

9-1-1 Modernization (legislative update); Feb '17

(We will soon need your help)

NENA and APCO representatives continue to work, mostly behind-the-scenes, with other professional associations such as Badger Sheriff's, WI Counties Association, American Heart Association, WSTA (Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association) and others, to attempt to bring about funding for Next Generation 9-1-1 via the State legislature.

Despite efforts by the Next Generation 9-1-1 work group and the Department of Administration (State CIO's office) it is clear the Governor will not include funding as part of his budget recommendation made public on February 8. However, that does not mean funding might not happen for the upcoming biennium. Our next steps are to inform and encourage the Joint Finance Committee to add funding to the budget through their deliberations over the next few months.

A draft bill and a 1-page set of talking points to explain that bill are being developed in cooperation with the aforementioned Associations and their lobbyists, and with the State's NG9-1-1 workgroup that includes NENA and APCO members. As soon as that bill and set of talking points are approved by the NG9-1-1 workgroup, we will distribute them to you so you can help encourage Joint Finance Committee members, their staffs, and their fellow legislators who advise them on budget needs.

The legislation is not likely to solve all the needs of WI PSAPs, but will hope to solve the most pressing, expensive need; the building of an Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) to replace the aging and increasingly expensive copper wire network. We believe it will also address the need to have statewide coordination via an Advisory Commission or Council and perhaps will encourage or mandate a State department to staff that Advisory group. That State "9-1-1 Office" will be crucial for bringing efforts of the Advisory Commission together, providing an agency for coordinating RFPs and contracts, and being involved in overseeing the build-out of the statewide ESInet (to name a few). For those of you who remember that PSAP consolidation was a factor in past legislative discussions, I'm relieved to say that the topic is not under consideration (best we know) this time around.

The NG9-1-1 white paper that you have been provided in the past and a forthcoming NG9-1-1 Strategic Plan being written by the NG9-1-1 work group will be the blueprint for future needs of WI PSAPs and will inform any future legislation that this year's legislation might not address.

For now; please keep the following in mind:

- The time is now (this biennium) for funding an ESInet. Failing to do so places WI 9-1-1 on the doorstep of the year 2020 when the telephone companies want to remove the copper wire network (or start charging very high fees to maintain it). If we wait until the next biennium, the buildout of the ESInet to replace the copper network won't be done in time for 2020.
- There is time this session to accomplish what we need to do to get NG9-1-1 moving and avoid problems with the copper network getting more and more expensive and obsolete.

- We will need your voices to join together to push for legislative help...and, we will provide talking points soon so you can know how to assist (including information on the most influential legislators to talk with).
- And, if/when you do talk with legislators and/or other interested parties (perhaps from other public safety organizations); remember that NG9-1-1 and FirstNet are not the same nor are they on the same planning/funding track. They do, however, support each other (NG9-1-1 has to do with the IN-coming set of digital information into the PSAP; whereas FirstNet is the means by which that wide-band digital information goes OUT to public safety responders from the PSAPs). We need both, but have to make sure that legislators don't assume NG9-1-1 comes with FirstNet.