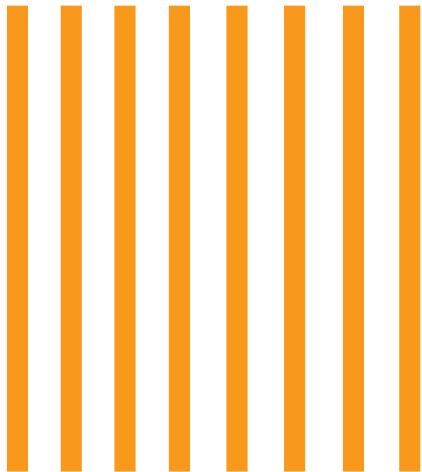




Serving Counties Since 1886

Repair 911 Funding System

COUNTY GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES



Fact Sheet 2007

Counties have responsibility for one of the key functions in public safety, the operation of the 911 call-taking and dispatch system. Counties are in the midst of implementation of enhanced systems to locate wireless callers, perhaps the greatest increase in call volume over the last several years and now accounting for more than half of all calls. Prior to implementing locator technologies, dispatchers had to keep the caller on the phone, and try to get them to describe their location. This took valuable time, and worse, when the caller could not communicate, they could not dispatch.

Counties are making great strides with wireless caller locator systems, but there are major problems with administration of the fund by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), resulting in significant cash flow difficulties for counties and in questions on whether or not PEMA has approved local plan submissions that included unnecessary purchases, inappropriate equipment, or inflated costs.

Apart from wireless 911 implementation, counties must also adapt to other new and anticipated technologies. Counties are seeking legislation to required PBX and similar systems to be outfitted to facilitate location of callers. Legislative and administrative assistance is also needed to assure that users of new technologies, including Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) and other internet services, can place emergency calls to the correct call center, and be assured of correct emergency dispatch.

Counties fund 911 systems through nominal surcharges on subscribers' monthly wireline and wireless bills. A key component of this system is assurance that telephone system providers are properly collecting and remitting the subscriber fees that support the development, deployment and operation of these systems.

For more information on 911 implementation, contact Douglas E. Hill at 717-232-7554 x3115, or dhill@pacounties.org.