Utah 911 Committee and NG9-1-1 Preparation

Consumers currently have available and use 21st-century computing and communication devices and technologies that are increasing sophisticated and mobile. They include and are not limited to:

- Highly-capable cell phones with voice, video, pictures, sound and text capabilities with sophisticated applications (iPhone example);
- PCs with voice, video, pictures, sound, text and applications such as "soft" phones (software-only phones) and home monitoring systems;
- Transportation systems with cars, hazmat cargo carriers, trucks, trains, etc. that are being outfitted with location technology, intelligent sensors and automated incident notification technologies that provide only data (so-called "data-only" devices);
- Businesses and homes with sensors and unattended, automated alarm and event "data-only" notifications; and
- Personal devices such as clothing, ankle monitors, etc. with sensors and automated notifications.

Current E9-1-1 systems use 20th-century telecommunications (telephony) technology that is voice-oriented and cannot handle 21st-century computing and communication devices and technologies that supply data, video, pictures and text.

Consumers with their highly sophisticated devices expect them to support 9-1-1 services, and are quite surprised when they find out they cannot; mainly because the current E9-1-1 system cannot support the new capabilities.

NENA has been working on the NG9-1-1 system standards for the last 3-4 years and is coming close to completing the first set of specifications scheduled for release in Q1 2009.

NG9-1-1 is a complete overhaul of the Emergency Services "application" and network from the ground up. It uses modern IP-based network technologies and techniques that can handle the newer devices and products with their IP-based technologies.

NG9-1-1 is not a panacea. It will require a great deal of work to implement, especially with regard to planning and preparation. It promotes integration and interoperability, making possible a state-wide unified emergency services network that can handle large-scale disasters, assist the smallest PSAP with after-hours coverage, broadcast emergency alerts and notifications, and more.

Utah's NG9-1-1 will not happen without proactive extensive planning and preparation. To produce a statewide, unified NG9-1-1 emergency services network that will provide the services expected by Utah citizens and visitors, Utah governmental agencies need to start planning and preparing.

The Utah 9-1-1 Committee needs to start a technical evaluation of the NG9-1-1 network infrastructure needs, of which the earlier recommended fiber-based network is a start. NG9-1-1 performs all functions based on location, which means GIS system data preparation.

All Utah cities, counties and the state have the basic data needed to populate NG9-1-1 GIS system databases. This data should be entered into GIS systems that will be used by the NG9-1-1 network. Why should Utah governmental entities generate the data gleaned by 3rd-party vendors that then sell the data or services based on the data back to Utah for 9-1-1 purposes? Utah governments can control their own data and use it for the NG9-1-1 system.

PSAPs will need NG9-1-1 equipment, training, etc. before the NG9-1-1 system becomes Utah's emergency services system. Both the old telephony-based E9-1-1 system and the NG9-1-1 system will have to simultaneously operate as the NG9-1-1 system supplants and replaces the E9-1-1 system to deliver continuous, uninterrupted service to Utah's citizens and visitors.

The Utah 9-1-1 statue needs to be updated to permit planning, preparing for and deploying the NG9-1-1 system within Utah. The planning for the actual system needs to start very soon, preparation of GIS data by cities, counties and the state could actually begin nearly immediately, and as the NG9-1-1 technology becomes available for deployment, Utah will be ready to implement the 9-1-1 system of the future.

The Utah 9-1-1 Committee has a statutory mandate to "make recommendations to the division, the Bureau of Communications, PSAPs and the Legislature on" a "unified, statewide … emergency system". The current system is not "unified and statewide" and will not be able to be so. NG9-1-1 will provide such a capability.

The Utah 9-1-1 Committee needs to proactively prepare for NG9-1-1 by researching and monitoring the NENA NG9-1-1 specifications and recommendations, examining city, county, state and PSAP needs, and devising requirements for Utah's future NG9-1-1 system. Only then will Utah know what must be done and be able to estimate its cost, timeframe, etc.

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