

**ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON LOCAL 911 SYSTEMS  
(ACT 1171 OF 2013)**

**JULY 17, 2014  
MINUTES**

The Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems met Thursday, July 17, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station, University of Arkansas, Marianna, Arkansas.

Members of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems who were present Senator Linda Chesterfield, Senate Chair, Representative Harold Copenhaver, House Vice-Chair, Yell County Judge Mark Thone, Cabot Mayor Bill Cypert, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) Director David Maxwell, and Consumer members Joel Hoggard and Todd Woerpel.

Other legislators present were Representatives Reginald Murdock and Chris Richey.

**Opening Remarks by Senator Chesterfield and Representative Wren, Committee Chairs**

Senator Chesterfield called the meeting to order and told the committee that Representative Tommy Wren, House Co-Chair was unable to attend the meeting.

Representative Harold Copenhaver, Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Welcome by Representative Murdock and Representative Richey**

Representative Murdock thanked Senator Chesterfield and the committee for meeting in Marianna. He spoke about the importance of having an efficient and integrated 911 system and the work the committee is doing. Representative Richey also welcomed the committee and said he looks forward to learning more about 911 systems.

**Welcome by Lee County Judge Jim Keasler and Marianna Mayor Jimmy Williams**

Lee County Judge Jim Keasler was unable to attend the meeting. Marianna Mayor Jimmy Williams welcomed everyone to Marianna and said he recognizes the importance of 911 for the safety of his residents and he appreciates the work the committee is doing to enhance the statewide system.

**Welcome by Claude Kennedy, Lon Mann Cotton Research Station, U of A**

Claude Kennedy, Resident Director, Lon Mann Cotton Research Station, University of Arkansas was recognized. Mr. Kennedy said the research station originated in 1920 when meetings were held in a converted cotton storage shed. The U of A constructed the current facility, along with \$500,00 in funding provided by the City of Marianna and donors who raised the funds over a 5-year period. He also said that a new soil testing laboratory is planned. Soil testing for the entire state is done at the facility, with over 200,000 samples tested in 2013.

**Introduction of Randie Jones, the new 911 Coordinator for ADEM. Report on the status of Phase II 911 Deployment and the status of Landline Enhanced 911 Deployment by County**

Senator Chesterfield recognized Randie Jones, 911 Coordinator for the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM). Ms. Jones said she began work at ADEM three weeks ago. She is reviewing existing 911 information and contacting PSAPs statewide. She was asked to describe Enhanced 911. Ms. Jones said that Enhanced 911 provides the dispatcher the ability to know where a wireless call originated. It shows the closest cell tower and the call's coordinates.

Senator Chesterfield recognized David Maxwell, Director. Mr. Maxwell said the original funding of the 911 system were fees assessed to landline telephones. As more people have stopped using landline telephones, funding has decreased and fees for wireless service have not increased enough to make up the difference. Mr. Maxwell will present a report with suggested funding solutions at the committee meeting to be held August 21, 2014. Mr. Maxwell was asked to discuss the dollar amounts of 911 fees. He explained that rates on landline telephones were voted on in each 911 jurisdiction throughout the state. The larger populated jurisdictions established a 5% rate per landline phone and the lesser populated jurisdictions established a rate of 12%. He said the current fees for 911 on wireless phones is 65¢ per month. The monies collected on landline phones is sent directly to each local jurisdiction for the operation of its 911 system. The money collected from cell phone fees is sent to the Emergency Telephone Service Board (ETSB) for distribution to 911 Centers. A question was asked concerning comparison of wireless rates for surrounding states, plus the centralization of 911 systems. Mr. Maxwell said he has that information and will distribute to committee members.

**Report from the Arkansas Geographic Information Office (AGIO) on the Status of their 911 Mapping Project**

Shelby Johnson, State Geographic Information Officer, AGIO was recognized. Mr. Johnson gave a PowerPoint presentation and discussed a 911 mapping project AGIO is conducting. His PowerPoint demonstrated how 911 calls are handled from landline phones as compared to wireless 911 calls. Ideally, a 911 dispatcher will see where a call originates with data relaying a physical location, a road name, and information related to the call. An important element in the 911 system is precise mapping of the multiple jurisdictions and boundaries, which helps a 911 dispatcher determine which responder should receive the call. He gave examples of countywide emergency service jurisdictions: city police, county sheriffs, rural and city fire departments, each having a specific district and boundary.

Mr. Johnson emphasized that the statewide road file is a fundamental part of the 911 system. Another project his office is working on is an address point file, which will contain latitude and longitude and an assigned physical address that is provided by the 911 addressing authority. He recommends that the address point file should be completed in all counties. He explained that the addressing authorities, those responsible for assigning physical addresses, differs across the state. Many municipalities want to govern the process to control street naming and address

assignment. There is no uniformity. There are 159 cities and 75 counties that assume the role of assigning physical addresses. AGIO has begun work on a survey of PSAPs to assist ADEM. Mr. Johnson reviewed survey responses his offices has received. In response to a survey question regarding PSAP funding sources, responses ranged from funds distributed by the ETSB board, local landline surcharges, and interlocal agreements between a municipality and county. Mr. Johnson said it appears there are as many combinations of funding as there are 911 centers. Mr. Johnson was asked to provide his presentation to committee members by e-mail.

**Senator Chesterfield recognized Renee Hoover, Board Administrator and Gary Gray, Chairman, ETSB for comments**

Senator Chesterfield recognized Renee Hoover, Board Administrator and Gary Gray, Chairman, ETSB. Ms. Hoover discussed funding of 911 centers by the ETSB. Wireless fees were increased from 50¢ to 65¢ and the disbursement rates increased from 49% to 83.5% following the passage of Act 1221 of 2009. The ETSB Board determines the distribution of funds remaining in the Interest Bearing Account prior to the increase on the amounts will continue to be based on the population of the 911 jurisdictions. This establishes the amount of funding available to each county and PSAP. Currently 40 counties and/or PSAPs have funds remaining in the account. Ms. Hoover reviewed the funds the ETSB received in wireless fees by fiscal year:

- Fiscal year 2011, \$15 million
- Fiscal year 2012, \$16 million
- Fiscal year 2013, \$16 million
- Fiscal year 2014 to date, \$15 million

She also provided funding amounts distributed to the PSAPs on a quarterly basis:

- Fiscal year 2012, \$13 million
- Fiscal year 2013, \$10 million
- Fiscal year 2014, first quarter, \$3 million

Senator Chesterfield recognized Gary Gray, Chairman, ETSB. Mr. Gray reviewed (Handout) titled 9-1-1 Wireless and explained the funding distribution of wireless fees by the ETSB. Mr. Gray suggested the committee consider legislation to create a state board for oversight and guidance for 911 Centers. He reviewed (Handout) titled NG9-1-1, (Generation 911). The handout illustrates two screens as seen by a 911 dispatcher upon receipt of a 911 call. Prior to implementation of Phase I, the screen a dispatcher saw only provided an address and the phone number of the caller. After Phase I service was implemented, a dispatcher saw a screen display closest wireless cell tower located near the caller. Mr. Gray explained that when Next Generation 911 technology is available and implemented, a 911 caller will have the ability to text a message to a 911 Center. He told the committee that it is very important that all of the 911 centers work together on any efforts to implement Next Generation 911.

Senator Chesterfield recognized Tony Bond, Lee County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator. Mr. Bond spoke about his experience with 911 service and suggested consideration be given to allowing fire, police, and OEM

personnel the ability to receive the information on their mobile phones when responding to 911 calls.

Representative Copenhaver discussed his concern about the lack of a centralized 911 system.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Upon adjournment, members toured the 911 Call Center at the Marianna Police Department.

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