

**Testimony of**

**Barry Ritter, ENP  
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**on**

**“Realizing Nationwide Next Generation 911”**

**Before the House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee of Communication and Technology**

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Chairman Blackburn, Ranking Member Doyle, other members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am honored to share the story of success in Indiana. Thank you, Ms. Brooks, for the kind introduction.

I am joined here today by the Chairwoman of our Statewide 911 Board - Treasurer of State Kelly Mitchell. As the only state treasurer in the country to chair a 911 Board, I am especially grateful for her continued leadership and support of the work we do and the progress we have made to improve public safety.

As Ms. Brooks said, I am Barry Ritter, Executive Director of the Indiana Statewide 911 Board.

In 1996 the General Assembly created the Wireless Advisory Board, the predecessor to the now Statewide 911 Board. Established as a “body, corporate and politic” - it is separate from the State, and the Board’s powers constitute an essential government function. As the state’s 911 authority, the Board has two primary responsibilities:

The first is to oversee the statewide 911 system, known as the IN911 network. The second, is to administer the funding that supports a uniform statewide 911 program.

Established as a state “Trust Fund”, the funds have a targeted use – authorized by statute. Our 911 funds have never been diverted or raided.

This governance model permitted the Board to deploy wireless 911 service on a very aggressive schedule.

Generation 1 of the original Wireless Direct Network began in 2004, and was completed in 2006. This work brought the cost of wireless 911 under control, and began the goal of uniform service.

Completed in 2010, Generation 2 included the buildout of an Emergency Service Internet Protocol network, now known as an E-S-i-net and established connectivity to all bordering counties in Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky. PSAPs now transfer calls and handset location information across state lines. (Exhibit A)

In 2013 as part of the Board’s strategic plan for NG services, the board commissioned a statewide study of PSAP’s legacy networks and call processing equipment (CPE). The estimated cost to replace the remaining legacy networks and PSAP equipment was enormous. A decision was made to manage the transition to NG911 networks as a statewide project, under the authority of the Board.

In 2014, the board published a Request for Service Notice, seeking proposals for a NG911 service compliant the NENA i3 standard. In 2015, the board awarded contracts for “dual networks”. The new IN911 network will operate as a “Public – Private Partnership”.

The dual network design was a cost-effective solution, and leveraged efficiencies from two providers. The ESinets operate independently and are responsible for specific service

areas. However, they connect at core level to provide redundant service. This design provides statewide redundancy.

The Board also required the primary vendor to build and deploy a 3<sup>rd</sup> tier disaster recovery service. This further ensures that calls can be delivered statewide. And finally, the board contracted with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party for network monitoring and data analytics.

Scheduled for completion in the fourth quarter of 2017, all PSAPs will be served by the NG911 network. Purchased as a service, the board's annual cost will be approximately \$15M, serving all 92 counties. (Exhibit B1, B2)

Indiana's statewide 911 program benefits from the efficiency provided by modern technologies – such as hosted solutions. We believe that our design and implementation can serve as a model for other state programs.

Our next priority will be to assist local government in replacing their legacy call processing equipment, some of which is not capable of processing the many type of emergency calls that can be generated by the public today.

It is important to understand that funding alone is not enough to achieve NG911 in the US. Leadership, collaboration and cooperation between local, state and federal government – and between industry partners and industry associations is also a must. That leadership needs to start here at the federal level. 911 will continue to be a local service, but it needs strong leadership and a spotlight on the methods that are proven to get results.

Sustainable funding, strategic planning and advocacy for non-proprietary standards support NG911 initiatives.

## **National broadband (FirstNet)**

We recognize that the NG911 network, while separate from FirstNet will serve a critical role in the larger public safety broadband initiative. Citizens reporting an emergency could improve public safety using video, pictures or other data which can be processed and delivered to the PSAP using NG911 standards.

A FirstNet connected PSAP could then relay this same information to, and receive from first responders, data to improve service. Indiana is engaged in the FirstNet Public Safety Broadband project, led by the Integrated Public Safety Commission and the Office of Technology. Representing the 911 community, I serve on the Commission's key players subcommittee as an advisor. It is the committee's responsibility to ensure the Commission and the Governor have sufficient data to make an informed decision.

## **Non-voice Communication – Text for 911**

As mentioned above, Indiana's governance structure has allowed an aggressive deployment of services, both voice and non-voice.

In 2013, the board authorized deploying the first non-voice communication tool, Text FROM 911. This communication service is text messaging initiated by the PSAP to a wireless device. Most often a text message initiated by a PSAP is in response to a dropped "voice" call or the caller simply hangs up

Indiana PSAPs are using the Text FROM 911 several thousand times each month as a tool to communicate with citizens. Utilizing this tool saves time and resources of first responders which is an indirect cost savings.

In May 2014 Indiana began deploying Text to 911 service. As of June 2016, Indiana provides Text TO 911 in all 92 counties. The Board has conducted several media campaigns to publicize the new feature and has worked with the hearing impaired community to promote its' use. The largest use of non-voice communications is in Text FROM 911. (Exhibit C)

Thank you for allowing me to share Indiana's story with you today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.