

SUMMARY
BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT EMERGENCY DISPATCH
With emphasis on State role, consolidation efforts
LUARCC MEETING – November 17, 2008

Overview

History of New Jersey's 9-1-1 System

Like other municipal services, emergency dispatch is conducted primarily at the local level, with sharing or regionalization decisions being made at the discretion of local officials.

The framework for the original New Jersey statewide 9-1-1 system was established through enabling legislation in 1989. Among other things, the Statewide 9-1-1 Enhanced Emergency Telephone System Act established the Office of Emergency Telecommunication Services (OETS), and vested with it the responsibility for planning, designing, implementing, and coordinating the statewide emergency 9-1-1 network. Under the legislation, each county developed a county plan, which was submitted to OETS, which adopted the statewide 9-1-1 emergency plan in January 1990.

New Jersey funded the original 9-1-1 infrastructure in 1991 at a cost of \$94 million. This funded the backbone of the 9-1-1 network, including routers, databases, and dedicated 9-1-1 trunk lines. Local PSAPs and PSDPs were responsible for the costs associated with equipment purchases, staffing, facilities, and operations.

In 1997, a line of credit for \$4.7 million was executed to fund upgrades to the E9-1-1 network. The upgrades enabled New Jersey to begin to implement Phase I wireless 9-1-1 services and to address issues arising from the growing number of area codes.

The State of New Jersey implemented enhanced wire line 9-1-1 in December 2004. The amendments also established the 9-1-1 Commission to oversee OETS efforts to design and implement the state's E9-1-1 network.

In recent years, the State has taken steps to encourage consolidation through various interventions that will be discussed below, driven in part by the expense involved in replacing obsolete equipment and meeting challenges created by changes in telecommunications technology.

Faced with obsolete 9-1-1 infrastructure in 2004, the State imposed an "Emergency Preparedness and 9-1-1 System Assessment" fee to establish a stable and ongoing source of funding for creating an enhanced system and to finance the costs of funding the State's capital equipment, facilities and operating expenses that arise from emergency preparedness activities. A major problem identified at that time was the inability of the current system to process wireless calls at the same service level as calls originating from land line telephones.

The Heldrich Study

In March 2005 the State commissioned a study of 9-1-1 operations throughout the state with Rutgers University, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. This comprehensive study was designed to explore opportunities that would provide improved service and reduce the operational

cost as well as potential cost avoidance that could be obtained through consolidation of PSAPs in New Jersey. In commissioning the study, the 9-1-1 Commission and the Office of the Treasurer recognized that in many locations throughout the State, consolidation of 9-1-1 services had proven effective. In October 2006 final conclusions from the comprehensive study were published.

The Heldrich study identified over 300 public service agencies and private medical centers providing 9-1-1 emergency services in New Jersey. The 9-1-1 service providers differed widely in terms of population served, service area, call volume, equipment, technological capabilities, and call taking/dispatch organization. By far, the largest percentage of PSAPs was heavily concentrated in the northeastern region of the state. However, the PSAPs managing the majority of the 9-1-1 calls were geographically disbursed throughout the state. Call volumes tended to be highest in areas of heavy concentration of people and roadways or where there was a countywide PSAP. Call volumes also fluctuated seasonally for resort destinations located at the New Jersey shore and in the northwestern region of the state.

Operationally, each PSAP and PSDP tailored its call taking and dispatch functions to suit particular regional, political, or other needs. The overall governance structure of the 9-1-1 system in New Jersey favored local control. As a result, OETS focused almost exclusively on the technology, the network, and the cut over to wireless E9-1-1. *Although the state set the standards for technology, operations, and training, it had no real power to enforce PSAPs that failed to comply with those standards.*

The Special Legislative Session

While the Heldrich study was underway, an unprecedented special legislative session was convened by legislative leaders and the Governor that would work throughout the summer and fall with the goal of enacting property tax reforms by the end of 2006. One of the committees, named the Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services, was charged with reviewing and formulating proposals that address the sharing of services and regionalization of functions at all levels of government. The committee ultimately put forth 18 recommendations to be acted upon, one of which was recommendation #12 which states: Consolidate public safety answering points consistent with State 9-1-1 Commission recommendations.

The report noted the existence of 250 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) in the State and an additional 117 Public Safety Dispatch Points (PSDP) with widely varying call loads. Again, the report reiterated the difficulty in answering and locating emergency calls from wireless phones.

The Joint Legislative Committee's recommendation which would promote consolidation of PSAP's consistent with the 911 Commission's master plan, was subsequently incorporated into Senate Bill 45 of 2006, which was enacted as P.L.2007, c.56, on March 16, 2007. That measure amended N.J.S.A. 52:17C-3 as follows:

The State plan shall require the consolidation of PSAPs as appropriate, consistent with revisions in the plan to upgrade the enhanced 9-1-1 system and shall condition the allocation of moneys dedicated for the operation of PSAPs on the merging and sharing of PSAP functions by municipalities, counties and the State Police, consistent with the revised plan.

The Treasurer may establish, by regulation, a 9-1-1 call volume minimum that may be utilized as a factor in determining which PSAP functions are to be consolidated under the State plan.

The State plan shall limit the use of sworn law enforcement officers to provide dispatch services and the office shall condition the receipt of moneys dedicated for the operation of PSAPs on the limited use of sworn law enforcement officers, except for officers returning to active duty from an injury or other physical disability.

911 Consolidation Commission – Promoting Consolidation through Funding

At the June 1, 2007 9-1-1 Commission meeting, the Consolidation Committee recommended that the model of one PSAP per county plus the urban 15 cities (21 plus 15 model) should be the target, with some exceptions. The committee further recommended in December 2007 that grant funding to achieve this goal should be undertaken in a phased in approach. The committee recommended that criteria for receiving funding in the FY-2008 cycle should increase the PSAP serving population from 19K to the population of the least populated county in New Jersey, currently the Salem County population is 65,346.

According to the Office of Emergency Telecommunications Services, there are currently 217 PSAPs and 122 PSDPs.

Further detailed information follows below.

Statutes Related to PSAPs – Relevant Excerpts

52:17C-2 9-1-1 Commission.

2. a. There is created in the Office of Information Technology a commission to be known as the 9-1-1 Commission which shall oversee the office in the planning, design, and implementation of the Statewide emergency enhanced 9-1-1 telephone system

52:17C-3

The State plan shall require the consolidation of PSAPs as appropriate, consistent with revisions in the plan to upgrade the enhanced 9-1-1 system and shall condition the allocation of moneys dedicated for the operation of PSAPs on the merging and sharing of PSAP functions by municipalities, counties and the State Police, consistent with the revised plan. The Treasurer may establish, by regulation, a 9-1-1 call volume minimum that may be utilized as a factor in determining which PSAP functions are to be consolidated under the State plan.

52:17C-7. Public safety answering points

No provision of this act shall be construed to prohibit or require in any manner the formation of multi-agency, multi- jurisdictional, regional or county-wide public safety answering points. However, the formation of public safety answering points that serve groups of municipalities is encouraged in the interest of reducing cost and increasing the efficiency of administration.

52:17C-8. PSAP functions

a. Each public safety answering point shall be capable of dispatching or forwarding requests for law enforcement, fire fighting, emergency medical services, or other emergency services to a public or private safety agency that provides the requested services.

b. Each public safety answering point shall be equipped with a system approved by the office for the processing of requests for emergency services for the physically disabled. No person shall connect to a telephone company's network any automatic alarm or other automatic alerting device which causes the number "9-1-1" to be automatically dialed and which provides a prerecorded message in order to directly access emergency services, except for devices, which may be approved by the office. Devices approved by the office shall be registered with the office on forms provided by the office.

c. Each entity operating a public safety answering point shall be responsible for obtaining, operating, and maintaining enhanced 9-1-1 termination equipment. The operations and maintenance of this equipment shall be in accordance with standards set forth by the office pursuant to section 3 of this act.

Findings and Recommendations of the Heldrich Final Report:

Saving Lives, Increasing Value: Consolidating New Jersey's 9-1-1 Emergency Services

Findings

- Local officials in New Jersey and 9-1-1 officials from other states cite improved service and public safety as potential benefits of consolidation.
- There are clear economies of scale in the cost of handling 9-1-1 calls.

The statistical analysis demonstrated that average cost declined as call activity increased. Cost per ALI dip call dropped as call activity increased and then began to level off, as illustrated in Figure 1. The pattern of declining average cost held up regardless of the type of measure or data source that was used.

Both equipment and employee cost per call followed the same statistical pattern. After falling, average cost began to reach a plateau in the range of 4,000 to 10,000 ALI dip calls per year. It appears that the costs of operations handling calls from 4,000-10,000 to 250,000 are similar due to fixed costs. Operations below 4,000-10,000 appear to be much less efficient

- There is potential for improved efficiency through consolidation of PSAPs and PSDPs that have a low workload or call volume.
 - PSAPs that handled a large number of calls had a lower cost per call than centers with a low volume of calls. Reducing the number of PSAPs and PSDPs has the potential to generate cost savings for state and local government.
 - The smallest PSAPs were most likely to be inefficient, compared with all PSAPs
 - PSAPs with one person on duty at any time had higher costs per call than centers with more than one person on duty at all times.
 - Similar to the low-volume PSAPs, most PSDPs experienced extremely low call activity and those with one-equipment position tended to have high costs per call.
 - Larger PSAPs (with moderate to high call activity) tend to receive more calls per position (and employee) than smaller operations.
- Reducing the number of PSAPs and PSDPs has the potential to generate cost savings for state and local government.
 - Reducing the number of PSAPs would probably cut the number of phone voice circuits needed to be maintained by the state and thus lead to a possible savings
 - Reducing the number of PSDPs would be very likely to reduce the number of ALI data circuits and phone voice circuits maintained by the state.
 - Reducing the number of circuits maintained by the state would only generate limited cost savings
 - Reducing the number of PSAPs, through consolidation, would allow the state to avoid a portion of the projected costs of replacing or upgrading equipment in every local center.

- State policy can influence the direction of 9-1-1 consolidation by creating a supportive environment.

Recommendations

- Commit to a policy favoring combined operations for call taking and dispatch.
- Establish a program of incentives to pay a portion or all of the costs associated with PSAP consolidation.
- Support ongoing education of call center staff in the form of training assistance grants.
- Develop a set of standards defining high quality E9-1-1 emergency services, institute data submission requirements for all E9-1-1 grants, and explore opportunities to collect more detailed budget information.
- Institute a public education and technical assistance program to promote and support consolidation.
- Limit eligibility for E9-1-1 grants to those communication centers that can demonstrate a minimum staffing level of two certified telecommunicators 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Summary of the Heldrich Preliminary Reports

1. Profile of the New Jersey E9-1-1 System

The FCC began addressing the need to extend E9-1-1 services to wireless devices in 1993 and adopted its first wireless E9-1-1 rules in 1996. The rules created schedules for wireless carriers to provide both basic and enhanced 9-1-1 services. Under Phase I, wireless carriers must provide PSAPs with the callback number of the device making the call and the location of the cell site/sector receiving a 9-1-1 call. Under Phase II, the wireless carriers are required to provide to PSAPs the location of all 9-1-1 callers by longitude and latitude (within different degrees of accuracy depending upon the location technology employed) beginning October 1, 2001. In October 1999, the FCC revised its rules to impose more stringent accuracy requirements. The FCC has continued to take action to effectuate the implementation of wireless E9-1-1.

Also in 1999, Rockwell International, Inc., the manufacturer of the underlying call routing systems and of much of the answering equipment in many of New Jersey's PSAPs, notified Verizon that it would terminate support of their switches in December 2002, three years before the end of the contract between Verizon and New Jersey. That decision effectively rendered much of New Jersey's 9-1-1 network obsolete. This necessitated a significant network upgrade, including replacing the switches and, for many PSAPs, their call-taking equipment as well. Verizon replaced the four Rockwell switches with equipment from Nortel in 2004 at no cost to the state.

Those PSAPs with Rockwell call answering equipment either purchased new equipment or converted to the Plant MAARs equipment loaned by Verizon. Verizon gave PSAPs until September 2005 to either replace the Plant MAARs equipment or purchase it outright. According to OETS, the replace versus purchase question remains an ongoing issue and OETS is unsure of the exact number of PSAPs affected or their current status. Given that more than 100 PSAPs and PSDPs had been using the Rockwell equipment, it is likely that most have had to invest in new or replacement equipment within the past several years or are planning to do so in the near future.

In June 2004, the New Jersey Legislature authorized a new monthly surcharge of \$0.90 per phone line. The fee is intended to provide a stable source of revenue for replacing the current 9-1-1 infrastructure and pay for costs of funding the state’s capital equipment, facilities, and other operating expenses associated with emergency preparedness, counter terrorism measures, and security at state facilities. Proceeds from the surcharge are credited to the “9-1-1 System and Emergency Response Trust Fund Account.”

In FY2006, the state initiated the Enhanced 9-1-1 grant program to begin distributing the proceeds of the 9-1-1 System and Emergency Response Fee. The grant program is intended to provide financial aid to PSAPs for the purpose of purchasing, operating, maintaining, and upgrading the technology in their call centers. (See “FY-2008 Enhanced 9-1-1 Grants” below)

[HTTP://WWW.HELDRIICH.RUTGERS.EDU/UPLOADEDFILES/PUBLICATIONS/NEW%20JERSEY%20STATE%20PROFILE%20E9_1_1.PDF](http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedfiles/publication_s/new%20jersey%20state%20profile%20e9_1_1.pdf)

2. Reorganizing 9-1-1 Operations: Consolidation in Other States

A central goal of the report was to illustrate different approaches to encouraging consolidation and provide information that will help New Jersey develop future strategies. Telephone interviews were conducted with officials in six states and two regions that have experience with consolidation of answering and dispatch points. The states are Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin. The two regions are Cook County, Illinois and Volusia County, Florida (see map below).

States and Regions Profiled in the Report



The Heldrich Center found that:

- *States tend to support local consolidation by providing financial incentives, setting standards, and providing technical assistance. There are few examples of state policies that require PSAPs to merge operations. None of the states in the study employs a direct mandate. Some states have played a limited or virtually no role in supporting local consolidation.*

- Although states can play a role, *consolidation is, in essence, a local process* driven by local decision-makers.
- The *results of consolidation are not well documented*. State and regional officials strongly believe that consolidation leads to improved service, although it is not clear how improved service is measured.
- The *organizational structure of PSAPs varies among the study states* (see table below).

TABLE 1. PSAP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE BY STATE

State	Structure	Typical Parent Organization	Notable Features
Connecticut	Town and city-based PSAPs with eight regional centers that provide services to groups of towns	Mostly local police departments; regional centers operated by independent agencies	No county-level government
Maine	County and municipal PSAPs	Mostly local police departments or county sheriff's offices	Strong tradition of local control
Minnesota	County and municipal PSAPs with several multi-county PSAPs	Mostly local police departments or county sheriff's offices	Inter-state PSAP that covers counties in Minnesota and North Dakota
Oregon	County and municipal PSAPs with a large number of centers that provide services to groups of cities	Mostly independent agencies or police departments	Strong tradition of local control
Washington	Mostly county PSAPs with some municipal PSAPs and several multi-county PSAPs	Mostly sheriff's offices with a large number of independent agencies	Strong county government
Wisconsin	Mostly county PSAPs with some municipal PSAPs	Mostly county sheriff's offices or police departments	Locally managed system with a limited state role

- The six states in the study have similar funding mechanisms for 9-1-1 services (see table below). Most of the states have imposed a wire-line and wireless fee on telecommunications bills to support statewide and local services. However, while the source of funds tends to be the same, states provide different types and levels of funding support to PSAPs.

KEY FEATURES OF STATE FUNDING BY STATE

State	State Surcharges	County Surcharges	Operational Assistance to PSAPs	State Support for Basic Equipment
Connecticut	✓		✓	✓
Maine	✓			✓
Minnesota	✓		✓	
Oregon	✓		✓	✓
Washington	✓	✓	✓	
Wisconsin		✓		

Notes: Wisconsin has a temporary state surcharge but not an ongoing one. The states indicated in the last column provide full (100%) support for basic 9-1-1 call-taking equipment to PSAPs. Other states may provide partial support.

- State roles in influencing local consolidation range from active to limited or nonexistent
 - Washington**: supports consolidation of 9-1-1 services at the county level
 - Maine**: has taken a proactive stance towards streamlining local operations
 - Minnesota**: sets no standards for local operations

-**Wisconsin:** provides little financial incentives for consolidation

- A recent study suggests that the state role in local consolidation is a function of the state’s leverage over local operations and funding.
- States that influence local consolidation tend to rely on financial incentives rather than mandates (see table below).

-To encourage consolidation, some states issue planning or study grants that allow local jurisdictions to examine the technical, fiscal, and other issues involved with combining operations.

-Another strategy is to provide a higher level of funding to regions that consolidate than to those that maintain existing operations.

-A different strategy is to encourage consolidation by allowing local jurisdictions to impose surcharges on telecommunications users and to collect revenues to support 9-1-1 services.

State	Grants to Study or Plan Consolidation	Financial Incentives for PSAPs Serving a County, More than One County, or a Municipality of a Certain Size	State Standards that Encourage Larger Local Operations	Authority for County Surcharges to Fund 9-1-1 System	State Support Limited to PSAPs with a Minimum Call Volume	State Cost Savings Distributed to Consolidated PSAPs	Technical Assistance to PSAPs
Connecticut	✓	✓					
Maine	✓				✓	✓	
Minnesota							
Oregon			✓				✓
Washington	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Wisconsin				✓			

- Although incentives are a promising strategy, they are not necessarily sufficient to produce consolidation.
- There are only a few examples of state policies that require, rather than encourage, consolidation and those policies have led to mixed or uncertain results.

-State policies that, in essence, force local consolidation are less commonly cited among the six states in this study. **Maine** is the only state that has adopted and continued to implement a directive approach to local consolidation.

-**Oregon** also has experimented with a directive policy toward consolidation. Unlike Maine, however, Oregon reversed course and adopted a less assertive policy stance.

- Although state policy can be influential, consolidation of 9-1-1 services ultimately occurs because local leaders support it as a way to reduce costs and improve service to citizens.
- The most significant barrier to consolidation is concern about governance and accountability.

- Nearly every state and regional official interviewed as part of this study observed that local police and public safety officials tend to resist consolidation because they fear losing control of their local operations and staff.
- Evidence of cost saving achieved through consolidation is mostly anecdotal and is particularly difficult to pinpoint at the local level.
 - Maine** is likely to reduce expenditures because consolidation will result in a sharp reduction in the number of PSAPs that receive state support. Estimated cost savings were originally expected to be nearly \$1 million per year.
 - Washington** also experienced cost savings as a result of a recent program to encourage regional consolidation that combines operations in multiple counties.
 - In **Volusia County, Florida**, consolidation has actually led to an increase in the number of staff as the three cities have focused on improving service rather than cutting costs.
- According to those interviewed, consolidation may not lead to efficiencies in the short term; rather, it may help local jurisdictions avoid costs in the long term.
- Nearly every state and local official interviewed as part of this study cited improved service as a benefit of consolidation.

Lessons Learned

- Consolidation of 9-1-1 services has potential benefits for citizens and public agencies. State and regional officials strongly believe that it can lead to improved services and, ultimately, public safety. However, much of the evidence is based on perception rather than systematic evaluation. In addition, many officials believe that combining operations is likely to generate efficiencies in the long term, even though they admit that direct cost savings due to consolidation are not well documented and are difficult to quantify.
- Ultimately, consolidation is a local process driven by local decision-makers. Local elected officials and public safety officials must recognize the benefits of combined operations and decide how consolidation will unfold.
- Although local leaders must determine the course of consolidation, state authorities can influence the process. The optimal state role is to create an environment conducive to local consolidation and then let local authorities work out the details. Common state strategies include setting standards, issuing financial incentives, and providing technical assistance to local authorities.
- Consolidation initiatives require time and advance planning. State and regional officials cite the need for advance planning so that local jurisdictions can work out complicated issues related to management, personnel, and operations. Some states have found that PSAPs needed more time than expected to establish combined centers.

<http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Profile%20of%20Other%20States%20E9-1-1.pdf>

3. Site Visit Results and Implications for Consolidation

This report is the result of site visits and interviews with officials from 12 PSAPs. This report also identifies issues associated with consolidation, including barriers and opportunities, and presents recommendations for promoting consolidation in New Jersey.

- Historically, New Jersey has not played a strong role vis-à-vis local PSAP operations and consolidation, either through setting more than minimum standards or by providing funding.
- The decision to acquire and fund equipment is made almost exclusively at the local level. Therefore, facility and equipment upgrades are highly dependent on local funding and local will.
- There is no formal assessment or agreed-upon definition of service quality. Clear performance goals are practically nonexistent and assessment of response times and service outcomes are rarely employed.
- Local 9-1-1 officials are making independent decisions to consolidate services. For the most part, budget pressures and concerns about public safety drive many local decisions to consolidate.
- The job qualifications, training opportunities, experience, and compensation of call takers and dispatchers are inconsistent and wide ranging, and turnover of call takers, especially in the small call centers, is a problem.

Issues and Trends

Some of the observations included: growth of immigrant populations within certain communities, municipalities making the transition from resort to year-round residential communities, and traditionally blue-collar communities expanding/changing to include more affluent populations.

These changing circumstances are compounding the more traditional challenges, including “spillover” crime from neighboring communities, proximity to major motor transportation and railroad routes, and large daytime populations.

Coupled with these challenges is the introduction of wireless communication devices and new technologies, such as Voice-Over-Internet Protocol. And, finally, overlaying all of these issues is the need to plan for and implement homeland security requirements.

Issue #1

- There is a lack of information and data analysis at all levels of New Jersey’s E9-1-1 system, as well as a lack of resources necessary to generate data that could measure activity and performance.

Issue #2

- Larger, consolidated PSAPs are more likely to forward some calls for emergency response to another entity to respond.

Issue #3

- Equipment quality and capabilities vary widely among call centers.

Issue #4

- New network requirements and expansion of wireless technologies have driven many PSAPs to make significant investments in their facilities and equipment and there is little long-term planning regarding investment renewal.

Issue #5

- Compensation for telecommunicators ranges widely and mandatory overtime is commonly used to ensure adequate staffing of call centers.

Issue #6

- Based on reported staffing and retention data, there appears to be little relation between compensation and retention rates.

Issue #7

- Fifty percent of the PSAPs visited require their telecommunicators to assume additional duties unrelated to E9-1-1; nearly half also report employing no more than one telecommunicator on at least one shift during a 24-hour period.

Issue #8

- The level of professionalism, experience, and preparedness of telecommunicators varies throughout the E9-1-1 system because ongoing training and professional development opportunities are not supported by funding and are not widely available.

Issue #9

- A PSAP budget is typically incorporated into an overall budget for the municipal police department. It is therefore difficult to isolate precise costs for staffing and administration of 9-1-1 services.

Issue #10

- According to preliminary data, it appears that PSAPs with higher call volumes are more efficient than PSAPs with lower call volumes.

Specific Recommendations: Incentives

- The state should encourage consolidation of PSAPs and PSDPs through application of financial incentives. For example, the state could give funding priority for E9-1-1 consolidation grants to consolidated PSAPs/PSDPs seeking to upgrade their operations.
- As an incentive to consolidated call centers, New Jersey could provide training assistance grants to subsidize the training costs and/or staff salaries while a telecommunicator is in training. Alternatively, the state could subsidize, to some pre-determined level, all training and limit financial support for salaries to inter-local and countywide PSAPs.
- Any consolidation program needs to include a means to leverage existing investments to assure all participants are able to continue to make use of that technology. To do that, the state should consider providing sufficient financial support to allow a consolidated center to equip itself to the highest common denominator.

Specific Recommendations: Improved Data and Metrics

- New Jersey should develop a set of standards defining high-quality E9-1-1 emergency services. Addressing issues of staffing, equipment, facilities, governance, and accountability, these standards would not only provide a benchmark for local officials pursuing consolidation but would also serve as a best practices guide for all PSAPs.
- E9-1-1 funding must be tied to requirements that meet the specific technical, operational, and efficiency standards. At a minimum, recipients of state E9-1-1 grants should be required to provide the state regular reports on call volume and costs of operation as a condition of their grant.

Specific Recommendations: Public Education and Technical Assistance

- The state should consider implementing a structured, phased education program aimed at local officials (administrators, local decision makers, law enforcement officials, PSAP managers, and the public).

Specific Recommendations: Enhanced State Operation Role

- OETS is a critical partner in New Jersey’s E9-1-1 system. While E9-1-1 services remain a largely local/regional service, OETS staff should be tasked with providing support services and education, and developing the standards described in the aforementioned recommendations.

<http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Site%20Visits%20E9-1-1.pdf>

The State Of New Jersey EMS System Review, DHSS, OEMS

This report thoroughly reviewed the State EMS system. The report makes 55 recommendations on some 30 topics. At the top of its list of the top five ideas is the following:

“1. *Primary access points and dispatch regionalization* – Most focus group participants endorsed a bill passed by the legislature that calls for the consolidation of primary access points to 21 countywide centers. This has occurred in nine of the southern New Jersey counties and has met with success. Many focus groups felt that this must now extend to countywide primary dispatch points. While the primary access point consolidation is a good first step, it does not eliminate one or more transfers from the primary access point to the actual agency that dispatches the call. This is especially true where the primary access points are police agencies and multiple transfers are required until the caller is connected to an emergency medical dispatcher.”

The resulting recommendation reads...

“... *Aggressively move toward compliance with the consolidated countywide 911 centers.* This includes the consolidation of both primary access point and primary dispatch point agencies.”

http://www.nj.gov/health/ems/documents/ems_study_report.pdf

From the Budget FY 2009

Narrative from Governor’s FY 2009 Budget relating to the 9-1-1 systyem:

Office of Information Technology

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) centrally manages the information technology (IT) infrastructure of the State and provides critical IT services to State agencies. Additionally, the OIT oversees large--scale IT initiatives, coordinates IT planning across State agencies, and identifies savings opportunities to reduce IT costs statewide. Recommended State funding for the OIT is reduced \$16.7 million in fiscal 2009, primarily due to the elimination of \$9 million in funds for nonrecurring costs, a \$2.5 million reduction in Enhanced 911 Grants to reflect continuing efforts to consolidate local call centers, and \$2.2 million in savings from the State’s renegotiated contract for telecommunication services.

The Legislature through Budget Language focuses efforts on the “Heldrich” study Language from A2800 (the Budget Bill)

Grants-in-Aid:

Enhanced 911 Grants (\$12,425,000)

Grant awards and expenditures supported by the appropriation for Enhanced 911 Grants, including 911 operating assistance or equipment grants, shall be determined in accordance with the recommendations of an efficiency study prepared by the Rutgers University-Heldrich School as well as grant criteria to be jointly developed by the 911 Commission and the Department of the Treasury, the purpose of which will be to create incentives for the regional consolidation of 911 call services and public safety answering points. Those grant criteria, the specific requirements of which will be defined by the Office of Emergency Telecommunication Services, shall include a requirement that applicants provide information to the Office of Emergency Telecommunication Services on existing budget and staffing resources, including salary and non-salary line items and position titles, as well as equipment and operating performance data related to the existing public safety answering point operations, public safety dispatch and radio communications systems and services.

The unexpended balance at the end of the preceding fiscal year in the Enhanced 911 Grants account is appropriated for the same purpose, subject to the approval of the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting.

Summary of uses of the 911 fund on page H-63 of the Governor’s 2009 Budget Download: <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/omb/publications/09budget/pdf/appendix.pdf>

911 System and Emergency Response Fee

(thousands of dollars)

The estimated revenue from the mobile telecommunications service and telephone exchange service fee in fiscal 2009 totals \$129 million. In accordance with the enabling legislation (P.L. 2004, c.48), these funds will be deposited into the 911 System and Emergency Response Trust Fund account, and applied to offset a portion of the cost of related programs listed below:

Department of Health and Senior Services

Disease Surveillance3,250

Interdepartmental

State Police Emergency Operations Center..... 1,553

State Police Multipurpose Bldg and Troop C Headquarters8,262

Statewide Security -- Capital.....2,000

Department of Law and Public Safety

Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness.....2,757

Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force600

Homeland Security and Preparedness 15,000

State Police CAD System.....600

State Police Forensic Lab.....3,274

Vehicle Purchases7,274

State Police Central Monitoring Station.....654

State Police Radio Upgrade.....1,552

Emergency Operations Center, Operating.....3,466

State Police -- Remaining Operating Budget262,828

Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs	
Military Services -- National Guard and Support Services	7,173
Department of Treasury	
Statewide 911 Emergency Telephone System	11,967
Enhanced 911 Grants	12,425
Office of Emergency Telecommunications Service (OETS)	1,050
Total, State Appropriations	345,685

FY-2008 Enhanced 9-1-1 Grants

Download: <http://www.nj.gov/911/fy089-1-1granthandbook.pdf>

The \$12.4 Million in grants are distributed for three purposes, Equipment, General Assistance and PSAP Consolidation. Below are the eligibility standards for the grants. Note that the minimum size in for an eligible PSAP in “b” of 65,346 is also the population of Salem County, which has the lowest population of the State’s 21 counties.

MINIMUM PSAP ELIGIBILITY STANDARD:

For PSAPs to be eligible to receive Enhanced 9-1-1, Grants the PSAP must meet the following criteria:

- a. The PSAP shall be operated by a county agency, or;
- b. The PSAP shall serve a population of 65,346 or more, based on the most recent Census Bureau statistics with the serving population specified on the Grant Applicants resolution by the governing body, and;
- c. The PSAP shall be configured with a minimum of two fully equipped call-taker positions as defined in N.J.A.C. 17:24-2.1, and;
- d. Maintain a minimum staffing level at the PSAP consisting of two certified call-takers/dispatchers dedicated to PSAP operations the at all times. Such staffing levels must be sufficiently documented to show that the PSAP met this minimum staffing level no less than 95% of the time during the 60-day period prior to the Grant Application date by supplying staffing schedules for that period. Grant recipients may be required validate such staffing levels throughout the grant period, or;
- e. PSAPs that have been designated as Resort Municipalities in the New Jersey Uniform Crime Report that maintain a minimum staffing level at the PSAP consisting of two certified call-takers/dispatchers dedicated to PSAP operations during those months recognized as peak tourist season will be eligible for those months where the minimum staffing is maintained and funding will be adjusted accordingly. Such staffing levels must be sufficiently documented to show that the PSAP met this minimum staffing level no less than 95% of the time during the previous peak period by supplying staffing schedules for that period prior to the Grant Application date. Grant recipients may be required validate such staffing levels throughout the grant period, and;
- f. Grant Applicants must include specific language in their resolution from the governing body that confirms the condition of grant acceptance is the PSAPs continued ability to maintain a minimum of two certified call-takers/dispatchers dedicated to PSAP operations 100% of the time, or;
- g. Grant Applicants from designated resort municipalities must include specific language in their resolution from the governing body that confirms the condition of

grant acceptance is the PSAPs continued ability to maintain two certified call-takers/dispatchers dedicated to PSAP operations 100% of the time during those months recognized as peak tourist season, and;

- h. PSAP staffing shall not utilize regularly scheduled sworn officers as call takers or dispatchers except in instances where the sworn officer is returning to active duty from an injury or other physical disability or other unique situation that precluded that officer from performing law enforcement duties, and;
- i. The PSAP shall have submitted a completed PSAP Survey to the Office of Emergency Telecommunications Services for the most recent fiscal year.

Resources: Emergency Response

The Final Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services in 2006

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/PropertyTaxSession/OPI/jcgo_final_report.pdf

PL 1999 C. 125 which established the 9-1-1 Commission **Download:**

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/9899/Bills/PL99/125_.PDF

PL 2007 C. 56 which required consolidation of PSAPs **Download:**

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2006/Bills/PL07/56_.PDF

NJ 9-1-1 Commission **Download:** <http://www.nj.gov/911/>

Four reports from the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers Commissioned by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Telecommunications Services

Profile of the New Jersey E9-1-1 System **Download:**

http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/New%20Jersey%20State%20Profile%20E9_1_1.pdf

Reorganizing 9-1-1 Operations: Consolidation in Other States. **Download:**

<http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Profile%20of%20Other%20States%20E9-1-1.pdf>

Site Visit Results and Implications for Consolidation **Download:**

<http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Site%20Visits%20E9-1-1.pdf>

Saving Lives, Increasing Value: Consolidating New Jersey's 9-1-1 Emergency Services **Download:**

<http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Saving%20Lives%20Increasing%20Value.pdf>

Department of Treasury: FY-2008 Enhanced 9-1-1 Grants **Download:**

<http://www.nj.gov/911/fy08enhancedgrants.html>

THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY EMS SYSTEM REVIEW, DHSS, OEMS

Download: http://www.nj.gov/health/ems/documents/ems_study_report.pdf

Feasibility Study for Consolidation of 9-1-1 Services in Atlantic County **Download:**

<http://www.aclink.org/oep/911study/index.asp> the report links are on the left hand side of the page.

Summary of uses of the 911 fund on page H-63 of the Governor's 2009 Budget

Download: <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/omb/publications/09budget/pdf/appendix.pdf>