A Message From Your President:

With the upcoming election, it is a good time to reflect upon how we can continue to work together to save money and maintain service levels in every community that our public expects. First of all, thank you to our Public Relations Committee for creating the letterhead you see. The message is timely – think about it – “Answering the Call Past, Present, and Next Generation”.

We continue to talk about Next Generation 911 and its impacts. Realistically, even before we fully implement Next Generation service delivery across the state we are working together in many ways to be fiscally responsible and maintain quality service. I thought I would articulate on paper some of the things we have been discussing in our association and committee meetings. I broke it out into what I perceived as short-term, long-term, and future planning initiatives. This is subject to interpretation and we can certainly talk about it at the upcoming meeting in June. Please don’t take these ideas as “gospel” but rather as “food for thought” as we continue our journey to meet today’s expectations and plan for future needs.

Ideas for Communications Equipment / Services Collaboration

The idea is consider regional or statewide RFP’s and contracts for equipment sharing/and or maintenance contract sharing to save money and continue to improve services.

Short Term:
- CAD
- Reverse 911 System (immediate need)

Long Term:
With the establishment of a statewide ESInet, options will open up to share backroom equipment yet still have full functionality at remote sites.
- Recording Systems
- Mapping
- Radio consoles
- Paging systems
- Tower sharing
- Master clocks

What would we see as “core services” on the ESInet? We will need to define this. Possibly it would be 911 call traffic, radio communications, paging systems.

Future Planning:
Next Gen 911 will grow to include text and video capabilities. While we still don’t realize the impact of those types of calls to our centers – we may want to consider having 2 to 4 centers that have an individual dedicated to text message calls only and/or video calls. Some discussion should evolve on whether centers even open video messages – they may just pass those images directly on to the correct responding entity – like fire, police, EMS.
There may be a need for interface on the ESInet with all the hospitals in the state, so they can receive feeds re: patients that will be coming in –

Will rural EMS have the ability to send medical records, etc. to the appropriate hospital? They may not and may rely upon dispatch to forward those kinds of records to the hospitals that may come with the patient. We need to plan to accommodate that traffic volume on the ESInet, as well as develop protocols to handle it. We thank our Standard Operating Guidelines Committee for the work they are doing to establish guidelines for centers for uniformity in call handler capabilities, records, management, and call handling. They will be busy over the next several years attempting to plan for policies that will affect us all as Next Generation 911 Service delivery evolves.

Currently, our ND Emergency Services Communications Coordination Committee (ESC3) has voted to hire a Next Generation Project Manager. This individual will work in a similar fashion as Russ Lindblom has as our Project Manager for the Phase II project. The individual will work on our behalf to research Next Generation initiatives and come up with best practices. We all know this is a labor intensive job, I believe strongly that we need that individual to ensure interoperability is achieved. The position is on hold because the funding stream was attached to grant funding that expires in September. An extension has been requested, but not yet granted. In the interim, we should include that position as part of our funding request to the legislature in the next legislative session, for the longer term we will want to discuss the possibility of local support (as we now do for Russ). As NDACo will be the employing entity, if you have ideas about a good candidate for this position please give those ideas to Terry. The job description was previously circulated, but I have attached another copy for your review. We should thank the ESC3 committee for all the hard work they have done on our behalf. The time and effort this takes by these people on a volunteer basis is extensive. Their commitment demonstrates true public service. We need to be sure to work through our Legislative Committee as we identify funding priorities and needs to put together concise plans in conjunction with what is developed through the ESC3 committee.

In closing:
We can identify what we can share today, with systems currently in place utilizing the state Stagenet or adding MPLS connections in each region until the full ESInet is built. We need to breakout actual “nuts & bolts” equipment vs statewide contracts for services that entities can opt in on, similar to the statewide radio contract that Motorola won through an intensive RFP process spearheaded by State Radio. Every current PSAP can maintain their independence, yet have support available if they choose to change service delivery in the future – whether it is to deliver services locally during the day only and transfer calls at night, or hand off any future text/video calls that come into their center to a telecommunicator that has special training to handle those calls.

911 continues to evolve and public expectation along with it. We have a history of successful collaboration planning for effective 911 service delivery to our constituents with our success in handling Phase II wireless delivery. We can be successful planning Next Generation 911 service delivery.

I hope to see you all in June at our next 911 Association Meeting, June 6 and 7 in Bismarck at the Comfort Inn!

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