

# Texas 9-1-1 Newsletter

Commission on State Emergency Communications

Volume 2, Issue 2, Spring 2005



## Emerging Technology Impacts 9-1-1

### Mission Statement

*To preserve and enhance public safety and health through reliable access to emergency telecommunication services.*

### CSEC Commissioners

Dorothy Morgan, Chairperson  
*Brenham, Washington County*

James Beauchamp  
*Midland, Martin County*

Don Comedy  
*Wichita Falls, Wichita County*

John deNoyelles  
*Tyler, Smith County*

Heberto Gutierrez  
*San Antonio, Bexar County*

Glenn Lewis  
*Fort Worth, Tarrant County*

James O'Neal  
*Lancaster, Dallas County*

Lyn Phillips  
*Bastrop, Bastrop County*

H.T. Wright  
*Lockhart, Caldwell County*

Casey Blass  
*Dept. of State Health Services  
Ex-Officio*

David Featherston  
*Public Utility Commission  
Ex-Officio*

Brian Kelly  
*Dept. of Information Resources  
Ex-Officio*

Paul Mallett  
*Executive Director*

### CSEC

333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 2-212  
Austin, TX 78701  
Tel: 512.305.6911

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony is an emerging technology that is rapidly impacting levels of 9-1-1 service in Texas. With VoIP, calls are packaged in Internet Protocol, the same routing instructions that form the backbone of the Internet. Voice quality is the same as regular telephone service, and there are typically no long distance charges because the calls do not travel over the public switched telephone network that is owned and operated by the traditional telephone companies. While VoIP is less expensive and more flexible than most traditional telephone service, it does not always interface with the existing 9-1-1 network nor lend itself to the established methods for the application of 9-1-1 service fees.

With such a new technology, standards for this industry are still being developed. At this time it is not clear if 9-1-1 calls originating from VoIP providers will be able to interface with the existing 9-1-1 system, or if they will be able to deliver the callback number or physical address information. Some types of VoIP providers, such as cable companies, partner with competitive, alternative phone companies to provide traditional 9-1-1 service, with location and callback numbers for their customers. A less efficient method is offered by other providers who have chosen to deliver 9-1-1 calls directly to public safety answering points (PSAPs) via the published 10-digit emergency telephone number, commonly referred to as the "admin line." Calls delivered on 10-digit admin lines often do not have the same level of priority as those delivered on the 9-1-1 lines, and they do not provide the call taker with location or callback information, making call handling, dispatch, and response more difficult and time consuming.

CSEC staff is active with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and other organizations that are working together for a standard VoIP 9-1-1 solution. CSEC and the 9-1-1 Alliance of Texas (a group of Emergency Communications Districts) held a VoIP workshop at the Hobby Building on March 29, 2005. The purpose of the workshop was to exchange information. The workshop was well attended with 60 people from the industry and the Texas 9-1-1 community in attendance.

One action item from the workshop was to establish a VoIP working group to explore some of the issues and impact this new technology will have on 9-1-1 in Texas. CSEC has established the formation of a working group whose mission will be to document the impact of VoIP telephony on 9-1-1 in Texas and explore potential solutions to identified problems. The first topic will be 9-1-1 funding.

For more information regarding VoIP, visit the CSEC web site at [www.911.state.tx.us](http://www.911.state.tx.us).

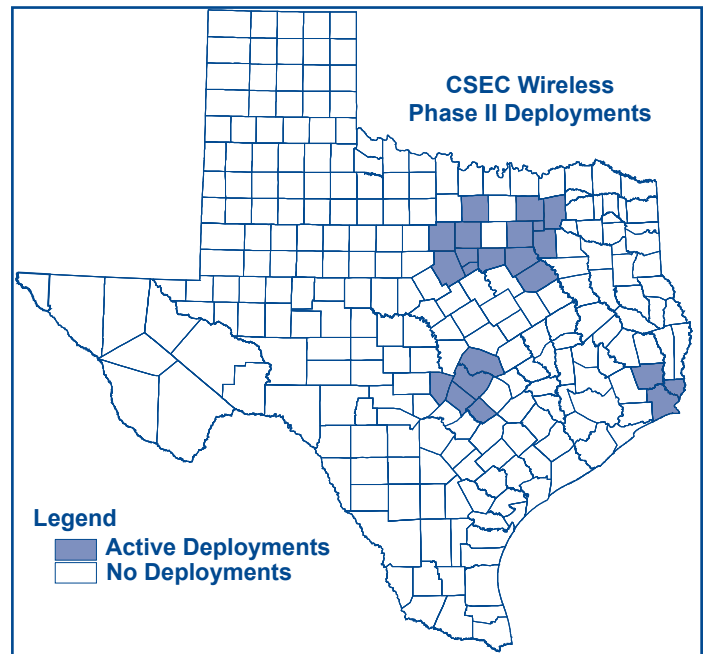
## WIRELESS PHASE II UPDATE

Phase II deployment, which provides the general location of a wireless caller, is successfully underway in three regional planning commissions (RPCs): Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC). The Phase II deployments in these three RPCs cover 28.98% of the CSEC program population.

CSEC is ready to expand Wireless Phase II deployment to include additional wireless carriers and other RPCs. There are 13 RPCs representing 166 call centers that potentially meet the FCC readiness requirements for placing a valid request for Wireless Phase II service. CSEC will work with these RPCs to determine their readiness to place Phase II requests.

The CSEC staff has worked with the initial three RPCs to develop a standard procedure for deployment of Wireless Phase II service based on knowledge gained from actual deployments. A workshop was held in November 2004 to instruct the other RPCs on requesting and implementing Wireless Phase II service. During this training, an informational packet for Phase II implementation was distributed along with a sample PSAP training presentation developed by NCTCOG.

The map below depicts those areas of the state program that currently have Wireless Phase II E9-1-1 service deployed. The map does not reflect Phase II deployment for Emergency Communication Districts or 9-1-1 Home Rule Cities outside the CSEC program area.



## REGIONAL 9-1-1 PRIMER

Within the CSEC program area served by the State's 24 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), telephone customers pay for 9-1-1 service through two fees on their phone bills: the 9-1-1 Service Fee and the Equalization Surcharge. The 9-1-1 Service Fee is set at fifty-cents for each wireline and wireless telephone. The Equalization Surcharge rate is set at six-tenths of one percent and is applied to all intrastate long distance toll calls that begin and end inside the State of Texas.

The money collected for 9-1-1 is deposited into a dedicated account within the State Treasury, which means the money collected for 9-1-1 can only be used to fund 9-1-1. Once every two years, funding from this dedicated account is appropriated by the Texas Legislature to the CSEC to distribute back to the RPCs to fund 9-1-1 service for their local governments.

9-1-1 Funds pay for the dedicated network, database and call taker computer equipment that are necessary to deliver a 9-1-1 call to a public safety answering center that can answer and respond to

emergency calls. The 9-1-1 network routes and delivers the 9-1-1 call over dedicated telephone lines to the correct answering center. The 9-1-1 database stores all of the caller's phone numbers and address location information that is delivered with each call. The specialized call taker computer equipment is used to answer the 9-1-1 calls and displays important information such as the caller's address, telephone number, as well as the names of the emergency responders for Police, Fire, and EMS. Once the 9-1-1 call and information is delivered to the answering center, the local governments are responsible for answering and handling the 9-1-1 call, and for dispatching the appropriate emergency responders within their jurisdictions.

If you would like further information on how 9-1-1 works, please visit the following link on our web site:



[www.911.state.tx.us/files//pdfs/911/callflow.PDF](http://www.911.state.tx.us/files//pdfs/911/callflow.PDF)

## TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL VoIP ALERT

Consumers who are considering buying Internet-based telephone services should be aware that not all such services provide access to the 9-1-1 network. Sometimes 9-1-1 service is provided but is not the full service we are used to receiving via regular wireline telephones. When a person calls 9-1-1 from a wireline telephone, emergency service providers automatically know the caller's location and can direct emergency personnel to that location even if the caller is not able to provide an address.

If you are considering an Internet-based telephone service for your household, you should ask whether the offer includes 9-1-1 service. If the advertising, whether in store brochures, media print, online, or oral communications, is silent on this issue, it is likely that 9-1-1 is NOT being provided.

If the provider claims to provide 9-1-1 service, ask whether 9-1-1 calls are routed to the traditional 9-1-1 network. If yes, then the service is just like traditional telephone service. If the provider makes it voluntary or mandatory to sign up for 9-1-1 service, you may be required to go on line and enter your name and address so you can be located in an emergency. It will be very important for you to enter the information accurately and keep it up to date.

If you are considering a telephone service which does not include traditional 9-1-1 service, you should ask yourself how members of your household, including children, visitors and babysitters, will call for help in an emergency. Don't forget that they will have to know your address and be able to communicate it to emergency personnel.

*Gregg Abbott, Attorney General of Texas*

## STAFF RECOGNITION

CSEC bids farewell to Mrs. Velia Williams, CSEC Director of Administration, who announced her retirement in early April. After 16 years of working at CSEC, she is looking forward to a new chapter in her life. "I plan to spend more time with my family" says Velia, "I will definitely miss everyone at CSEC." Since CSEC opened its doors, Velia has played an important role to ensure that all Texans can rely on emergency services during their time of need.

This past March, Mrs. Williams was recognized by the State Agency Council as a recipient of The Outstanding Women in Texas Government Award for the category of community involvement. The distinguished award honors women who work in state government and who have helped shape Texas by contributing their talents and skills.

## Online Efficiency: CSEC Website

The CSEC was among the first state agencies to implement an agency web site and strives to keep the site fresh with new and timely information. As a result of new features implemented over the past five years, primary stakeholders and other interested parties now have easier access to agency resources and information.

Automatic notification allows users to sign up to receive updates via e-mail whenever new messages are posted to the correspondence section. This section is used to distribute materials such as Commission meeting agendas and notebooks that were previously distributed in hard copy through the mail. This feature reduces staff time, agency resources, and distributes the information more quickly to interested parties.

Online reporting has greatly improved required quarterly performance reporting. The participating 24 regional planning commissions (RPCs) report quarterly financial and performance information to CSEC staff via an interactive online reporting system. The online reporting system greatly reduces errors, as it cross-checks entered data in real time. The system reduces RPC and CSEC staff time required for data entry and report processing, which frees staff to focus more on the administration of 9-1-1 services across Texas.

Public Education and the provision of supporting materials is a statutory requirement for CSEC. CSEC makes available a wide variety of public education materials via its online catalog and ordering system. The online ordering system is available year round, and facilitates orders from RPCs, 9-1-1 Home Rule Cities and Emergency Communications Districts. The online system significantly reduces data entry, eliminates the need to print paper catalogs, and streamlines order fulfillment, all of which help reduce costs and increase efficiency.

One feature of particular interest to the public is the "What's New" section on the CSEC web site home page. "What's New" highlights recent meetings, activities, and other items of interest and is regularly updated to provide timely and useful information. Find out more about CSEC at:

[www.911.state.tx.us](http://www.911.state.tx.us)



Texas 9-1-1 Newsletter is an external publication of the Commission on State Emergency Communications. We want to hear from you. E-mail your questions and comments to the newsletter editor at: [info@csec.state.tx.us](mailto:info@csec.state.tx.us).

## CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

<b>79th Regular Legislative Session Ends</b>	<b>May 30</b>
<b>Telecommunicator Award Nomination Deadline</b>	<b>June 2</b>
<b>TTY Train the Trainer / Austin</b>	<b>June 14-15</b>
<b>Commission Meeting</b>	<b>July 21</b>
<b>Telecommunicator Awards Luncheon</b>	<b>August 31</b>

### WELCOME ABOARD!

On January 3, 2005, Patrick Tyler became CSEC's first general counsel. Mr. Tyler received his law degree from the University of Texas and has been a member of the State Bar of Texas since 1991. He is also a member of the state bars of California and Oklahoma. Prior to joining CSEC, Mr. Tyler spent four years with the Public Utility Commission of Texas in the Legal & Enforcement and Policy Development divisions. He also spent two years with the Office of the Attorney General of Texas in the Bankruptcy & Collections division.

Texas 9-1-1 Newsletter  
333 Guadalupe Street  
Suite 2-212  
Austin, TX 78701

