

## **APCO and NENA position statement 2009 Legislative Session**

Since 1991, counties and the State E9-1-1 Program Office have experienced a 34 percent decrease in their ability to fund the costs of E9-1-1 service. That is, if the 9-1-1 excise tax that was authorized at that time at \$0.50 and \$0.20 had been adjusted for inflation, it would be \$0.74 and \$0.30 at the county and state levels, respectively.

When the cellular telephone growth began, RCW 82.14B was amended by the Legislature to ensure excise tax parity with wireline subscribers, and to ensure that network, database, hardware and software that was needed to accommodate that technology was being funded by wireless subscribers rather than expecting the wireline subscribers to subsidize those costs.

Voice over Internet Protocols (VoIP) is the newest technology and that service is experiencing exponential growth rates. 9-1-1 is again faced with the challenges of ensuring the 9-1-1 network, database, hardware and software that is needed to accommodate this technology is put in place, without the legislative authority to extend the 9-1-1 excise tax at the state and local levels to VoIP subscribers.

### *Example of nationally published VoIP Growth Rates*

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones have grown exponentially at rates that appear to be exceeding the wireless growth rates.

- Over 400 companies provide VoIP phone service worldwide
  - Currently 38 million VoIP customers worldwide, over 9 million in the U.S.
  - VoIP is expected to replace wireline phone service, with over 267 million VoIP customers in the next 5 years.

(From national associations' published statistics)

For example: In King County there has been 1000% growth in VoIP 911 calls from 2005 to 2007.

VoIP technology having access to 9-1-1 has resulted in a loss of 9-1-1 revenue both at the State and local government levels. Yet 9-1-1 will continue to be forced to accept and accommodate through network, hardware and software changes, VoIP emergency calls. To do so, tax collections from wireline and wireless subscribers has become our only revenue source to accommodate the VoIP subscribers. The projected local revenue losses in King and Snohomish Counties alone (2 of 39 counties) are expected to be over \$1 million per year for from just one large carrier. The State 9-1-1 fund will experience revenue losses as well. With the rapid growth in VOIP subscribers, it's easy to see that 9-1-1 may soon be unable to support the current level of service, let alone move forward with a Next Generation 9-1-1 network solution that is underway across the nation.

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) will force us to address added information sources such as photos, video, text messages, as well as crash notifications. Our current network, database, software and hardware will need to be replaced, while maintaining the ability to handle legacy systems to serve those citizens across the State that do not have ready access to technology, or who have chosen not to use it.

The communications services that can connect to 911 have increased beyond wireline, and wireless services as defined within RCW 82.14B. Revenue generated for 9-1-1 needs to be sufficient to support this essential service, without customers from one service subsidizing the service of another (example: VOiP). The enabling RCW must be amended to eliminate specific technologies, and direct 911 excise tax be collected from any communications device that allows connection to 911.

A company's lack of Nexis within the State of Washington is currently undermining the ability to generate revenue for the service provided, where 9-1-1 is concerned. Consideration of our State denying the

authority of a company to provide 9-1-1 service to their customers within our state if excise tax is not collected and submitted may nullify the affect of Nexis for 9-1-1.

A Legislative Budget Proviso in 2008 allocates \$200,000 of State 9-1-1 money to study: long term funding for statewide E9-1-1 services, to include analysis of the current funding mechanisms; current caps in RCW 82.14B; implementation of Next Generation 911, prepaid wireless phones; and future technologies. The study is to be completed no later than November 1 2008, so that the Military Department/State 911 Office is able to submit the report to OFM. December 1, 2008, the report is to be submitted to the House of Representatives finance committee and the technology, energy and communications committee; and the Senate Ways and Means committee and the Water, Energy and Telecommunications committee.

The specific recommended changes will not be published until the conclusion of the Study on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The State E 9-1-1 Advisory Committee has a subcommittee putting in place a trial program of Next Generation 9-1-1 within our state within the authorized budget allocation in 2008. That will set in motion our plan to migrate from our current 1960's technology to a new secure internet protocol based network called an Emergency Services Internet (ESInet) that will support both our current and future needs within Washington State.

The 9-1-1 community desperately needs legislative assistance to ensure we can both implement and provide on-going funding for this essential statewide emergency service. We are asking for your organization's support and assistance in the 2009 Legislative Session to make the necessary changes to secure the future of 9-1-1.