

---

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

---

---

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

---

#### Overview

When an individual is confronted by a personal emergency in the United States, he or she can be confident that any 911 call for assistance will be answered promptly, and that a competent authority will respond rapidly. Y2K presents two essential threats to our emergency service and disaster preparedness agencies. First, it threatens to interrupt the ability to properly process and respond to calls for assistance. This threat is present at all levels, from the potential interruption to a citizen's call for fire or police assistance to delays in a state's ability to request emergency or disaster assistance from the federal government. Second, due to lack of experience with anything like the possible affects of the disruptions we may face, it presents a novel challenge to those who must devise Y2K emergency response strategies unlike those they have formulated in the past.

Most 911 emergency dispatch centers, known as Public Safety An-

swering Points (PSAP), are highly automated, particularly in the case of enhanced 911 systems. Enhanced 911 systems are those which automatically provide the caller's location and phone number to the 911 operator. According to the FCC, the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) has identified 50 pieces of equipment within a PSAP that have Y2K vulnerabilities. There are approximately 4,500 PSAPs located throughout the United States.

***"THERE ARE THINGS THAT CAN  
SPAWN PANIC AND PANIC  
DOESN'T HELP PREPARATION.  
WE NEED TO PREPARE, NOT  
PANIC."***

***SENATOR GORDON SMITH***

Modern emergency dispatch facilities often incorporate sophisticated Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems into their operations. CAD systems provide important benefits to public safety

communication systems, including:

- improved call-taking service to the public,
- provision of greater accuracy, efficiency, and speed in responding to calls for service,
- enhanced officer safety by providing detailed information on call locations, and
- increased officer productivity and resource management and provision of additional system capacity due to growth or crisis.

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

CAD systems are especially vulnerable to Year 2000 problems due to the fact that they perform time and date calculations on the time an initial call for assistance was received, when a unit was dispatched, the time that it arrived and how long it took to resolve the emergency. These systems are in widespread use in all areas of local emergency service, including police, fire and emergency medical services (EMS).

Sophisticated information technology systems serve as important tools for emergency service agencies today, particularly for law enforcement. Systems such as the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS), Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems (AFIS) and individual criminal information data systems operated individually by all 50 states enable officers to obtain the most up-to-date information on wanted persons, stolen vehicles, criminal histories, and department of motor vehicle records. The ability to access this information dependably and quickly is essential both to officer safety and to the speedy and effective administration of justice at all levels. A recent survey conducted on the effectiveness of NCIC indicates that during a one year period, 81,750 wanted persons were found, 113,293 individuals were arrested, 39,268 missing juveniles and 8,549 missing adults were located and 110,681 stolen cars valued at over \$570 million were recovered as a result of NCIC's use.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is responsible for the administration of NCIC and has assured the Committee staff that this system will fully meet its Year 2000 challenge, successfully maintaining its links to the systems of all 50 states. The challenge for local law enforcement agencies is to be sure that their own links to NCIC and NLETS via state maintained connections and any other similar systems operated on a regional or agency-wide level are compliant and compatible with the larger systems. Also, at the local agency level, there often is a great deal of "interconnectivity" between the emergency service department's systems and those of other city agencies, such as the court system, the corrections department, and even local utility companies, thereby increasing the potential for Y2K-related problems in this area.

As is true in other areas, Y2K's presence is insidious in the area of emergency services. One major police department related to the Committee staff that its city's government was required to remediate its gasoline pumps in order to ensure that gasoline would continue to flow to its patrol cars on January 1, 2000. This problem had the potential to affect the entire fleet of city government-owned vehicles. In this particular case, the computerized gasoline pumps perform a time and date calculation based upon the last time a particular gas credit card was used to fuel a vehicle and therefore the pumps were Y2K vulnerable.

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

In another case, the sheriff of a large western county related that his department was currently examining its computerized detention files which track in and out time of inmates at the county jail facility and hearing date information for inmates. Additionally, a consultant specializing in Y2K public safety problems provided the Committee staff with a list of over 35 items of technical equipment commonly used in law enforcement that could potentially be vulnerable to embedded chip problems. These items included patrol car mounted video equipment, mobile data systems and electronic prisoner monitoring devices used in home detention and probation.

In addition to the technical aspect of Y2K vulnerabilities, emergency service departments must also consider the possibility that January 1, 2000, may bring with it an enormous increase in the demand for their services, depending on the degree of disruption experienced. This must be considered as part of Year 2000 emergency planning at the state, county, and local levels of government.

### **U.S. Emergency Services Structure**

The U.S. emergency service and disaster response sector is a multi-layered safety net consisting of local, county, and state police departments, local and county fire departments, emergency medical service agencies, local, county, and state

emergency management organizations, volunteer organizations and a coordinated network of federal resources available when state and local resources are exhausted or overrun. The Y2K problem bears the potential to affect all layers and sections of this safety net. In the event of serious Y2K-related disruptions, many of the organizations that comprise the safety net will be called upon to respond.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are over 17,000 police and sheriffs departments in the U.S. The International Association of Fire Chiefs estimates that there are 32,000 fire departments in this country. Additionally, approximately 65 % of our country's EMS agencies reside within the organizational structure of our nation's fire departments.

Statistics provided by the National Emergency Number Association indicate that over 300,000 911 emergency calls are placed in this country daily. (Approximately 110 million calls for emergency assistance per year). An additional 83,000 calls for emergency assistance are placed via cellular phones. Ninety percent of the U.S. population is covered by 911 service.

Each of the 50 states and U.S. territories encompass an emergency management department headed by a state emergency manager. The governors in each respective state appoint many of these managers. The emergency manager serves as the chief disaster preparedness and

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

response coordinator in the state. Twenty-four states and one U.S. territory are currently signatories to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. The Compact provides for mutual assistance between the states in managing any disaster or emergency that is duly declared by the governor of the affected state, whether arising from natural disaster, technological hazard, man-made disaster, resource shortages, community disorders, insurgency or enemy attack. This compact also provides for mutual cooperation in emergency-related exercises, testing, or other training activities. While on its face it would appear that this compact would hold the promise of being well-suited to address the many problems that may arise from the Year 2000 problem, discussions with a number of emergency managers reveals otherwise. During her testimony before the Committee on October 2, 1998, Ms. Ellen Gordon, President of the National Emergency Managers Association (NEMA), explained that mutual aid between the states might not be possible in the event that all states are affected in a significant manner.

Individual states might not be able to spare limited resources or be in a position to lend other mutual aid. One state emergency manager told Committee staff that he would be hesitant to release any of his own resources to another state because of the degree of uncertainty about potential Y2K disruptions.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was established in June 1979 by President Carter to improve the responsiveness of the federal government to catastrophes in the United States. FEMA provides financial and technical assistance to states and localities overwhelmed by disasters. FEMA administers policies related to emergency management and planning, evacuation, and matters associated with civil defense, disaster relief, fire prevention, earthquake hazard reduction, emergency broadcasting services, flood insurance, mitigation programs and dam safety. The principal federal authority for the provision of disaster relief is the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (the Stafford Act). The act authorizes the President to issue major disaster or emergency declarations, sets out eligibility criteria and specifies the types of assistance the President may authorize. Aid is provided to meet urgent housing needs, purchase necessary personal items and obtain legal services needed as a result of disasters. Aid is provided to state and local governments and non-profit organizations to repair or reconstruct damaged or destroyed infrastructure, remove debris and to construct protective measures. In addition to the assistance provided by the Stafford Act, federal disaster assistance is also provided by other federal agencies (see description of the Federal Plan).

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

### The Federal Response Plan<sup>1</sup>

The Federal Response Plan (the Stafford Act) established the authority for the federal government to respond to disasters and emergencies in order to provide assistance to save lives and protect public health, safety, and property. It is applicable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes and volcanic eruptions; technological emergencies involving radiological or hazardous material releases; and other incidents requiring federal assistance.

The Plan establishes the architecture for a systematic, coordinated and effective federal response to disasters or other emergencies. It concentrates the provision of federal assistance a state is most likely to need under 12 Emergency Support Functions (ESF). Each ESF is headed by a primary agency, which has been selected based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities. The 12 ESFs are the primary mechanism through which federal response assistance is provided to the affected state.

#### Emergency Support Functions

ESF #1 - **Transportation:** U.S. Department of Transportation

ESF #2 - **Communication:** U.S. National Communications System

ESF #3 - **Public Works and Engineering:** U.S. Department of Defense

ESF #4 - **Firefighting:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

ESF #5 - **Information and Planning:** FEMA

ESF #6 - **Mass Care:** American Red Cross

ESF #7 - **Resource Support:** General Services Administration

ESF #8 - **Health and Medical Services:** U.S. Department of Health Human Services

ESF #9 - **Urban Search and Rescue :** U.S. Department of Defense

ESF #10 - **Hazardous Materials:** Environmental Protection Agency

ESF #11 - **Food:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

ESF #12 - **Energy:** U.S. Department of Energy

The Plan describes federal actions to be taken in providing immediate response assistance to one or more

---

<sup>1</sup>Public Law 93-288 was amended by Public Law 100-707 and retitled as the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288, as amended).

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

affected states.<sup>2</sup> Response assistance includes those actions and activities which support state and local government efforts to save lives, protect public health and safety, and protect property. In some instances, a disaster or emergency may result in a situation that affects the national security of the United States. In those instances, other national security authorities and procedures could be used.

Each state has general responsibility for law enforcement, using local and state resources, including the National Guard. In some cases, a state government may experience a law enforcement emergency (including one in connection with a disaster or emergency) in which it is unable to adequately respond. For example, it may be an uncommon situation that requires law enforcement assistance, one that is or threatens to become of serious or epidemic (large-scale) proportions, and one in which state and local resources are inadequate to protect lives and property of citizens or to enforce the criminal law. In the event such a law enforcement emergency exists throughout a state or part of a state (on behalf of itself or a local unit of government), the governor may, in accordance with the Federal Response Plan, request emergency

---

<sup>2</sup> Under the Plan, a State means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, or Republic of the Marshall Islands.

federal law enforcement assistance from the U.S. Attorney General. If the request is approved, federal law enforcement assistance may be provided to include equipment, training, intelligence or personnel.

Our national security is dependent upon our ability to assure continuity of government, at every level, in any national security emergency situation that might confront the nation. Executive Order 12656, the Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities, broadly outlines the role of FEMA's director and the National Security Council in response to national security emergencies. Executive Order 12656 defines a national security emergency as "any occurrence, including natural disaster, military attack, technological emergency or other emergency, that seriously degrades or seriously threatens the national security of the United States." It establishes the role of the President in national security emergency preparedness. Pursuant to the President's direction, the National Security Council is responsible for developing and administering our national security policy.

**Our national security policy dictates that all national security emergency preparedness activities shall be consistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States and with preservation of the constitutional government of the United States.**

Effective national security emergency preparedness planning re-

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

quires identification of the functions that would have to be performed during such an emergency, development of plans for performing these functions and development of the capability to execute those plans.

Executive Order 12656 establishes that the director of FEMA shall serve as an adviser to the National Security Council on issues of national security emergency preparedness, including mobilization preparedness, civil defense, continuity of government, technological disasters, and other issues, as appropriate. It also states that the director of FEMA also shall assist in the implementation of national security emergency preparedness policy by coordinating with the other federal departments and agencies and with state and local governments, and by providing periodic reports to the National Security Council.

The public has voiced its concern to the Committee regarding the role that the federal government will play in responding to Y2K-related emergencies. Numerous misguided rumors and outright falsehoods are being circulated in some quarters on the Internet about the possibility that "martial law" will somehow be declared by the federal government in response to Y2K emergencies. These rumors and falsehoods will serve only to incite unwarranted public panic and to needlessly heighten public fear and misunderstanding about the Y2K problem. Such irresponsible and reckless speculation has no basis in fact, and it disregards the long history of our

nation's commitment to democracy and our own constitutional system of government, which is grounded in the rule of law.

As the aforementioned information illustrates, a well coordinated, pre-existing network exists through which appropriate emergency or disaster assistance may be rendered from the federal government down through the states and local governments when the states request such assistance. Such assistance is rendered within the context of existing legal authority, and in accordance with pre-existing structures as previously described. The Committee strongly believes the emergency and disaster response structures as described within this report to be the appropriate mechanism through which any necessary federal response to Y2K-related disruptions would be provided.

### Major Initiatives

On October 2, 1998, the Committee held a hearing to assess the Year 2000 readiness of government at the federal, state, and local level to continue to provide without interruption vital emergency services, such as police, fire and emergency medical services. The Committee also inquired into the ability of emergency response personnel to respond to potential Year 2000-related disruptions, such as interruptions or anomalies in the utility, communications and transportation sectors.

The hearing examined the role of FEMA in coordinating the execu-

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

tion of the Federal Response Plan, and the role the Plan could play in mounting a federal response to potential Y2K-related interruptions. Also, it explored the extent to which FEMA has considered potential Year 2000 disruptions as events that might require a coordinated federal response.

The hearing examined the state of FEMA's readiness to carry out its mandate under the Stafford Act in light of the Year 2000 problem and focused on FEMA's outreach to the state emergency preparedness agencies and non-governmental organizations that help respond to disasters.

Lacy Suiter, Executive Associate Director of FEMA's Response and Recovery Directorate, provided testimony about the state of FEMA's internal Y2K preparedness, its outreach to state and local emergency management and emergency services agencies, and FEMA's plans to coordinate the federal response to Y2K-induced emergencies.

FEMA's other Y2K initiatives, as described both in Mr. Suiter's written statement and testimony before this Committee are summarized as follows:

- FEMA is working with other agencies in the emergency services sector to develop an outreach plan that will include meetings on Y2K convened by federal agencies, outside meetings that federal officials will attend to increase Y2K awareness, and other communications on Y2K such as letters, public notices, web site information, and brochures. FEMA plans to post this information on its web page.
- The United States Fire Administration, which reports to FEMA, has initiated a multi-phased plan to raise awareness and assess readiness on the Y2K technology problem. The Fire Administration staff issued a suggested article for the fire and emergency services publications on Y2K preparedness, and FEMA has developed a list of frequently asked questions about Y2K in a Y2K brochure. FEMA has distributed the brochure to participants in the National Fire Academy, major fire service organizations, and state fire marshals. FEMA is in the process of conducting a direct mailing of the brochure to approximately 32,000 individual fire departments nationwide. FEMA has also distributed materials to associations of fire and emergency service equipment manufacturers and distributors requesting information on actions their members are taking to ensure that their products are Y2K compliant.
- FEMA is pursuing outreach activities with state and local governments through the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) and the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). The focus has



## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

been to heighten awareness of state and local government about the seriousness of the problem and to provide Y2K emergency preparedness guidance and information.

- NEMA has identified Y2K as a priority area and has initiated a Y2K dialogue with its members. NEMA has assigned its Preparedness, Training, and Exercises Committee to review and coordinate efforts with FEMA. FEMA is working in partnership with NEMA, IAEM and other organizations to develop preparedness guidance for the entire emergency preparedness community.
- FEMA's regional directors have been asked to contact the state emergency management directors in their region to reinforce the importance of preparedness and compliance at the state level, to emphasize the necessity of state outreach to local governments, and to help identify areas where additional assistance is needed.
- FEMA's Emergency Management Institute has incorporated a "Y2K Show-of-Hands Survey" to gauge the level of Y2K awareness of its participants.
- In November 1998, FEMA's associate director for preparedness, training, and exercises addressed the IAEM 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, to urge local emergency managers to partici-

pate in Y2K preparedness activities.

- FEMA is in the process of planning a series of regional "table-top" exercises to ascertain the needs of the states resulting from a Y2K-related emergency.
- FEMA will coordinate a nationwide "table top" exercise some time in the spring of 1999 to conduct an operational simulation of its response to a Y2K emergency.
- FEMA is hosting monthly meetings with primary Federal Response Plan agencies to monitor progress on the Y2K compliance status of the 12 emergency support functions.
- FEMA is developing a "Y2K Supplement" to the Federal Response Plan based on input from the Federal Response Plan agencies and their regional counterparts. Assessments from the emergency services sector and the President's Council on Y2K conversion will influence the composition of the supplement. FEMA plans to publish the supplement by July 1, 1999. The supplement will include a basic plan and annexes for each of the emergency support functions.

Beginning in July 1998, the Committee staff began discussions with FEMA to determine what authority the federal government would have to act in case of serious Y2K disrup-

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

tions, and how FEMA specifically plans to respond in the event that such disruptions do occur. In his testimony, Mr. Suiter emphasized that FEMA programs represent a "bottoms up" approach in which federal response comes "by invitation only," upon a specific request from the governor of an individual state, in response to specific and identifiable emergencies and disasters. This response is requested by and coordinated through the governor, and never independently by the federal government. This fact is in stark contrast to some of the reckless assertions appearing on the Internet, claiming that Y2K events would serve as an "excuse" for a massive marshaling of federal forces or the suspension of civil legal authority to deal with possible disruptions.

Sufficient legal authority currently exists under the Stafford Act to allow federal resources to be utilized in response to a Y2K-related disruption if, upon application from a state's governor, an "emergency declaration" is made by the President of the United States. While FEMA has no authority to respond to the causes of Y2K disruptions or to provide technical assistance for "Y2K fixes," it can respond to the physical consequences of Y2K disruptions if they constitute a threat to lives, property, public health and safety pursuant to the President's "emergency declaration."

Although FEMA cannot respond to requests for technology support, it could use the federal response system to provide a backup network to

ensure that requests for such aid from state and local governments are channeled to the appropriate public/private coordination entities established by the President's Council on Y2K Conversion. FEMA currently has no plans to pre-position resources prior to January 1, 2000, but will activate the interagency Emergency Support Team at FEMA headquarters and its 10 interagency Regional Operations Centers, beginning on December 29, 1999, and continuing through January 4, 2000. FEMA will also place on alert its Emergency Response Support Detachments during that time.

### Other Y2k Emergency Services Initiatives

During the summer of 1998, Federal Communications Commission Commissioner Michael Powell began playing a very active role in promoting awareness about potential Y2K-related communications problems in the public safety community. Commissioner Powell authored an article entitled "Protecting Public Safety Communications from the Year 2000 Bug," which was published in the bulletin of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officers International. In June, the FCC held a public safety roundtable which attracted many experts in the field of public safety communications. During the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Conference held in Salt Lake City October 17-22, 1998, John Clark, FCC deputy chief for public safety in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, ad-

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

dressed the major city police chiefs on Y2K issues. On November 16, 1998, the FCC sponsored a forum entitled "Year 2000: Maintaining Emergency Response Communications." The goal of the forum was to examine the implications of the Y2K problem for various segments of the emergency response communications system.

The State of Texas sponsored a 2-day national conference on October 15 and 16, 1998, for correctional facilities, law enforcement, and emergency services on the topic of the Year 2000 and embedded systems.

In his written statement to the Committee, Sergeant John Powell, University of California Police Department, Berkeley, California, detailed several initiatives that the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International (APCO) and the IACP are conducting on Y2K.

Sergeant Powell reported that APCO and the National Institute of Justice were discussing the development of a series of short Y2K seminars targeted at public safety chief officers and upper-level management to address four key Y2K impact areas. These areas are internal systems; potential disruption of outside services such as power, 911 service, and supply chain interruptions; the additional workload that could confront agencies due to heightened fears about the problem and the advent of the actual problem itself; and the

special needs of agency employees during the time of impact.

During its August 1998 conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, APCO conducted Y2K seminars to address the broad array of issues confronting public safety agencies. The IACP Communications and Technology Committee included Y2K on its agenda at the IACP conference this year.

### **First Alert System**

In preparing for the October 2, 1998 Hearing on General Government/Emergency Services, the Committee staff formulated the concept of a Year 2000 problem early-warning system dubbed the "Y2K First Alert." Similar to the National Weather Service's storm warning and monitoring system, the Y2K First Alert would provide American citizens with the earliest possible warning of Y2K events that may threaten public safety or national infrastructure. Senators Bennett, Dodd, and Collins jointly expressed their support for the development of this concept during the opening remarks of the October 2, 1998 hearing.

First Alert would give citizens of the eastern United States up to 17 hours advanced warning of the effects of the Year 2000. Other Americans will have proportionately more warning the farther west they live. For example, citizens in Utah will have up to 19 hours of advanced notice while citizens of Hawaii and some citizens

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

of Alaska will have almost a full day's notice. This system would be most useful for problems that occur at or very near midnight, December 31, 1999, which could be referred to as Y2K "prompt effects." These effects could occur in embedded systems in utilities, transportation, telecommunications and other applications that had not been repaired. They could also occur in mainframe or information technology systems that serve a control or supervisory role that had not been fixed. When the century change occurs, a Y2K prompt effect may very quickly cause problems that might lead to some disruption of an important service.

The Y2K First Alert concept is feasible because of the arrangement of international time zones. A new day begins in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, 17 time zones earlier than Eastern Standard Time in the United States. If the Y2K bug is potent enough to cause immediate problems or "prompt effects" in information systems and embedded chips, the effect will not occur worldwide all at once. Rather, the problems will happen repeatedly in one time zone after another for one full day. For example, Y2K problems that occur at precisely 12:00 a.m. on January 1, 2000, in Wellington, New Zealand, are occurring while it is still only 7:00 a.m. on December 31, 1999 in the eastern United States. Systems and technology vulnerable to Y2K prompt effects in the eastern United States will not be affected for another 17 hours by the century rollover.

The Committee believes it is imperative to use this advance notice that the United States has for the good of the nation. For instance, it would be very useful to know that utility and transportation problems are likely to occur based on our Y2K First Alert system before large segments of the population are away from their homes celebrating on New Year's Eve. The Committee has called for the government to implement this concept by coordinating the resources of the Departments of State and Defense as well as other departments and federal agencies that have resources and expertise to contribute to the system.

Since the Committee issued its call on October 2, 1998 several parties have acted. FEMA has begun exploring the implementation of the concept. The telecommunications industry has begun developing a similar, private-sector concept named "Follow the Sun," and it now appears that the U.S. Air Force is pursuing a related concept to meet its mission needs. Finally, the Canadian government announced in January 1999 that it plans to implement a similar concept.

### **Assessments**

In accordance with the President's Council on the Year 2000 outreach program, the U.S. Fire Administration has been charged with monitoring the progress of the fire response agencies. Outreach to the law enforcement sector of public safety has been assigned to the Department of

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

Justice.

While there was a high level of Y2K awareness among the limited number of representatives of individual emergency service agencies contacted by the Committee staff in preparation for the October 2, 1998, hearing, the major emergency service professional associations were just beginning to coordinate Y2K awareness programs. During her opening remarks to the International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, in October 1998, Attorney General Janet Reno made no mention of Y2K. Some federal agencies that have regular contact with state and local criminal justice agencies were just beginning to promote awareness about the Y2K problem among the state and local agencies. The National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Assistance reported no specific or focused Y2K initiatives in progress as of the October 2, 1998, hearing. The National Institute of Justice reported that it was in the process of developing a Y2K awareness bulletin, and that it had incorporated a Y2K compliance stipulation into its grant agreements with state and local agencies.

As part of the Justice Department charged with outreach to the law enforcement community under the President's Council, both the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Assistance could be playing a more active role in spreading Y2K awareness among state and local law enforcement and

other criminal justice agencies. These agencies have a broad range of contact with criminal justice and law enforcement organizations at the state and local level of government and bear the potential to make a positive impact on the Y2K problem in the emergency service sector. As the available survey data indicates, there is a startling lack of preparedness at the state and local levels of government. All efforts to alleviate this problem should be pursued.

Almost all of the command-level emergency service personnel contacted by the Committee staff expressed serious concerns about a perceived lack of Y2k awareness on the part of emergency service agencies in general. To date, there has been no known large scale attempt to gather any meaningful survey data to measure the overall level of awareness or preparedness of this vital sector.

### Concerns

While it is clear that an effective mechanism exists at the federal level to coordinate resources in the event of Y2K related emergencies or disruptions, there is still concern about the Y2K awareness and preparedness levels of emergency service providers at the county and local levels. The strong leadership role that FEMA has recently assumed in the area of Y2K emergency preparedness should have a positive impact on the state and local emergency management network and hence on the nation's overall ability

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

to respond adequately to Y2K-related emergencies. The overall Y2K preparedness status of state and local emergency service agencies remains unknown, as does the extent to which these agencies have considered Y2K as an event for which they must creatively plan.

In his testimony before the Committee, Mr. Bob Cass, city manager of Lubbock, Texas, described the Y2K emergency simulation exercise that Lubbock had conducted just 2 days prior to the date of the Senate hearing. This exercise gained major nationwide media attention and served as an excellent example of the type of emergency planning activity that local, county and state governments should replicate. Bruce Romer, Chief Administrative Officer of Montgomery County, Maryland, also testified about Montgomery County's plans to conduct a similar exercise in December 1998. Mr. Romer has stated to the Committee staff that Montgomery County plans to activate its Emergency Operations Center prior to December 31, 1999, and said that in the event of a Y2K emergency, he "doesn't want to be looking around for people they will need." Both Lubbock, Texas and Montgomery County, Maryland represent model cases of effective Y2K emergency preparation.

In his written statement to the Committee, Sergeant Powell emphasized the difficulty of accommodating the additional demand for emergency services that may accompany the century date change, due in part to

the possible increase in public fear toward the end of 1999. Of great concern to the Committee is the need for effective dissemination of credible information to the general public about the expected level of severity of Y2K disruptions. Governments at all levels must work constantly over the next year to obtain accurate information in order to dispel irrational and unwarranted fears about the potential impact of Y2K disruptions.

---

### FEDERAL AGENCIES

---

#### Overview

On the whole, federal agencies have been slow out of the gate in the race to cross the finish line for Y2K efforts. In this race, even though one agency or another may at times lead the pack, all agencies must cross the finish line together in a tie. As the race enters the home stretch, agencies must pick up the pace and sense of urgency. Although much progress has been made this year, the home stretch of this course is daunting.

As expected, those that started the earliest generally lead the pack. The Social Security Administration and Small Business Administration are notable agencies in front that started in the late 1980s. Considering the lead these agencies have over those that started in 1996, one can only conclude that late starters face a formidable task. The most notable agencies that have found themselves in that unenviable posi-