

## Public Safety and Transportation Committee

### Presentation – 6/2/10

Good morning . Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Terry Volk, I am the 911 Coordinator for Bottineau County. My presentation gives a general back ground on how the Bottineau PSAP is structured, how it's funded, who it serves, how it operates, and some of the current technologies we use.

- Bottineau County and Renville County created a joint 911 system (1994)
- Bottineau hosts the joint PSAP in the Sheriffs Dept
- Our PSAP is governed by the Bottineau/Renville 911 Board of Directors
  - Bottineau dispatches 911 calls for all of Bottineau and Renville Counties.
  - Bottineau also answers calls for the Renville County Sheriff Office after hours.
    - Both Bottineau and Renville have their own 911 Coordinators. Each respective Coordinator prepares a budget, assigns addresses, creates reports, investigates complaints, manages mapping updates and sees to it that equipment is maintained.
    - Renville shares 25% of the cost of equipment purchases.
    - Renville contributes \$6000 annually for dispatch expense.
- Our PSAP employs:
  - 4 full-time dispatchers
  - 2 part-time dispatchers
  - Our Sheriff serves as dispatch supervisor and manager.
  - There is 1 dispatcher on duty 24/7.
- Our PSAP has two 911 dispatch stations.
- The Bottineau County revenue produced by the 911 dollar in 2009 was:
  - \$100,924 (94%)
    - \$43,902 - Landline
    - \$57,022 - Wireless
  - Jan 1 911 fund balance was \$209,038
    - \$40,000 budgeted for future NG911 expenses
    - \$30,000 budgeted for implementation of Reverse 911
    - \$35,000 budgeted for continued Mapping Development
- Bottineau/Renville PSAP provides dispatch services for:
  - 5 law enforcement agencies
  - 17 fire departments
  - 11 ambulance services
  - Covers a total land area of 4,000 square miles

- In 2009 the Bottineau/Renville PSAP received:
  - 2,102 9-1-1 calls
  - Of which 1365 (65%) were wireless
  - 707 (34%) were landline.
  - Non-emergency calls for service
    - neighbor disputes, parking complaints, animal disturbance, welfare checks, funeral escorts, kids playing on the phone, call transfers, civil process, warrant checks, road check, travel weather, etc.
- Technologies that we use are:
  - Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping
    - PSAP and Sheriff Deputies in Bottineau and Renville
    - Bottineau Ambulance, Westhope Ambulance, Mohall Ambulance
    - Bottineau Fire, Bottineau Rural, Station II ( Metigoshe), Westhope Fire
  - CML Hardware/Software
    - ANI/ALI controller
    - Sentinel 911 dispatch software
  - Outdoor Warning Sirens
    - Sounded by hardware

A constant challenge is keeping up with communication technology (texting, videos, internet, etc.), understanding how it relates to 911, identifying 911 hardware/software systems that can handle new kinds of communication and finding a way to pay for it all. Add to that, yet to be defined, federal requirements for NG911 and it can be difficult charting a path that is efficient, affordable and sustainable.

Regionalizing PSAPs has been a topic of discussion in ND. Some years ago Bottineau/Renville initiated a project that would fit that concept. Faced with expensive hardware/software upgrades every few years, we undertook a partnership with United Telephone, Pierce and Cavalier Counties to lower our costs. In exchange for a monthly fee United would supply the ANI/ALI controller, dispatch computers/software and provide maintenance for the system. That portion of the agreement is complete and is working very well.

Not yet complete but within the original proposal is development of a local 911 database to keep 911 operating if the main Quest/Intrado lines are disrupted. In the event our PSAP is totally taken out by disaster, all calls can be immediately transferred to another PSAP in the group. Agreements still need to be worked out between the individual counties as what the

exact protocols would be. In addition, I've been told that radio signals can be adapted to transmitting through the network. This flexibility is achievable with the private IP connection provided by United Telephone. The technology is in place for other PSAPs in the area to participate if suitable agreements can be reached. These features are among the primary objectives of NG911.

Besides getting a better handle on costs, we now have people with the technical expertise to maintain an increasingly complex hardware/software setup. The charges were designed to come close to the breakeven point (\$.73 to United and \$.27 to PSAP). That has been our long term goal; to be as financially self sufficient as possible and keep the 911 fee as low as possible.

Another goal we share with other ND PSAPs is to maintain local dispatch service. Sharing existing assets is a good way to keep 911 affordable. Costs can be held down by economy of scale on the infrastructure. For instance, does every PSAP need its own controller? The CML ANI/ALI controller we use is capable of handling 911 calls for a major metropolitan city; maybe all of ND. One or two more would provide plenty of redundancy. Sharing of expenses between PSAP's makes more sense than purchasing high dollar equipment separately.

Forging that kind of cooperation requires a little give and take and a political will to find a way through competing interests. Existing PSAPs are the public face of 911 people rely on for assistance in time of trouble. The local service factor is difficult to measure in dollars; but it does have great value. We believe a little ingenuity and cooperation can make the move to NG911 an affordable, realistic goal without significant disruption to local PSAP structure and service.

Thank you.

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