 and 2014 severely hindered the implementation timeline of NG911 within the State of Washington. The implementation of the NG911 system has shifted from 2014 to 2017 due to funding shortfalls. Washington counties and the state are ineligible for federal matching

9-1-1 grant funds due to the re-appropriation of 9-1-1 taxes.

***Revenue***

For State Fiscal Year 2014, the State E9-1-1 Fund expended $21,957,199 in support of the statewide 9-1-1 enterprise. Of this amount, $12,917,443 was expended in support of the Statewide NG911 Network, state contracted 9-1-1 training resources, and support of the E9-1-1 Advisory Committee. $8,060,523 was provided to Washington State Counties as reimbursement for 9-1-1 operational expenses and modernization of 9-1-1 phone systems. Additionally, in the SFY 2014-15 biennium, appropriations from the State E9-1-1 Fund were made to the Washington Military Department ($10,842,000) and the Washington State Patrol ($3,480,000) for purposes other than 9-1-1.

***2013/2014 Highlights: Finding efficiencies***

**Regionalization Studies:** In 2013, four counties contracted for regionalization studies seeking greater efficiencies. Those counties were Benton-Franklin, and Clallam-Jefferson. As of this report, neither study has been completed due to technical, operational, or political challenges.

**New Pilot Programs:** January 2014 Thurston and Clark counties initiated a geographically diverse, dual-hosted remote prototype pilot program. This program is expected to allow counties, which choose to be a “remote” location PSAP, to reduce on-site equipment and overall costs, while increasing redundancy. The original plans reflected thirteen counties had expressed interest in linking to this pilot program. Thurston County completed their portion of the system in July 2014 and is currently prepared to host remote PSAPs. Clark County is expected to have their system complete in April 2015.

**Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet):** The ESInet provides for 9-1-1 call routing, transport, interoperability, security, and related services. The ESInet is the foundation of the Next Generation 9-1-1 system and was completed and linked to all counties in April 2012. The existing ESInet requires technology enhancements to allow the transport of Next Generation data communications. A Request for Proposal (RFP), to continue and enhance the NG911 System, is in the final approval stage and legal review process and is expected to be released within first quarter 2015.

**Coordinated Training & Outreach**: The Public Education Subcommittee is a function of the Enhanced 9-1-1 Advisory Committee. Counties collaborate on educational efforts to create additional efficiencies and team up on public outreach strategies to ensure the consumers in Washington receive critical messages related to E9-1-1. The “Know Your Location” campaign continues to be successful due to State/County collaboration.

***9-1-1 System 2014 Modernization Status***

* An RFP, to continue and enhance the NG911 System, is in the final approval stage and legal review process and is expected to be released within first quarter 2015.
* An independent Security Assessment of the current ESInet is recommended by national standards to be completed every three years and is currently in process.
* NG911 capable systems that are using a direct Session Initiated Protocol (SIP) are installed in the following counties: Franklin, Garfield, Klickitat, Lincoln, Pierce, San Juan, Stevens, Thurston, and Walla Walla.
* County primary PSAPs which continue to use obsolete 9-1-1 systems are: Columbia, Ferry, Grays Harbor, Kittitas, Lewis, Mason, Pend Oreille, Skamania, Wahkiakum, and Whitman/Asotin, as well as the WSP in Tacoma and Wenatchee.
  + There are also several secondary PSAPs using the same obsolete equipment.
  + Due to State 9-1-1 appropriation levels, inadequate funding exists to assist these counties in completing modernization efforts.
* RiverCom 911 (a regional PSAP for Chelan and Douglas Counties), Jefferson, and Clallam Counties have been approved for funding and have signed contracts to complete modernization in early 2015.
* Spokane County and Yakima County have also signed a contract and will complete their modernization in 2015.
* The following counties have systems nearing end of life and lack the ability to utilize the features of NG911 until they are replaced: Adams, Benton, Cowlitz, Grant, Kitsap, Pacific and Whatcom.
* Clark, King, Snohomish, and the WSP PSAP’s in King and Snohomish have modernized their equipment but have not yet made a direct SIP connection to the ESInet.
* The following counties are currently utilizing NG911 systems but are in need of upgrading to allow full functionality of the benefits of next generation: Island, Okanogan and Skagit.
* Interim Text to 9-1-1 progress includes final statewide policy recommendations development, security requirements, training curriculum development and public education program development.

***Challenges***

**Appropriations of State 911 excise taxes for non 9-1-1 activities:** There is a real possibility of 9-1-1 telephone equipment failures in multiple counties if a fund sweep of State 9-1-1 excise taxes happens again this year.

**Impediments to Modernization:** Reductions to the requested appropriations made by the State 9-1-1 Office to OFM has contributed in the delay of the 9-1-1 network and system enhancements. This creates an unappropriated fund balance, when in fact those monies are required for the modernization of 9-1-1 in the State of Washington.

**Declining revenues:** Wireline telephone excise tax revenue has historically been the primary source of 9-1-1 funding. Wireline 9-1-1 revenue has declined, 22% annually in 2010, 2011, and 2013. Prior to 2010, consumers subscribed to multiple telephone technologies that supported the 9-1-1 excise tax, with multiple wireline and wireless devices per household. Today many subscribers have migrated to a single device, negatively impacting the 9-1-1 tax revenue base. Additionally, the number of traditional wireless service contracts has declined as the popularity of pre-paid wireless has increased. The Department of Revenue estimates 75% of wireless consumers pay the 9-1-1 excise tax in Washington. Due to the shift in subscription services, coupled with the abandonment of multiple devices, 9-1-1 revenues are decreasing without an equivalent level of new subscribers in other technologies that support the 9-1-1 excise tax. 9-1-1 revenues are projected to continue to decline as consumers continue to shift to technology solutions that result in the abandonment of multiple services that pay 9-1-1 taxes.

**Emerging Cybersecurity and Text-to-911:** All networks are vulnerable to security intrusion. Conversion to IP technologies for 9-1-1 systems increases both capabilities and vulnerabilities to the 9-1-1 system. Funding to assure Cybersecurity in the 9-1-1 network and PSAP systems is critical. In addition to conventional computing cyber-attacks, the language used to convey text messages (SMS) also brings Cybersecurity challenges to the

9-1-1 system. Addressing security concerns and mitigating Cybersecurity risks requires that the full appropriation requested by the State E9-1-1 Coordinator’s Office be approved.

**Major 9-1-1 Outage:** On April 9 and 10, 2014, CenturyLink, Inc., experienced a network outage that affected 9-1-1 systems in six states for over six hours. In Washington State alone, 5,840 attempted 9-1-1 calls failed to reach emergency services. This major outage is the subject of a Federal Communications Commission Report and Enforcement Bureau investigation, and a Utilities and Transportation Commission Report and Enforcement Recommendation.

***Recommendations:***

The Washington State E9-1-1 Advisory Committee was created to advise and assist the State Enhanced 9-1-1 Coordinator in coordinating and facilitating the implementation and operation of Enhanced 9-1-1 throughout the state.

* The E9-1-1 Advisory Committee respectfully recommends that the Office of Financial Management, the Governor, and the Legislature fully appropriate the requested State E9-1-1 excise tax funds to address only 9-1-1 eligible items and purposes currently in Statute and Administrative Code. The appropriation would allow the State WMD Emergency Management Division State E9-1-1 Coordinator’s Office to assist local and county governments implement NG911 modernization.
* The E9-1-1 Advisory Committee recommends the Washington Department of Revenue conduct an audit in calendar year 2015 for 9-1-1 tax payment compliance on the sales of pre-paid wireless devices.

Washington State, which has been a leader for the nation in 9-1-1 services for the last two decades, has fallen behind in 9-1-1 modernization as a result of 9-1-1 excise tax fund sweeps for non 9-1-1 purposes. The result is a deterioration of county E9-1-1 PSAP operations equipment and the inability to complete the modernization of the E9-1-1 network to a Next Generation system.

In 2011, the Legislature approved a $.05 increase in the state 9-1-1 excise tax rate for wireline, wireless and VoIP services. The purpose of the tax increase was to fund the modernization of the Washington State 9-1-1 system. The citizens expect a reliable, resilient, and modern Next Generation 9-1-1 system.

Respectfully submitted by the Washington State Enhanced 9-1-1 Advisory Committee.