



May 2020 Newsletter

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State 911 Funds—Not the Panacea for State Budget Woes

There is a movement among state legislatures to re-appropriate dedicated funding for 911 systems in times of crisis to meet balanced budget requirements. This tendency is often shortsighted and serves to further compromise the integrity of current 911 systems - systems the public depend on in times of individual emergency as well as community crisis. State 911 Boards have embarked on disciplined, comprehensive, and farsighted undertakings to modernize their states' 911 infrastructures. The ultimate purpose is to migrate public safety agencies to a more resilient, robust, and technologically modern system capable of being integrated into the entirety of public safety and first responder operations across the islands. This migration to Next Generation 911 (NG911) systems is a task that must be undertaken by the thousands of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) across North America. Communications technology advances have rapidly mandated this movement to increase the reliability and functionality of 911 to all located users of mobile and data communication services.

911 in the Era of Pandemics

The current Corona virus pandemic has only highlighted the need for change. While the current 911 systems are still robust enough to manage the call volumes, it has amplified the shortcomings of the current E911 systems. In a recent interview, Brian Fontes, Executive Director of the National Emergency Number Association, states:

"This is the first time we've had something affect the whole country at the same time," Fontes said. "Prior to this we had hurricanes, fires, tornados, earthquakes, where 911 can rally around and help those 911 centers that may be in harm's way. Today with this pandemic, this affects everyone....As we look at a post-COVID-19 environment, we have to take a serious look at how next-generation 911 is deployed and get it deployed nationwide so that we can move information and data from point A to B or from one point to multiple points and allow for virtual PSAPs to exist and to allow for seamless operations regardless of where people are..... In today's world you can partner with another PSAP but you may not be able to move the data from one PSAP to the next and that's requiring the second PSAP to reconnect with the caller to obtain information that may have been lost in the transfer."¹

What It Will Take

Unified communications technology has been successfully implemented with proven results in productivity and cost reduction in the enterprise space. This same technology is what has enabled so many to work remotely during the current COVID-19 pandemic. A broadband connection into secured company

Winbourne Consulting offers a full range of public safety services, including strategic planning, systems integration, specifications development, solution acquisition, and implementation project management and quality assurance.

¹ State Scoop April 7, 2020 <https://statescoop.com/911-call-centers-have-enough-capacity-so-far-but-upgrades-are-delayed/>

Our Areas of Expertise encompass all segments of Public Safety, including:

- PSAP Consolidation
- NG911 Strategic Planning and Implementation
- Public Safety Communications and Telephony
- Public Safety Applications and Systems Requirements and Implementation Support
- Mission Critical Facilities Design and Fit-Out
- 311 Call Centers and Implementation
- PSAP Staffing and Operations Analysis

servers and remote workers are connected to the company with access to all applications used in the office. However, this technology is only now slowly making its way into the public safety PSAP environment. The reasons can generally fall into one of several categories: financial, cultural, and operational. This article explores the financial impacts that will allow PSAPs to garner the same benefits of operating on a more modern, secure Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) supported by Next Generation Core Services (NGCS) for 911 call routing. These two elements comprise the NG911 system and can be deployed in a variety of operational and business models. Agencies are typically doing due diligence in determining the deployment that will meet the needs of PSAPs and other emergency response agencies. Activities typically include developing a Deployment Plan that will serve as a road map to contract for and deploy NG911 services, modifying operational procedures, and training stakeholders on the new system. All of these activities need to be done while maintaining current systems. Typically, there is a transitional period where the two systems, with their own respective maintenance costs, will be in active use.

E911 is truly a mission critical system for all public safety agencies. As such, the Federal Communication Commission strongly discourages this raiding of designated E911 surcharges. Further, the FCC states that those entities that make a habit of appropriating 911 funds for other purposes may not be eligible for any federal public safety grant money.

Commissioner Michael O’Rielly writes in the FCC blog:

“Even if a state is just diverting current collections because it maintains underlying balances in an existing account, the diversion generally prevents new investment in costlier, future networks as states don’t want to deplete their accounts in total. In other words, just paying to maintain older, outdated networks does not allow for growth, advancement or new technologies. But we all know that significant investment – not just maintenance – is going to be necessary to develop and implement NG911 and Federal assistance in the form of grants under the Spectrum Act is rightfully precluded from going to diverting states.”²

Appropriating 911 funds reserved for this critically necessary and timely transition to NG911 services is a short-term and a risky solution to a transitory budget shortfall. It penalizes the PSAPs and first responders and does a disservice to the public’s trust as to the purpose and intent of the fees they are dutifully pay monthly on their phone bills to support a system they have come to rely on in times of distress and urgency.

2. <https://www.fcc.gov/news-events/blog/2017/03/01/states-must-stop-raiding-9-1-1-fees>

Industry Events



APCO 2020 is the premier event for public safety communications officials, from frontline telecommunicators to comm center managers to public safety communications equipment and services vendors.

[Go to the APCO 2020 website.](#)



Fire-Rescue
International
IAFC's Conference & Expo

August 19 - 21, 2020
Phoenix, AZ

Clients include city, county, state, and federal agencies located throughout the United States and the world, as well as countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America.

Fire-Rescue International is due to take place August 19-21. The IAFC team continues to plan for the show. We currently have no plans to postpone or cancel this event and are considering all options. This unprecedented situation is changing daily, so we remain watchful but also focused on delivering what is an extremely important event for the industry. Mindful of our duty of care, we are in regular communications with our hotel partners, as well as monitoring the recommendations of health advisory bodies. We will continue to keep this page up-to-date as information comes available.

For more info visit: <https://www.iafc.org/events/fri/general-info>



Important Announcement: Date Change for #NENA2020

After careful consideration NENA has decided to reschedule the NENA 2020 Conference & Expo, previously planned for June 13-18 in Long Beach, CA. **The new dates are September 24-29 and Long Beach remains our host city.** With the well-being of attendees, exhibitors, sponsors, and volunteers as the number one priority, it is clear that rescheduling #NENA2020 is the only responsible course of action at this time.

Please take a moment to let us know if you have any questions regarding the date change; your voice matters and we care about your feedback. We look forward to seeing you in the fall. Until then, stay safe and healthy!

If you are a #NENA2020 registrant, speaker, or exhibit coordinator, check your inbox for a message sent on the morning of May 1 containing further event-rescheduling details specific to you.

For additional info visit: <https://www.nena.org/nena2020>

Articles of Interest



SMART Act Looks to Help Local Government COVID Response

As COVID-19 has slammed local governments, they've been forced to dip into reserve funds and come to terms with the prospect of years of economic hardship due to skyrocketing costs and loss of tax revenue.

The total cost to counties during the pandemic is estimated at \$144 billion through Fiscal Year 2021, according to National Association of Counties (NACO) President and Douglas County Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson. County leaders said federal legislation could provide a lifeline as they consider making deep budget cuts that would mean furloughing or laying off essential frontline workers.

To read the full article visit: <https://gcn.com/articles/2020/05/22/smart-act-local-gov->

[covid-help.aspx](https://www.winbourneconsulting.com/covid-help.aspx)



The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Released Two Resources for Public-Safety Communications Managers

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The first is a checklist to help statewide interoperability coordinators (SWIC), who often deploy to a state's emergency operations center (EOC). It is good practice for a SWIC to bring everything they might need when they are deployed so that they do not place additional burden on the limited resources at the EOC. SWICs that have never been deployed before, or SWICs that are experienced and need a reminder, may not be aware of what they do not have until they already arrive at the EOC...

CISA also released the Guidelines for 911 Centers: Pandemic document suite, which aims to assist public-safety partners across all levels of government when developing plans and actions regarding governance, procedures, staffing, and cleaning and disinfecting in response to a pandemic.

The full article can be viewed at:

<https://www.rrmediagroup.com/Features/FeaturesDetails/FID/986>



Connection Matters: Technology, Communication and Connection

Written by Lisa Frank

COVID-19 is forcing us to adopt the technologies that some of us have successfully avoided up to this point. Even those who are comfortable with technology acknowledge the tactile differences between in-person and virtual meetings. A few task force members with whom I often work have resolutely refused to learn new platforms. They insist that documents be attached to emails as Word documents. I'm happy to do it. I understand their frustration with the learning curve and idiosyncrasies of each new "app." COVID-19 is not so flexible. Some of those task force members have now been directed to pack up necessary items from their brick-and-mortar offices and work or deliver classes remotely.

In this surreal time, how do we use technology to connect and collaborate with one another? How do we view technology as a tool to enhance communication and productivity while acknowledging that there is no substitute for human touch?

To read the complete article visit: <https://urgentcomm.com/2020/05/20/connection-matters-technology-communication-and-connection/>



Using Data to Make Better Decisions on Project Selections and Schedules Under CARES Act

Now that the \$2T Phase 3 portion of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act has been officially signed into place, attention is being turned towards a potential Phase 4.

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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/winbourne-consulting-llc?trk=biz-companies-cym>

As we know, Phase 3 will provide direct payments to individuals, expand unemployment benefits and provide relief to small businesses and health care systems. A Phase 4 will be needed to help jump start the US economy using infrastructure investing as the key part of the stimulus package.

To read the full article visit:

<https://www.americacityandcounty.com/2020/05/22/using-data-to-make-better-decisions-on-project-selections-and-schedules-under-cares-act/>

**We Are Interested in Your Thoughts on the Above Topics.
To share them with us, please:**

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