

**STATEMENT OF
JENNY HANSEN, 9-1-1 PROGRAM MANAGER
STATE OF MONTANA**

**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
SUBCommittee on Communications
U.S. SENATE**

**“E9-1-1 Needs in Rural America”
October 16, 2001**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, Senator Burns, thank you very much for providing me with this opportunity to appear before you today. Let me extend a special thank you to the Committee and the United States Senate for your leadership on these critical issues. As you may recall, this hearing was scheduled to take place on the afternoon of September 11. Billed as “9-1-1” day, the hearing was to be an honest and frank discussion of wireless enhanced 9-1-1. Instead, we watched, listened and learned about the heroes that responded, putting their lives on the line under the most trying of circumstances. The efforts of the dispatchers, fire, medical, law enforcement services and countless volunteers in metropolitan New York, Washington DC and Pennsylvania were nothing short of outstanding. The combined efforts of the human spirit and modern technology proved heroic. The events that unfolded that day not only dealt with wireless 9-1-1, but highlighted the many technology challenges facing our nation’s emergency communications system. Today, we have an opportunity to address these challenges by improving the emergency response infrastructure throughout the nation.

My name is Jenny Hansen, and I have worked in Public Safety for over 20 years. The duties and scope of my career include Dispatcher, Ambulance Driver, 9-1-1 Director, Academy Instructor, F.E.M.A. Urban Search and Rescue Team Member and Logistics Specialist to name a few. The geographic areas covered in my specific experiences range from metropolitan San Francisco to suburban California and now rural America, the last best place, the State of Montana. Initially, hired as the 9-1-1 Director of Bozeman, Montana, I now serve as the 9-1-1 Director for the State. As a contrast to some of my colleagues here today, the State of Montana serves a population of just over 900,000 people, yet plays host to millions and millions of visitors each year, covering a land area of over 147,000 square miles. Regardless of where we work and we are from, public safety professionals share the same objective in our jobs, saving lives. It is the reason we are here, and the answer we give when we're asked why we do what we do, answering every call for help on the worst if not last day of someone's life.

A Special Thanks

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Senator Conrad Burns for his leadership on this issue in Montana and throughout the nation. In 1999, Senator Burns sponsored the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act, an important roadmap for improving emergency communications, and specifically for deploying

wireless 9-1-1. In late August, starting down that road, Senator Burns hosted a Montana statewide summit on emergency response, bringing together leaders from government, emergency response, medicine and industry to grapple with the challenges facing both our state and nation in deploying modern emergency response technologies. We were honored to participate in that program with Senator Burns, Governor Martz, Congressman Rehberg, leaders from around the state and the ComCARE Alliance. The summit was a tremendous success; however, it was just the first step in an integrated approach to emergency response for Montana. We know we have a great deal of work ahead of us and believe Montana could be a model for the rest of the nation as we address new challenges, threats and risks.

The “Faces” of Phased-In Wireless

Public Safety technologies have been the result of public and private partnerships, improved over time through the process of trial and error. Simply, the 9-1-1 system would have not been possible without a high level of cooperation. Wireless technologies have dramatically improved personal safety and security. Emergency response times have improved. Nationwide, 40% of the calls to 9-1-1 are from wireless devices. These numbers are expected to grow.

On September 11, the first call for help, to a loved one, and a warning to those of us in the path of destruction came from wireless phones. And now, as the

nation grids for an extended effort, wireless communications is a centerpiece to our safety and security.

Wireless technologies, however, present their own unique challenges. Instead of one call, 9-1-1 now often receives multiple calls for the same event. As we have learned, both Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and the wireless networks can easily be overloaded. In answering a call for help it is information that saves lives. One of the biggest challenges to PSAPs and emergency responders is that, unlike many wireline calls to 9-1-1, wireless calls do not provide location information. In a rural setting where distances are great between victims and help, victims and hospitals, delayed response can be a matter of life and death.

Following September 11, people have asked us to explain the relationship between wireless E9-1-1 and terrorist events. I am not an expert on terrorism, but here is what my colleagues are saying. 9-1-1 is the public's link to emergency response. We now have an "early warning system" of 120 million wireless subscribers. We provide a vital service to both the public and safety professionals, moving responders with the "what and where" of an emergency, ensuring that the appropriate help is dispatched. The "what and where" are equally important to protecting responder safety, and appropriately allocating responder resources. Locating hoax wireless callers, finding those who report an incident, locating victims in the event of a catastrophic disaster – all are dependent in whole or in part on

wireless 9-1-1. Simply, wireless 9-1-1 could be one of our greatest civil defense weapons, and E9-1-1 is a key part of that defense.

Wireless E9-1-1 Waivers

Chairman Powell's recent statement on October 5 may have said it best:

"I am disappointed and unsatisfied with the progress we have made, thus far, on Phase II E9-1-1 rules...It goes without saying that there is a new sense of urgency around using mobile phones as important safety devices...It is not good enough to go for a gentleman's 'C.' This test requires an 'A+' effort."

A lot has been said and done to make this a complicated issue. I am not an expert on the E9-1-1 waiver process. NENA and APCO have ably represented our point of view to the FCC. Like others, I have only seen the press release and statements, not the actual orders. But it appears clear that, with the exception of Cingular and AT&T (where we don't know the outcome), the FCC has essentially given the wireless carriers whatever waivers they asked for.

I will leave it to others to determine whether that was right or wrong. But no one has yet suggested to me how these waivers might serve public safety concerns by advancing deployment of E9-1-1. In any case, it is done. Having essentially given the carriers what they asked for, the message now must be very clear: "You

must now deliver. No more excuses and waiver requests.” I plead with you to ensure this is the last time the E9-1-1 rules get changed.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of revisionist history, and even greater confusion regarding the spirit of the original wireless E9-1-1 agreements. The rule in 1996 stated 2001-2002 as the end date. Both the handset and network technologies have proven viable by the wireless industry and public safety professionals. What is not working is the public policy. Now we have dates that reach well into the next decade. Making matters worse, a “safety divide” looms on the horizon.

A large number of wireless networks in rural America are traditional cellular—not covered by the waivers. Simply, these “legacy” subscribers will not be located. Cell phones in glove boxes will not be located. Travelers passing through Montana will not be located. At best, wireless E9-1-1 will come at much later date.

“Readiness”

Let’s not let the debate on waivers become an excuse to do nothing. And let’s not use rural PSAP’s ability to receive location information as an excuse either. PSAP readiness has been raised as a concern, and I could not agree more that it is terribly important. But let us understand why it is important. There are two relatively separate issues here. First, what PSAPs are now “ready”, and what technology

upgrades are necessary for PSAPs to be “ready” in order to trigger wireless carrier responsibility to deploy E9-1-1. Second, what technology upgrades are necessary for a 21st Century response system?

For starters, let’s keep in mind that PSAPs representing tens of millions of Americans are ready to use location information, and requested Phase II from carriers in a timely manner. These include full states like New Jersey and Minnesota, and big cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas/Fort Worth, St. Louis, Chicago, Orlando, Houston, Hampton Roads, Kansas City. They include smaller communities like Bozeman, Montana, and Winchester, Virginia.

So what about all the rest? The FCC was careful not to prescribe what is necessary for PSAPs to be ready to use location information to trigger carrier E9-1-1 responsibilities. The information wonders of the world come to me because I have a telephone line and a computer. So it should not be hard to make sure latitude, longitude and other E9-1-1 information is displayed on an electronic map to which any PSAP in my state can have access. With such a system, any PSAP with a telephone line and terminal would be able to see the location of a wireless 9-1-1 caller. Others will have alternative ideas.

But the question of what is necessary to trigger carrier E9-1-1 responsibilities is quite different from what our goal should be for a modern

emergency communications system. We need the most modern information tools, not the cheapest and easiest ones; we need to be able to integrate E9-1-1 data into our systems. It is that visionary process that we have launched in our state with the help of Senator Burns and others. That is a process that needs all the parties involved.

The one thing we've learned from the technology revolution is that innovation comes faster, better and at a more reasonable price when technology is made accessible to all. We need to bring the existing technologies that are readily available to government and business to the world of emergency response. The foundation of the emergency management system are the men and women in Public Safety who are links in the "Chain of Survival." We share a common ethic that we will do "whatever it takes" to save a life. We need the tools and training to do that.

Thinking Outside of the Box

We need to become innovative, thinking outside of the box in our protocols, on the telephone, at the radio consoles, in the field, to the transportation leaders and throughout the emergency medical and hospital network. We introduce new ways of thinking, asking the right questions in the right order, sparing no time in delivering life-saving instructions, in such a perfect, synchronized fashion that most scientists and magicians would find remarkable. This reminds me of the wherewithal of a certain 9-1-1 call-taker. This is a story of a lone driver in an unfamiliar, rural area

that gets stung by a bee. You may have heard about it. Without her bee-sting kit, and immediate assistance, the caller will die. The call-taker asks the question of the day, "Where are you?" The request for a location was delivered to no avail. Without skipping a beat, the call-taker pulls an idea out of a hat and instructs the caller to pull into the driveway of a residence and recite the license plate number over the phone. The location was positively identified, the driver instructed to wait for the next link in the of the Chain of Survival, her life was saved.

Industry leaders, carriers and vendors have also offered work-around solutions to their various works in progress. A simple solution to press only the number "9" on the keypad to deploy a 9-1-1 call on your cell phone comes to mind. Shaving seconds and defying demolition derby driving habits behind the wheel with diverting the caller's attention to the palm-sized keypad was a great idea. The caller is more quickly routed to the PSAP, just to hear the question of the day, "where are you?" Striving for perfection in technology has gotten in the way of our goal, and so we wait.

Each of these solutions, however, generates its own set of problems. The bee-sting incident was fortunate that the owner of the vehicle had an updated registration and was the actual homeowner, not a guest from two counties away. As for the industry's work around 9-1-1 as a speed function, this presents a problem for the PSAPs in receiving accidental calls.

It's about public safety, but not just 9-1-1. There are many stakeholders and constituencies who care and depend on these services everyday. We've developed a successful foundation. Now is the time to connect the dots; training, seamless networks, modern computer systems, public and private partnerships and coalitions, long term stable funding, and shared resources.

As aptly stated in the finding of the Wireless Public Safety Act of 1999 (6) *“The construction and operation of seamless, ubiquitous and reliable wireless telecommunications systems promote public safety and provide immediate and critical communications links among members of the public; emergency medical service providers and emergency dispatch providers; public safety, fire service and law enforcement officials; transportation officials, and hospital emergency and trauma care facilities.”* Simply, the stakeholders are the vast community of public and private service providers, that benefits not just 9-1-1, but all of us. It is all about saving lives.

Last month a fellow Montanan, Steve Albert, Director of the Western Transportation Institute and President, Rocky Mountain Chapter of ITS America testified on behalf of Intelligent Transportation Systems before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Nuclear Safety. His testimony also discussed the need for cooperation and integration of vital public services for improved

emergency response. Working together, we can overcome great obstacles, share resources and help reduce the many “stovepipes” that have kept innovation and life-saving technologies from being deployed. I look forward to working with him and sharing projects and ideas in the future.

Back to Basics

As a state leader, I am asked to respond to “the big picture.” In this case, the big picture is quite simple, that all counties, cities, townships and villages should be given equal access to the basic services that are available everywhere else in this country. We in Montana don’t need to replicate New York City, but the golden hour of a medical emergency is the same 60-minutes in New York as it is in Montana.

Bridging the gap to covering great distances, with limited personnel, equipment and financial resources is hinged on technology. The focus on wireless technology is natural, all public safety responders depend on seamless networks. All too often, especially in rural America, we have dead-zones, where there is no wireless coverage, for responders and good Samaritans alike.

Wireless is just one piece of the puzzle. All the links in the Chain of Survival must be fully developed and supported. Equally important are E9-1-1 technologies in wireline and PBX systems, training for 9-1-1 dispatchers, coordinating mapping

and support of integrated communications systems for all groups represented in the Chain of Survival.

Enhanced 9-1-1

We use the term E9-1-1 so freely now that I think we've lost the meaning. Or, perhaps we've just come to know it as the public's expectation as the minimum standard of care in this country.

Attached to my testimony is an overview of Enhanced 9-1-1, what it is, how it is funded, etc. A piece of particular interest involves my own state. "Montana Facts About 9-1-1". We have 58 PSAPs in the state, yet only 10 of them have Enhanced wireline services. While we're reaching for wireless and even satellite imagery in some areas, it is important to provide equal access to all areas of this country.

In 22 years of Public Service, I am reminded of one of the most heart-wrenching moments in my career. Amongst all the war-stories we keep inside as pieces of unfinished business, I can still see the man in the doorway of my office marked "9-1-1 Director" in rural Montana not even 2 years ago. He is not much older than I and there was a sadness in his eyes that was eclipsed only by his will to accomplish his mission that day. "I just came by to say thank you to the dispatchers for working so hard to help me with my wife. " The 9-1-1-call came exactly 7 days

earlier, his wife was in full-arrest (she wasn't breathing and did not have a heart beat). The dispatchers alerted the volunteer firefighters and began delivering pre-arrival CPR instructions to the shrieking caller. The dispatchers worked together like a well-oiled machine through cycle after cycle of CPR, while emergency vehicles traveled miles and miles of rural roads echoing the question of the day with each passing mile marker. "They did such a professional job and were so kind. You gave me help when I needed it. I don't know how you do what you do." His wife died in his arms that day.

I came from Montana, a state very typical of rural America, to ask for your help. We in Public Safety need 21st century tools and technologies, and we need you to support and encourage the rapid deployment of these technologies to save lives.

I thank you for your time, your commitment to "doing the right thing" and your support of the public safety community and the citizens at-large.