



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



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MEMORANDUM

TO: TACIR Commission Members

FROM: Harry A. Green *Harry*
Executive Director

DATE: June 30, 2011

SUBJECT: Update on Non-affiliated Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) Report and Initial Draft

Public Chapter 473 directs TACIR to:

- Perform a study of the impact on public safety of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) not affiliated with an Emergency Communication District (ECD).
- Review the emergency communications equipment capabilities of non-affiliated PSAPs.
- Report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, upon conclusion of its study. The report is to be delivered to each member of the House and Senate Government Operations Committee by December 1, 2011.

TACIR staff presented a research plan for this study at the Commission meeting on February 7, 2011. The following is a progress update on this project.

- Staff contacted and interviewed officials at the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board (TECB). TECB's 911 coordinator sent contact information for 22 non-affiliated PSAPs (this number has increased since reported at the last Commission meeting).

PSAPs not affiliated with local ECD

May 2011

PSAP	Corresponding ECD
Sewanee Police Dept	Franklin
Humboldt Police Dept	Gibson
Milan Police Dept	Gibson
Trenton Police Dept	Gibson
Greene County Sheriff's Dept	Greene
Greeneville Police Dept	Greene
Hardeman County EMS	Hardeman
Hardeman County Sheriff's Dept	Hardeman
Henry County Sheriff's Dept	Henry
Lauderdale County Sheriff's Dept	Lauderdale
Ripley Police Dept	Lauderdale
Maury County Sheriff's Dept	Maury
Maury County EMS	Maury
Mt. Pleasant Police Dept	Maury
Athens Police Dept	McMinn
Etowah Police Dept*	McMinn
Adamsville Police Dept	McNairy
Oneida Police Dept	Scott
East TN State University Police Dept	Washington
Jonesborough Police Dept	Washington
Franklin Police Dept	Williamson
Spring Hill Police Dept	Williamson

Source: Tennessee Emergency Communications Board, e-mail May 9, 2011

*Staff discovered Etowah Police Dept consolidated with the McMinn ECD during interviews

- Staff summarized the findings from the 2009 Office of the Comptroller's performance audit of the Department of Commerce and Insurance—the basis for PC 473—which found that there are “weaknesses in emergency communication services in Tennessee, which could put residents in some areas at risk.”

- Staff conducted a thorough literature review of
 - related technical issues,
 - consolidation,
 - industry standards,
 - federal and state regulations, and
 - other states' experiences.
- TACIR staff contacted the non-affiliated PSAPs (by e-mail, fax, and phone) with interview questions regarding the public safety impact of non-affiliated answering points. Questions were shared and a few days' time was given to recipients to consider responses.
- Staff then followed up with phone calls to collect responses. During interviews, staff discovered some of these entities do not consider themselves PSAPs.
- Staff is also interviewing local law enforcement agencies and the county ECDs related to the non-affiliated PSAPs.
- Staff is currently completing interviews and sorting through and analyzing responses.
- A final draft will be complete and ready for the Commission to review at the September meeting.
- Preliminary findings include:
 - The TECB recently amended its policies effective May 19, 2011, including upgrading GIS capabilities for each ECD. The TECB is working towards NG-911 implementation across the state's ECDs.
 - Etowah Police Department has consolidated with the McMinn County ECD since the last Commission meeting.
 - While some non-affiliated PSAPs do have adequate technology, several simply use ten-digit phone lines (with or without caller identification).
 - Most non-affiliated PSAPs reported they are providing sufficient service and do not believe consolidation is necessary. Two of the main concerns that were voiced during interviews are residents repeating information when calls are transferred and dropped calls.
 - There is no statutory definition of "public service answering point" in Tennessee Code 7-86-103, which contains the definitions for the Emergency Communications chapter. While PSAP is a standard term in the emergency communications field, the TCA does not provide a clear definition. Staff believes a better definition of these entities needs to be provided by the General Assembly in the future.