

2012 Report to the Governor



OKLAHOMA
STATE
9-1-1
ADVISORY
BOARD

Overview

The first 9-1-1 call took place in 1952; 60 years ago. Today, in Oklahoma, we have some counties that still do not have this basic life-saving service. They simply cannot afford it due to the lack of population and telephone subscriber base necessary to fund the implementation and on-going operation of the 9-1-1 services. This not only affects those residents that live in these counties but anyone travelling through them.

9-1-1 technology and the telecommunications industry have changed enormously in the past 60 years. The technology has become more expensive and complex. It takes specialized equipment and more personnel to perform the job today. The days of operating a 9-1-1 center with a pen, some paper and a single radio frequency are gone. The industry, the country and the expectations have grown and Oklahoma needs to catch-up and have a solid plan with financial guarantees for the future.

Who does 9-1-1 call when 9-1-1 needs help? Everyone assumes when they call 9-1-1 that someone will answer, reassure them, and send them help. What if no one answered? This is a reality in some areas of the state and could soon be a possibility as 9-1-1 centers run out of money to operate.

The current funding mechanisms are antiquated, vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and are not keeping up with the costs of doing business. The public expectations are going up and new technologies are emerging while 9-1-1 revenues are going down.

9-1-1 saves lives every day across Oklahoma. 9-1-1 services are operated by local governments; these may be municipalities, sheriff offices, public trusts, or stand-a-lone 9-1-1 centers. These services are funded by local citizens who pay a self-imposed fee on their landline telephones; which vary from 3% to 15%, depending upon when the vote was passed. In addition, every county can vote on imposing a fifty-cent fee on each wireless device. Still, many Oklahomans continue to have no enhanced or inadequate enhanced 9-1-1 services available to them during an emergency. Every citizen who lives in a jurisdiction that has passed this surcharge should receive the same level of service, however; this is not the case because the funding mechanisms are inadequate and inconsistent. This also affects those persons visiting our state.

Most of the more populated areas have “enhanced” 9-1-1 service, meaning that they have the technology that routes the call to the right emergency responder and delivers location and caller information to the 9-1-1 center. Rural or low populated areas cannot generate enough local revenue to purchase the equipment, hire personnel and operate these services, even if they assess the maximum 9-1-1 fees allowable by statute.

The State 9-1-1 Advisory Board was created by statute in 2005, through HB 1460. Every year the advisory board is faced with and struggles with the same problems: Funding, Training Standards, and the creation of the State 9-1-1 Coordinator’s position within the State Government as per statute. Every year, since 2005, has been deemed a bad year to ask for money. Time is running out; the money reserves 9-1-1 centers were able to build up prior to implementation are being depleted.

*Who Does 9-1-1
Call when 9-1-1
Needs Help*

The Current State of 9-1-1 Services

Oklahoma still has two counties that only have the FCC mandated 9-1-1 service. In 2001, the FCC stated that everyone must be able to dial 9-1-1 and the call must go to a 24-hour a day facility. This type of service is dubbed “less than” basic 9-1-1. There are no dedicated 9-1-1 lines; the calls are answered on a first come first serve basis, which means a house fire or heart attack could get a busy signal while the call-taker is taking a cow in the roadway call. If these phone lines fail there is no priority to restore service. The call taker does not have location or caller information that is so important for emergency response.

There are 140 Primary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) identified throughout the State. Primary PSAPs receive the original 9-1-1 call. Many of these Primary PSAPs transfer the 9-1-1 call to a secondary PSAP, which most can only receive voice, no location or caller information is sent. Of these PSAPs, 105 have Enhanced Landline and Phase II Wireless; 18 have Enhanced Landline and No Wireless Phase II; and 19 have only Basic Landline and Basic Wireless. Oklahoma has less than 75% of their PSAPs that have Enhanced 9-1-1 Landline and Wireless capabilities. Consequently, there is no uniform protection for Oklahoma’s citizens and visitors.

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9-1-1 is the backbone of emergency services response and we are still using the technology that was created in the early 1960’s.

LANDLINE 9-1-1

The revenue stream for Enhanced 9-1-1 is decreasing as people turn off their landline phones in favor of cellular phones; that money, now in steady decline, never comes back. Every month more and more people are disconnecting their landlines. It is possible over the next few years that the present revenues cannot support the 9-1-1 system that we have now.

Landline fees in Oklahoma range from 0%-15% as shown below. This fee is based upon the vote of the people by the County or Municipality. These fees cannot be raised except by another vote of the people. Those that were lucky enough to vote on the 15% are in better shape; because of the declining revenue and increase demands on service a consistent and dependable funding mechanism that benefits all citizens must be implemented for 9-1-1.

No Fee	3%	5%	7%	8%	9%	10%	12%	15%
5	22	41	6	2	1	9	1	44

WIRELESS 9-1-1

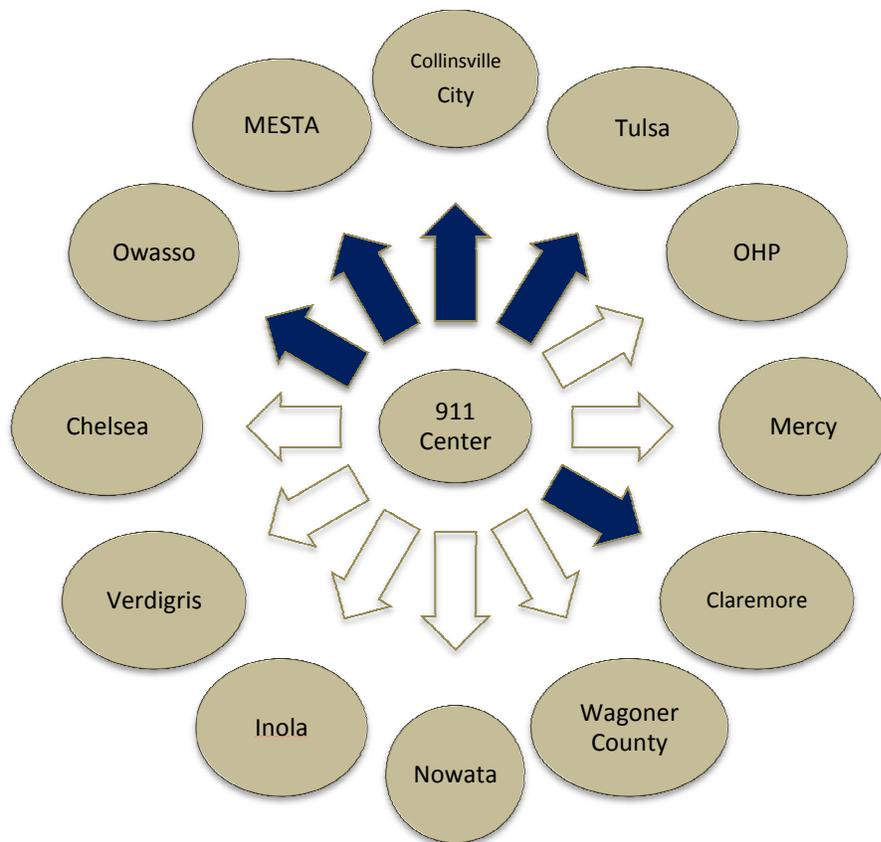
The advent of cellular technology resulted in increased call volume and decreased revenue. In June 2012 there were 321.7 Million wireless subscribers, 10% increase since 2010; 34% of households are wireless only; 396,000 wireless 9-1-1 calls are placed per day which is about 70% of the total 9-1-1 calls. The federally mandated technology to support the cell phones is much more expensive than for landlines and generally the fee collected for cell phones is below that collected for landlines. Oklahoma, by statute, is collecting \$.50 on cell phones; well below the national average of \$.72.

For many Oklahomans, the ability to call 9-1-1 for help in an emergency is the main reason for a purchasing a cell phone. The prompt delivery of wireless 9-1-1 calls to PSAPs benefits the citizens by promoting safety of life and property.

Secondary PSAP

These PSAPs do not receive any original 9-1-1 calls; they get calls that are transferred from Primary PSAPs or direct dial calls to their 10-digit administrative lines. On 9-1-1 transfers only the voice is sent. The technology that identifies the caller and the caller's location does not transfer. 9-1-1 calls were not designed to be transferred. If telephone equipment is not compatible among carriers then even when a Primary PSAP to Primary PSAP transfer is done the vital information does not transfer. On landline transfers the secondary PSAP can call back the primary PSAP and retrieve the vital data. Wireless calls usually take 30 seconds to 2 minutes to locate the caller. If the transfer occurs prior to plotting the location of the caller then there is no way to retrieve the location data.

This chart indicates One County's choices when a 9-1-1 call occurs. The blue arrows indicate a Primary PSAP and all the callers' data is transferred. The hollow arrows indicate a Secondary PSAP and only the voice is transferred.



State 9-1-1 Coordinator

The 9-1-1 State Coordinator's position, as created by statute in 2005, was addressed in the "2012 Annual Report to The Governor of Oklahoma and the Senate Bill 175 Recommendations to the Oklahoma Legislature" document.

The reasons for creating and funding this position have not changed. As the report states: *"Getting an accurate picture of the current state of deployment of 9-1-1 services is difficult. The maps are based on antidotal information derived from telephone calls made by volunteers on the Statewide 9-1-1 Advisory Board. There are no requirements for 9-1-1 centers to report on the status of their service, and no office to collect, update and maintain the data".*

The creation of the Coordinators' position would meet many PSAP needs that are desperately lacking. Included but not limited to standardized training for dispatchers; informing and educating PSAPs of new 9-1-1 technology; and a central point of contact for all PSAPs.

Where implementation of enhanced 9-1-1 services is problematic the state coordinator would be able to provide technical expertise, best practices, and contact information for successful regional models.

9-1-1 Training in Oklahoma

Training in Oklahoma is a luxury. There are no training standards; some agencies may provide six weeks while others provide 6 minutes. There is usually very little budgeted for training; even if monies are allocated they are most likely raided for essential services. The State Chapters of APCO (Association of Public Safety Communication Officials) and NENA (National Emergency Number Association) have a high quality, low cost training conference annually. However, PSAPs cannot get approval to allow their personnel to attend because they cannot afford the overtime to cover their shift or simply do not have the manpower.

PSAPs across the state have retention problems. It is hard to keep employees when McDonalds and Lowe's starting salaries are higher and have better days off and work schedules. The average starting pay of those PSAPs surveyed is \$12.66 per hour. Dispatching is a 24 hour/365 days per year. There are no holidays. PSAPs do not have the regular perks of Christmas bonuses, days off for good attendance, getting your birthday off, or building up compensatory time for the simple reason there are no funds. If someone calls in sick or takes the day off the shift still has to be filled by someone working overtime at a higher pay rate.

There has been some movement across the state at the Technology Centers to provide training but because there are no mandated training standards it quickly falls by the wayside. APCO trainer's offer "free" training across state quarterly but again, the dispatchers must get approval to attend.

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9-1-1 Funding in Oklahoma

Even for the best funded 9-1-1 systems in Oklahoma, keeping equipment and services current is always a budgetary and training challenge. Local governments continue to financially struggle to maintain and prepare to respond to the explosive growth in 9-1-1 technologies. Videos and “Texting to 9-1-1” will provide citizens with alternate ways of requesting 9-1-1 services, and not far behind will be the social media outlets, such as Twitter and Facebook. Already being developed is 4G Wireless; fourth generation of wireless standards. According to 9-1-1 experts, training will be crucial. Administration and management are vital to an efficient call delivery. Funding will be of concern by the 9-1-1 community and a concerted effort must be exacted to inform Legislators that funding for this life-saving service is critical. The expectation of both citizen and visitor should and cannot be disregarded due to possible legal liabilities for failure to respond to the emerging technology.

As Oklahoma plays catch up to provide enhanced landline and wireless 9-1-1 services, the technology is advancing, budgets are becoming more stressed, the public’s expectations are continuing to increase, more work is being added to the dispatcher, and funding is decreasing.

As previously noted, the use of cell phones in place of landline telephones reduces 9-1-1 fee revenue; because the cell phone fees are considerably lower than landline fees in Oklahoma. As cell phones become a household’s only phone, local revenues fall while the need to upgrade 9-1-1 systems to respond to the new technology increases.

This quote by the Beaver County Sheriff says it all:

Collection of the \$.50 wireless & 15% landline surcharges in progress since the vote in June 2011. Currently there is not enough funding available to purchase equipment for the PSAP or implement 911 Services above Phase 0/Basic. Collection of both landline and wireless fees will continue until enough funding is available to implement Enhanced Landline 911 Service and Phase 2 Wireless Service. No projected startup date at this time.

This survey of PSAPs across the state indicates the funding crisis. These figures are just a snap shot of the survey of four different types of PSAPs. Entire budgets and reports are available.

Garfield County dispatches for the entire County and has a contract with Major County to begin their dispatching, receiving their 9-1-1 revenues only. PSAP is located at the Enid Police Dept.

Income and Expenses - Garfield County	FY 2011/2012
Total Actual Annual 9-1-1 Income	\$725,864.66
Total Actual Annual Expense	\$868,614.90
100,000 was deposited by Enid Police Dept, additional shortfall absorbed by 9-1-1 reserve funds	-\$142,750.24
Population Served: 61,000	Employees: 20
	Landline Fee: 10%

Broken Arrow is a Municipal Dispatch Center and serves the citizens of Broken Arrow.

Income and Expenses - Broken Arrow		2012*
Total Actual Annual 9-1-1 Income		\$545,059.06
Total Actual Annual Expense		\$1,028,933.58
* <i>January thru August costs</i> (Expenses are absorbed by General Fund; \$400,000 per year of 9-1-1 revenues are used; surplus is allowed to accumulate for 9-1-1 upgrades and infrastructure)		-\$483,874.52
Population Served: 111,700	Employees: 20	Landline Fee: 5%

Pontotoc County is Stand-a-lone PSAP that serves the Entire County and relies solely on 9-1-1 revenues.

Income and Expenses - Pontotoc County		FY 2011/2012
Total Actual Annual 9-1-1 Income		\$568,432.44
Total Actual Annual Expense		\$750,381.79
Shortfall absorbed by 9-1-1 Reserves		-\$181,949.35
Population Served: 40,000	Employees: 13	Landline fee: 15%

Muskogee City County 9-1-1 Trust Authority is a Stand-a-lone PSAP that serves the entire County.

Income and Expenses - Muskogee County		FY 2011/2012
Total Actual Annual 9-1-1 Income		\$1,068,000.00
Total Actual Annual Expense		\$2,259,693.00
Muskogee Sheriff and Muskogee Police contribute \$816,000 per year shared equally; \$160,000 in reserve funds		-\$1,191,693.00
Population Served: 71,000	Employees: 20	Landline fee: 15%

As the above charts show if a PSAP relies solely on 9-1-1 revenues, there is a shortfall every year. The reserves will eventually be depleted and with no additional revenue identified some 9-1-1 centers may have to close their doors. Those PSAPs that have contributions from user agencies, have passed a sales tax, or have access to the general funds from government entities are in better shape. As general funds run short the budgets to supplement 9-1-1 services are cut.

The size of the center or the population served is not indicative of the amount of personnel needed or the cost of the equipment. The same type of equipment with the same price tag needs to be purchased to perform the job functions necessary for an enhanced 9-1-1 center. Staffing is based on positions that need to be manned not just call volume. A smaller populated, lower call-volume, multi-agency center may need more personnel than a single agency dispatch center because of the number of positions.

9-1-1 Federal Grant

This grant was a one-time appropriation from Congress through the National 9-1-1 Office. The grant was for the deployment of Wireless Phase II and was awarded through a competitive bid process.

Entity Receiving Grant	Amount
Chickasha	\$75,000.00
Creek County	\$76,745.90
Ellis County	\$12,610.00
Johnston County	\$50,000.00
Marshall County	\$56,920.80
City of McAlester	\$109,059.00
City of Pryor	\$50,000.00
City of Ada	\$57,575.00

Entity Receiving Grant	Amount
State of Oklahoma	\$2,048.96
ACOG	\$439,457.80
SWOR	\$245,381.79
Garvin County	\$73,448.19
City of Blackwell	\$68,691.09
McIntosh County	\$79,933.10
Total	\$1,396,871.63

Recommendations – State Coordinator, Training and Funding

The recommendations in our 2010 Governors Report are still valid the only change being that our plight is now more severe.

Without state planning and coordination, populated areas will continue to provide high quality 9-1-1 services while service in rural areas will be poor or non-existent. Urban areas are seeing their revenues decline as well; but additional funding sources are more readily available. However, as 9-1-1 services are dipping into general funds, local governments have to cut services in other areas.

Even if money were not an issue, implementing enhanced 9-1-1 is a daunting task. It requires an understanding of telephone networking, mapping, radio systems, and numerous types of 9-1-1 equipment. This list continues to grow and gets more complicated and expensive as technology advances. There is no single place, person, or office in Oklahoma that a jurisdiction can go to for help.

Statewide planning and coordination is also needed to standardize and improve 9-1-1 service delivery. For example, in order to locate a caller and direct emergency workers, it is vital that each 9-1-1 call center have mapping technology. The electronic map must contain properly formatted addresses for every home or business. Uniform addressing standards are crucial to providing fast and accurate emergency response. Currently, there are no state standards for addressing, and no person, no place, and no office to assist communities in building a standardized accurate map.

Training, as stated earlier, is a luxury. There are no state standards or curriculum for call taker/dispatcher training. Many centers do not have a formal training plan; training is done by word of mouth and is not documented.

In order to address these challenges, the State 9-1-1 Advisory Board is strongly recommending the creation of a State 9-1-1 Coordination Office. This office would be charged, in part, with assisting the build out of enhanced 9-1-1 service statewide and improving the quality of 9-1-1 service statewide. The State will need to develop a comprehensive strategy to implement the Board report's recommendations. The State 9-1-1 Advisory Board would assist the staff with recommendations.

The Board finds that the following recommendations are vital to begin addressing the critical issues of 9-1-1 in Oklahoma:

- Identify permanent funding source(s) that would enable the creation of a 9-1-1 Coordinator's Office to include administrative staff to carry out the tasks outlined in this Report and to help supplement certain duties of the Board.
- Identify the agency placement of the 9-1-1 Coordinator's Office.
- Provide job requirements and select a State 9-1-1 Coordinator.
- Adopt Legislation for Minimum Training Standards for Dispatchers/Call-Takers.
- Develop a permanent means of funding for 9-1-1 equipment, services and training; some funding recommendations are:
 - ✓ Many jurisdictions are below the 15% collection on Landline phones– unless the original language in the ballot said “up to 15%” a new vote is necessary. Introduce a bill that will allow all jurisdictions to collect the 15%.
 - ✓ Fund the Utilities Grant Program to allow PSAPs to apply for the “purchasing and updating of 9-1-1 infrastructure”; i.e. Computer-Aided Dispatch Equipment, 9-1-1 Telephony, and Recorders.
 - ✓ Establish, by State Statute, a fund that is specifically used to fund 9-1-1 activities and/or infrastructure (including definitions to ensure 9-1-1 funds are only used for 9-1-1 elements).
 - ✓ Increase the \$.50 now being collected for Wireless/VOIP to \$.75.
 - ✓ Other states are looking at adding a charge on all utility bills for 9-1-1 services.
 - ✓ Cleaning up the language in the 9-1-1 Statutes; Title 63, beginning at Section 2801. These statutes have been added to, patched up, and changed to accommodate technological advances to the industry. There are ambiguities in the language as to what 9-1-1 funds can be used for and how 9-1-1 funds can be spent.

Conclusion

Today, people communicate with each other in ways that the designers of the original 9-1-1 system could not have envisioned: wireless phones, text messages, smartphones, video chat, Internet Protocol (IP)-enabled devices and methods, with more on the way.

Technological advances are not waiting on 9-1-1 infrastructure to adapt. New funding models and mechanisms that are technology-neutral and dedicated for 9-1-1 services are essential for sustaining 9-1-1 systems.

The Board urges state leaders to centralize the planning and coordination of 9-1-1 services into a Statewide 9-1-1 Coordinator's Office, establish a permanent funding source for 9-1-1, and implement minimum training standards for all 9-1-1 call-takers and dispatchers.

The Board understands that there is never a good time to ask for money but we strongly believe in our mission and know that every Oklahoman and visitor deserves the best and fastest emergency response available when dialing 9-1-1. The Board is hopeful that the Governor and Legislature will see this critical need and take steps to make Oklahoma safer for all its citizens.

The Oklahoma State 9-1-1 Advisory Board

The State 9-1-1 Advisory Board is composed of 23 members appointed by the Speaker, Senate President Pro Tempore or Governor, representing various sized cities, counties, council of governments, law enforcement agencies, the Emergency Medical Services Authority, 9-1-1 professional organizations, large and small landline telephone companies, and national, regional and local wireless service providers. The duties of the Board are outline in 63 O.S. 2847. They are, in paraphrase:

1. Secure resources for the creation, operation, expansion and cooperative undertaking of local public safety answering points;
2. Secure an direct the distribution of public funds and grants as needed;
3. Facilities information-sharing among public safety answering points;
4. Create and maintain best practices databases for public safety answering point operations;
5. Encourage equipment and technology sharing among small jurisdictions;
6. Take steps to explain enhanced landline 9-1-1 service to every telephone user in the state
7. Assist public safety answering points in implementing Phase I and Phase II wireless technology;
8. Provide a clearinghouse of contact information for all telephone companies operating in the state and contact information and nine-one-one fees charged in each jurisdiction;
9. Develop training program standards for nine-one-one call takers;
10. Designate a statewide nine-one-one-Coordinator; and
11. Take any steps necessary to carry out the duties provided for in this subsection.

BOARD MEMBERS

Stephen Willoughby, 9-1-1 Assoc. of Central Okla. Govts. Chairman

Norman McNickle, Stillwater/Payne County 9-1-1

Darita Huckabee, Indian Nations Council of Govts

Gene Thaxton, Okla. Department of Public Safety

Vicki Atchley, National Emergency Number Assoc.

M.T. Berry, City of Oklahoma City

Dana Church, Southwestern Okla. Regional 9-1-1

Lanette Coppedge, Johnston County 9-1-1

Greg Fisher, City of Sand Springs

Ronnie Freeman, AT&T Oklahoma

Matt Stillwell, Assoc. of Public Safety Comm. Officials

Linda Herndon, Washington County Commissioner

Leroy Lage, City of Watonga

Darryl Maggard, Muskogee County 9-1-1

Lynn Mell, T-Mobile

Diane Pedicord, Oklahoma Municipal League

Richard Ruhl, Pioneer Telephone

Blaine Smith, Assoc. of South Central Okla. Govts.

Ron Strecker, Panhandle Telephone

Stephen Williamson, EMSA