SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS

MEETING JOINTLY

AUGUST 22, 2013
MINUTES

Senate and House Interim Committees on City, County, and Local Affairs met Thursday, August 22, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The meeting was held during the 2013 Annual Conference of the Association of Arkansas Counties.

Committee members present were Senator Stephanie Flowers; plus Representatives David Fielding, House Chair, Eddie Armstrong, Scott Baltz, Bruce Cozart, Kim Hammer, Fonda Hawthorne, Monte Hodges, Mike Holcomb, Douglas House, Joe Jett, Mark McElroy, George McGill, Micah Neal, Mary Slinkard, David Whitaker, and Richard Womack.

Other Members Present were Representatives Denny Altes, Duncan Baird, Nate Bell, Mary "Prissy" Hickerson, Andrea Lea, Homer Lenderman, and Frederick Smith.

Discussion of Public Safety Technology
Committee members attended a conference seminar facilitated by Mr. Scott Perkins, AAC Communications Director. Mr. Perkins introduced seminar panelists Mr. Noah Reiter, Smart911, Rave Mobile Media, Ms. Jill Mason, Account Representative, CodeRED Emergency Notification System, Baxter County Sheriff John Montgomery, and Cleburne County Sheriff Marty Moss.

Mr. Reiter described the Smart911 program currently accessible in 99 of the 112 emergency call centers statewide. Individuals may use the free service to create a safety profile on the Smart911 website at www.Smartt911.com. He gave examples of information individuals can place in a safety profile such as photographs of family members, utility shut-off locations, spare key locations, and medical conditions. Mr. Reiter explained that the safety profile information automatically appears on the screen of the 911 call-taker. The information helps first responders in situations such as when a child calls 911, a person suffering from a medical emergency calls, or a person hiding from an intruder calls who cannot verbalize their location.

Mr. Reiter then discussed the upgrade to the 911 system known as Smart Prepare, which will take effect in late September, 2013. Smart Prepare will be administered by the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM). ADEM and local emergency managers will work together to help communities better prepare, respond, and recover from a disaster. In the event of an evacuation, the location of citizens who have mobility limitations or don't have access to transportation, will be provided to

emergency managers. One focus of Smart Prepare is to encourage the involvement of citizens in their personal and family safety and preparedness.

Jill Mason, Account Representative, CodeRED Emergency Notification System
Ms. Mason was introduced for a presentation. She described CodeRED as a web-based mass communication system. Fifteen counties in Arkansas currently use CodeRED and the CodeRED weather warning system. The mass notification system was developed in 1998 to relay critical messages to citizens by land-line telephones, mobile telephones, texting, e-mail notification, and social media. It allows a community to target specific areas in the event of an emergency.

How technology is impacting Sheriff's offices
Mr. Perkins introduced Baxter County Sheriff John Montgomery who gave a PowerPoint presentation describing Baxter County's law enforcement website. The total population of Baxter county is 42,000. Originally, their website averaged 100 visits a month. Sheriff Montgomery discussed development of the website which has made it interactive. The website now has the ability to automatically upload warrants issued in Baxter County. Sheriff Montgomery said that within the first two years of the website's upgrade, the total number of warrants issued was reduced by 25%. He explained that many of the warrants were 15 and 20 years old. Typically warrants are issued by a judge on a particular day of the week and are then uploaded to the website. Sheriff Montgomery said once the new warrants appear on the website, they have had 15 to 20 individuals turn themselves in. Sheriff Montgomery discussed an addition to their website which displays an inmate roster with virtually live data. This addition has reduced the number of telephone calls received by the jail each week by 80%. Residents of Baxter County may now sign-up for e-mail and/or text alerts for notification of warrants issued for sex offenders and the most wanted offenders. Sheriff Montgomery said this new technology has been an asset to his office and helps law enforcement officers better serve their citizens. The number of visits to their website has increased to approximately 145,000 hits per month.

Cleburne County Sheriff Marty Moss was recognized. Sheriff Moss discussed a free phone app named "Mobile Patrol", which displays photographs of inmates housed in the Cleburne County jail. This app has become a great source of information. It is currently used in 18 counties statewide. Sheriff Moss described a program called Project Lifesaver, which is a tracking system using a bracelet with a transmitter. It is particularly helpful to families with a family member who suffers from Alzheimer's disease or dementia who has the potential to become lost. Each bracelet is uniquely identifiable to the individual.   Sheriff Moss said these types of technologies improve law enforcement techniques and enables them to better serve their citizens.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned 12:10 p.m.