

**ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON LOCAL 911 SYSTEMS  
(ACT 1171 OF 2013)  
SENATE & HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

**AUGUST 13, 2014  
MINUTES**

The Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems met with the Senate and House Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development on Wednesday, August 13, at 10:00 a.m. at the Delta Center on the ASU Campus, Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Legislative committee members present were Senators Linda Chesterfield, Senate Chair, Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems, and John Cooper, and Representatives Harold Copenhaver, House Vice-Chair, Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems, Scott Baltz, Charlotte Douglas, Lane Jean, Joe Jett, Kelley Linck, Homer Lenderman, Stephen Meeks, James Ratliff, and Matthew Shepherd, House Chair, House Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development Committee.

Other Legislators present were Representatives Mary Broadaway, David Hillman, Monte Hodges, Sue Scott, and Wes Wagner.

Non-Legislative members of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems present were Yell County Judge Mark Thone, Cabot Mayor Bill Cypert, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) designee, Tina Owens, Association of Arkansas Counties Director Chris Villines, and Consumer members Todd Woerpel and Joel Hoggard.

**Call to Order**

Representative Harold Copenhaver called the meeting to order, welcomed legislators, and asked them to introduce themselves.

**Approval of 911 Committee Minutes-July 16-17, 2014 [Exhibit B and B-1]**

Minutes of the July 16, and July 17, 2014 meetings of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 systems were approved by acclimation.

**Opening Remarks**

Senator Chesterfield stated that improving the coordination of comprehensive 911 emergency services throughout the state is vitally important to the safety of the residents of Arkansas.

**Overview of the Jonesboro/Craighead County PSAPs [Exhibit D]**

Jeff Presley, Director, Jonesboro E911 Dispatch Center, was recognized. Mr. Presley gave a PowerPoint presentation. He described the Jonesboro E911 Center and the many services it provides. The Center answers and dispatches calls for all of Craighead County using 4 console work stations, a call taking work station, and a director's station. Dispatchers participate in a 3-month training program with three certified training officers. The Center partners with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Morgan Nick Foundation, the Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC), and the National Crime Information Center. One of the changes encountered by the Center is an increase in emergency calls made from cell phones, and the large number of administrative, or 311 non-emergency calls. The 311 calls are based on the concept of using tracking software to forward calls to the appropriate city departments, such as street, animal control, and sanitation departments. Mr. Presley believes that if the Center continues taking these types of calls, it needs appropriate software for integration and interoperability. He also believes that PSAPs should be divided within a county by response levels because there are various levels of capability that exist in 911 centers. He described the following enhancements the E911 Jonesboro Centers uses:

- Nixle - an alert system, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice nationwide, provided free to all 911 centers, police departments and fire departments. Individuals may sign-up to receive alerts by phone and/or by e-mail.
- Smart911 – a safety profile program free to individuals who sign-up and enter their household's personal information so that during an emergency the 911 Center can access it to see specific medical, family, and other pertinent information to assist emergency responders.
- Text-to-911 – a system paid for and maintained by sponsors in Jonesboro, including local radio stations, Best Buy, and others at no cost to the city. Individuals can text an emergency message to a 911 Center using their cell phones.
- Rethink Storm Shelters – Jonesboro E911 partners with this local vendor to designate storm shelter locations of homeowners who sign-up through the Jonesboro 911 website. 3,000 citizens currently participate. Shelter locations are entered into an existing GIS database.
- Mutual Aid – acquisition of response vehicles obtained as surplus vehicles no longer used by other city departments or entities. Vehicles are also used during training events.

Mr. Presley believes that all 911 Centers statewide need broadband coverage, statewide GIS mapping, minimum training standards for dispatchers, and broadening of cell tower coverage. He discussed funding sources for 911 Centers and said that a portion of the funds go into a general fund to pay salaries for 911 personnel. He believes the majority of 911 funds should be dedicated for upgrading technology and maintaining the 911 centers.

#### **Draft Statewide Recommendations [Exhibit E]**

Gary Gray, Chairman, and Renee Hoover, Board Administrator, Emergency Telephone Service Board (ETSB) were recognized. Mr. Gray spoke on behalf of the North Little Rock Emergency Services and said that a work group including himself, ADEM 911

Coordinator Randi Jones, and Shelby Johnson, State Geographic Information Officer are working on a preliminary report to the Committee. He reported that more than half the PSAPs within the state have not yet been reviewed.

Shelby Johnson, State Geographic Information Officer, was recognized. Mr. Johnson gave a PowerPoint presentation and said the Arkansas Geographic Information Office (GIS) coordinates and supports the state's mapping efforts, particularly its work with counties. Because of the mapping GIS performs, his office works closely with local 911 coordinators who maintain road and address point files. Mr. Johnson said that because GIS plays such a key role in supporting 911 technology, his office initiated a survey of PSAPs in June, 2014. He presented a road file published by his GIS office and explained the files come from Arkansas 911 coordinators, and those files have been incorporated into a single statewide database. Another file that GIS coordinates with all the counties is an address point file. The coordinates and physical addresses are assigned by local addressing authorities in each county. Because addresses are assigned by individuals in the 75 counties and in 159 cities, it has created a cumbersome number of addressing authorities. He explained his slide that shows the location of dispatch centers across the state and said the information was obtained from the National Emergency Numbering Association (NEMA). It shows there are 105 dispatch centers in Arkansas. According to NEMA, the following counties have no landline 911 service- Izard, Newton, Calhoun and Cleveland Counties.

Tina Owens, ADEM Deputy Director, was recognized for an update. Ms. Owens said that ADEM 911 Coordinator Randie Jones is visiting and reviewing PSAPs across the state. She said part of the legislative charge is for ADEM to physically tour every PSAP. ADEM is continuing to gather the data and reviewing dispatcher training.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.