

November 30, 2009

Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR)
226 Capitol Blvd. Bldg, Suite 508
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Commission Members:

The Knox County Emergency Communications District serves approximately 400,000 citizens of Knoxville and Knox County. Being the regions education, health care, employment, and entertainment center daytime population can exceed 525,000. These figures do not include the travelers on the two major interstates that meet in the center of our city. Call count for the Knox County Emergency Communications District last calendar year was 685,000 calls for service.

Our two primary governments have maintained or increased their contributions yearly. Internally we have reduced our budget to pre-2003 levels. Our financial worries come not from the lack of support from our governmental entities or internal controls, they come from a rapidly eroding revenue stream; mainly wire line tariffs.

National studies conducted by the United States Department of Transportation, NENA, and APCO have all concluded that the cornerstone of 911 funding – tariffs on wire line phones – is outdated and is shrinking at a rapid rate. Technology is rapidly making the home and business phones, as we have known, antiquated.

Knox County Emergency Communications District has seen a decrease in revenue from landline tariffs of 10% during the past twelve months. All the while we are being forced to replace a radio system and a Computer Aided Dispatch System due to the manufacturers withdrawing maintenance support. These two purchases are estimated to cost over \$19 million.

The September 30th, 2009 *United States Department of Transportation Next Generation 911 System Initiative Report* states on page 24 that new funding models have to be developed. They recommend a fixed mount surcharge on all calling devices such as proposed in House Bill 0204.

We strongly urge the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations to endorse the intent of House Bill 0204 which will allow our first responders and citizens to have continuous access to state-of-the-art professional 911 services. They deserve no less.

Sincerely,

J. Robert Coker, Director
Knox County Emergency Communications District

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