

MINUTES

HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEGISLATIVE ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON LOCAL 911 SYSTEMS

Meeting Jointly

Thursday, August 27, 2015

The Senate and House Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development and the Legislative Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems, met jointly at 8:00 a.m., September 27, 2015, at the Holiday Inn, in Blytheville, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair (Agri); Linda Chesterfield, Chair (Local 911); and John Cooper; Representatives Dan Douglas, Chair (Agri); David Hillman, Vice Chair (Agri); Charles Armstrong, Rick Beck, David Branscum, Andy Davis, Douglas House, Lane Jean, Mark McElroy, Ron McNair, Stephen Meeks, Mathew Pitsch, and James Ratliff.

Other legislators present: Senator David Burnett; Representatives Nate Bell, Jim Dotson, Charlotte Vining Douglas, Deborah Ferguson, Monte Hodges, Frederick Love, Milton Nicks, Jr., Sue Scott, and Brandt Smith.

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Remarks by Chairs

Senator Caldwell, Representative Douglas, Senator Chesterfield, and Representative Baltz welcomed committee members and guests to the meeting.

Panic Button Alert for K12 Schools

Ted Mullenix, President, and Julie Mullenix, Attorney, Mullenix & Associates LLC, presented an update on the Panic Button Alert for K-12 Schools, which is a part of the Smart911 system by Rave Mobile Safety. Act 950 of 2015 (the School Safety Act) required the state to have an emergency alert system in place by September 1, 2015, however, due to the delay in funding, efforts are still underway to ensure that all 257 school districts in the state are operational. The school superintendent is the sole authority to assign designated personnel to initiate the system. Once the school official pushes the panic button, an instant alert is sent to all on-site personnel and first responders will then be able to pinpoint the location and initiate emergency protocol. Mr. Mullenix also provided the following information relating to the implementation of the alert system:

- funding was secured through the Arkansas Department of Education
first year cost is \$950,000; second year will be \$850,000
- Rave Mobile has contacted local 911 centers as well as state and local law enforcement agencies to ensure that all local 911 centers are updated and ready for implementation.
- a webinar was held for all K-12 school administrators and other school personnel; over 600 participated
- 60% of schools have begun steps to make sure that training is underway and all pertinent information is submitted to Rave
- working with local school districts and local 911 centers to ensure successful implementation
- planning additional webinars and a website for schools to obtain information 24x7
- updating contact information for each local 911 PSAP
- conducting panic button test runs across the state
- making on-site visits to schools and PSAPs to provide required assistance

Upon questioning by Senator Chesterfield regarding steps to increase the safety of state agencies as well as members of the General Assembly, Mr. Mullenix stated that Rave Mobile Safety has graciously agreed to provide the State Capitol, Big Mac, and Capitol Hill with panic buttons at no charge. He asked that she help facilitate implementation of the program in the near future.

Brianna Fields, Deputy Director, Benton County Office of Emergency Communications, provided an update from the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy; on the training courses offered by the academy. She stated that the academy may also offer online classes in the future.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m and committee members were invited to tour the Big River Steel construction site.

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