

Derek Poarch, Chief
Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
National Emergency Number Association
Remarks

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Good morning and thank you! It's a pleasure to be with NENA today. I bring greetings from Chairman Kevin Martin, other FCC Commissioners and the staff in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau.

You may be able to tell from my accent that I'm from the South. I moved to Washington last year after living in North Carolina my entire life. The reason I point this out is because, as you know, your president, Jason Barbour, is also a North Carolina native and is a UNC Chapel Hill graduate. For those of you who don't know it, I was the Chief of the UNC Chapel Hill Department of Public Safety for several years. Luckily, my tenure as police chief was after Jason's tenure as a student!

All kidding aside, I am very pleased that North Carolina has such a note-worthy representative as your president. He has served you well and will continue to do so even after his presidency is over. He is a wonderful representative of the 9-1-1 community and is passionate about his service. You are fortunate to have him in your corner.

Let me also congratulate you in your hiring of Brian Fontes as your new Chief Executive Officer. Brian is well known in the

communications world because of his experience with the FCC, AT&T and Cingular Wireless. He will be a wonderful asset to NENA, and I'm eager to work with him as we strive for advancements in public safety communications. Brian is committed to the 9-1-1 community and will work hard for you in continuing to develop and foster a strong voice in improving and encouraging relevant public policy related to first responder communications. NENA is lucky to have such a strong advocate joining you. Brian, I'm glad you've joined NENA, and I'm looking forward to working with you.

Many of you have heard me speak before and know that I spent three decades in law enforcement. My career started as a telecommunicator, and that was a wonderful basis upon which to build a career. Because of that experience, I understand thoroughly what an important role 9-1-1 and emergency communications have in the arena of public safety and homeland security. So let me say thank you for all you do to keep your communities safe. You have the role of making differences in people's lives every day and you should be proud of the service you provide to your communities.

Since September 11, 2001, the role of emergency communications has changed significantly and that role will continue to evolve in the years to come. How appropriate that the theme of your conference is “where you’ve been and where you’re going.” NENA has worked tirelessly to research and plan for the future taking into consideration lessons learned, best practices, creating effective partnerships, and incorporating new technologies and information in order to meet your over-arching goals of protecting life, preserving property and maintaining community safety.

I am so pleased to be here during the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the first 9-1-1 call. On February 16, 1968, Senator Rankin Fite completed the first 9-1-1 call made in the United States in Haleyville, Alabama. And the rest, as they say, is history. Our 9-1-1 system has been a life-saving and life-changing tool since that first call was made, and 9-1-1 technology has advanced significantly in the past 40 years. Currently, over 96% of the nation has access to some form of 9-1-1, and NENA has been a leader in preparing for Next Generation 9-1-1 so that all of our communities can continue to have life-saving, technologically advanced contact with first responders whether they are using wired, wireless or an Internet Protocol based device.

We are treading on new ground in the 21st Century, the likes of which the founders of 9-1-1 never dreamed. It's an exciting time for those of us in the public safety communications world, and I feel extremely fortunate to be a part of it and to be partnering with NENA, an association with a vision compatible with that of the FCC and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. We respect and appreciate the outstanding leadership, dedication and contributions this organization has made to public safety and homeland security over the past years.

In order for us to continue to pioneer advances in public safety communications, changes and updates to the current system must be made.

As of late, focus has been on E 9-1-1 location accuracy, and I'd like to thank NENA for partnering with the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) to lead in this initiative. This issue has been at the forefront of much recent discussion and action within the FCC as well as with PSAPs and industry partners. The Commission's rules regarding wireless Enhanced 9-1-1 seek to improve the effectiveness and reliability of 9-1-1 service by providing 9-1-1 telecommunicators with additional information on wireless calls.

The goal of location accuracy is to ensure that when someone calls 9-1-1 needing emergency help, they can be located and reached in a timely manner. And with over 255 million Americans, or 84% of the population utilizing wireless telephone services this enhancement is imperative in keeping up with the technological advances in our country. According to CTIA, there are currently around 291,000 wireless 9-1-1 calls per day.

It's important to note that approximately 13.6% of households do not even have landline phones any longer. Their wireless phone is not only their convenient way to communicate, it's their only way to communicate, and we must be able to locate them in the event of an emergency. There are many factors that can impact the determination of a caller's location such as topography and tower locations. Therefore, compliance with location accuracy requirements is generally measured against an aggregated geographic area and the public safety community strongly believes that the appropriate geographic area for measurement should be the PSAP service area. The Commission agrees with this concept and in September 2007, they gave carriers annual requirements leading to full compliance at the PSAP service area level by 2012. The Commission's ruling, however,

was challenged in court and the present status is that the PSAP service area-based requirement has been stayed.

Nevertheless, the reasons for achieving compliance at the PSAP service area level remain important. As the Commission found in its September Order, compliance at the PSAP level is necessary to ensure that carriers' provision of location information in compliance with current accuracy requirements is meaningful to PSAPs and first responders. The Commission added that the lack of meaningful or reliable location information could extend the amount of time necessary for a 9-1-1 call taker to obtain the location of the caller or the site of an emergency – including cases as serious as callers attempting to report criminal activity impacting homeland security – and thus result in longer dispatch times, and perhaps even no response by public safety officials who lack sufficient information to locate the caller. We continue to work at the FCC to improve location accuracy for wireless 9-1-1.

Of course, PSAPs must be capable of receiving and utilizing this data, and that effort has been constrained by factors such as a lack of funding. This is but one area in which partnerships and collaboration can play an important role in order to make significant improvements in the 9-1-1 system.

NENA has been a leader in creating effective, meaningful partnerships which strengthen and foster technological advancements and ensure the availability and implementation of an effective 9-1-1 system. It is important for associations and agencies to come together on this issue. NENA and APCO realize this and have led the way by creating an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and collaboration. NENA has recently partnered with APCO to stress to Congress the vital need for adequate and sustainable funding for advancements in 9-1-1 technology and resources. This partnership is extremely meaningful because your two organizations speak for more than 22,000 public safety communications and 9-1-1 professionals. This partnership has a strong voice in encouraging Congress to provide much-needed funding for adequate resources for modernizing the 9-1-1 system. The report submitted to Congress emphasized the tremendous need for new technology, new governance initiatives and increased funding to help 9-1-1 centers meet public safety needs.

Another example of NENA's partnership efforts is again with APCO and several other associations to include the E-911 Institute, the National Association of State 9-1-1 Administrators (NASNA) and CTIA-The Wireless Association and others, in order to create "National 9-1-1 Education Month" which was recently endorsed

by Congress. This effort will educate children, seniors and the general public about the importance of 9-1-1 and its proper and effective use. This educational initiative will make a difference in the lives of citizens, first responders and telecommunicators. As you all know, 9-1-1 is a life-saving tool and our community members need to understand when calling 9-1-1 is appropriate and when it's not, and this endeavor will surely help us toward that goal.

NENA has also taken a leading role in the effort to ensure our communities are prepared in the event of another disaster like Hurricane Katrina. For example, NENA was instrumental in creating the Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT) that is currently active in six states and is in development in 27 more. This huge undertaking was also in partnership with APCO.

The TERT program is a nationally recognized certification program for telecommunicator mutual aid response in the aftermath of disaster and will focus on typing and credentialing telecommunicators as required by FEMA/DHS. This will be a huge asset whenever the next event or disaster occurs. Emergency telecommunications is one area that is very often overlooked in the

response arena when a disaster occurs; therefore, in creating initiatives like TERT, NENA is doing what it can to ensure that no longer happens.

The FCC is proud to have associations like NENA with which to partner. It's always good to have reliable, noteworthy experts with whom to share ideas and from whom to get input from the field. You are where "the rubber meets the road" and we rely on NENA's counsel in meeting our Bureau's mission which focuses on collaboration with the public safety community, industry and other government agencies. We do not operate in a vacuum, and we know that. You and the mission you fulfill daily are never far from our thoughts as we work through public safety and homeland security matters.

Some exciting and challenging initiatives are taking place in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. We work daily on cutting edge issues and technology while also staying cognizant of the fact that many times public safety needs immediate answers or assistance. I'd like to speak about a few on-going Bureau endeavors which benefit the public safety community.

One of our current focuses is on the 700 MHz or “D Block” Public/Private Partnership as the means for promoting rapid construction and deployment of a nationwide, interoperable broadband public safety network that will meet the needs of our nation’s first responders. I’m sure you’re aware that we had challenges with the first D-Block auction, and we have subsequently issued a Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on this subject. In this Second Further NPRM we are asking some important questions and seeking input that we did not seek in the first NPRM. We are seeking input from industry, end users and others in order to identify concerns in the existing Public/Private Partnership and to see if there are better ways to define the partnership. We also want to promote wireless innovation and broadband network penetration while meeting the communications needs of first responders in a commercially viable manner and to facilitate public safety access to a nationwide, interoperable broadband network as quickly as possible. We understand that funding is an issue for the public safety community so we are also asking for input to help us identify funding opportunities for first responder agencies so that they can obtain the necessary equipment that will allow them to be part of a nationwide, interoperable broadband communications infrastructure.

We have encouraged input on these issues and are hopeful that armed with that information, the next D-block auction will be successful and we'll be on our way to a truly interoperable communications network that is beneficial to public safety across the nation.

On another important spectrum management issue, I'd like to provide you with an update on the 800 MHz rebanding process. We continue to focus on clearing this spectrum for public safety and resolving the interference issues that America's first responders now face in many regions of the country. Compared to where we were a year ago, we have made tremendous progress. Most public safety licensees now have executed agreements and are now proceeding with the physical rebanding of their systems, and nearly 200 public safety systems have moved to their new channels. We also now have procedures in place to ensure that Sprint Nextel will vacate channels when public safety needs them, and we were very gratified by the recent DC Circuit decision that completely affirmed the Commission's view with respect to Sprint's obligations.

The Transition Administrator has been bringing licensees together in regional planning sessions around the country to ensure

that transitions are well-coordinated and that interoperability is maintained throughout. We have also made progress on the Canada and Mexico border issues. We recently released a band plan for the Canadian border, and we hope to take similar action with respect to the Mexican border in the coming months.

Of course, we know that many public safety licensees need more time and have requested waivers of the June 26 deadline. But had we not held firm on the deadline in the first place, I am convinced we would not have seen the progress that has been made to date.

As for licensees that need waivers, we believe the majority of those licensees can and should complete rebanding within the next 12 months. We continue to expect all stakeholders in the rebanding process—licensees, vendors, Sprint and the Transition Administrator—to work diligently to achieve this goal.

Another matter about which I'd like to talk is the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau's Clearinghouse. We are working daily to create a useful tool for your use with our internet webpage. We want this to be a source you seek out regularly for information. You can locate it on the Bureau's webpage located at

www.fcc.gov/pshs click on “Clearinghouse.” The clearinghouse was established for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of public safety communications information. On this site, you can find information on best practices, interoperability plans, grants, communications plans, case studies and other reference materials. We welcome your input and cooperation in this endeavor. While this clearinghouse is parked on the FCC webpage, it belongs to YOU...the people in the field doing the work every day. We want it to be relevant and we can only ensure that by having your input, submissions and comments.

Please know that the Public Safety and Homeland Bureau exists for you, and we support you. We are available to offer technical guidance to the public safety community and other first responders as well as state and local governments. If you, or any member of your response community, have any questions regarding FCC issues, please do not hesitate to contact us. We all laugh when we hear that someone from Washington says they’re here to help, but in our case I sincerely believe that is true. We want to help you serve and protect your communities, and we want to be a resource for you in meeting your needs.

Protecting our nation from disaster and helping you respond to those disasters effectively and efficiently is our mission. With your help, we can further strengthen our national communications infrastructure and provide 9-1-1 PSAPs and the public safety community with the communications tools you need to get the job done.

Thank you for the job you do and for your willingness to do it sometimes against what seems like insurmountable odds. Your tenacity is admirable. I appreciate it, the FCC appreciates it and most importantly, your citizens appreciate it. On behalf of the FCC and specifically the Bureau's staff, please accept my thanks for your dedication to protecting life and property and for your commitment to public safety.

It has been my pleasure addressing you today. I hope you have a wonderful conference.

***Present Jason Barbour PSHSB Challenge Coin.