

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS
of the
LEGISLATIVE ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
on
LOCAL 911 SYSTEMS

presented to:

The Honorable Mike Beebe, Governor, State of Arkansas
The Honorable Michael Lamoureux, President Pro Tempore, Arkansas Senate
The Honorable Davy Carter, Speaker, Arkansas House of Representatives

Gentlemen:

Pursuant to Act 1171 of 2013, we are submitting a report on the status of the work of the Legislative Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems. The goal of the committee is to identify and address issues related to the state of Arkansas's 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) by setting a minimum standard for quality of care and service.

The committee has held six (6) meetings over the past several months in various regions of the state. In conjunction with these regional meetings, committee members were afforded opportunities to tour several dispatch centers (PSAPs).

Currently, a survey is underway to gather data regarding funding, training, equipment, mapping, personnel, continuity of operations, Smart911, Next Generation 911, and the number of safe rooms across the state. In addition, input has been solicited from stakeholders such as educational administrators, teachers and support staff, hospitals, law enforcement, firefighters, and energy providers.

Information garnered to date from committee meetings and various materials reflect the following findings:

- lack of an accurate list of Arkansas's primary and secondary PSAPs
- lack of access to broadband connectivity throughout the state
- lack of a central entity to oversee 911 service providers
- 911 service is not available in counties that have not passed a local surcharge for this service
- counties operate their 911 centers differently
- funding has significantly decreased due to the decline in the use of landline phones

Discussions during various committee meetings identified the following objectives:

- implement 911 services in underserved areas
- effectuate a uniform high level of service from the 911 system for all Arkansans and travelers
- sustain accessible assistance during an emergency

- effectuate a timely response by law enforcement, first responders, paramedics, and firefighters
- compile an accurate list of Arkansas's primary and secondary PSAPs and their point of contact
- identify the number of dispatchers/call takers, funding sources and expenditures, dispatcher training, equipment types, equipment vendors, communication issues, priority conflicts, point conflicts/inaccuracies, Smart911 deployment, plans for Next Generation 911
- improve statewide 911 systems to meet the needs of Arkansans and persons traveling through the state
- encourage wireless service availability within Arkansas's parks by wireless service providers

The committee is continuing its comprehensive study of local 911 systems across the state, which is essential to protect the lives, health, and welfare of all Arkansans in emergency situations. A detailed and comprehensive report will be submitted prior to its expiration date of January 1, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Linda Chesterfield, Co-Chair

Representative Tommy Wren, Co-Chair