At its May 3, 2023, meeting the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board ("Board") voted to create a reimbursement program to help emergency communications districts ("ECDs") implement or improve cybersecurity programs, as required by the Board's Revenue Standards. The Board will reimburse seventy-five percent (75%) of ECD expenditures for obtaining cybersecurity items or services purchased on or after July 1, 2023. ECDs should have received an email outlining the program and reimbursement procedures. Since that time, we have learned that the State will require individual grant contracts between the Board and each ECD to issue reimbursement payments. Once the grant contracts are finalized, the Board will forward them to each ECD that submits a request for reimbursement. We appreciate your patience during the rollout of this program. The delay in reimbursements will not affect the effective date of the reimbursement program.

Curtis Sutton, *Executive Director*

CYBERSECURITY

Cybersecurity is the body of technologies, processes, and practices designed to protect networks, devices, programs, and data from attack, damage, or unauthorized access. It is a continually growing and evolving industry, and it has become extremely important for 911 agencies that are implementing, or already live with, Next Generation 911 (NG911). The internet protocol (IP) -based platform that NG911 operates on enables interconnection between a wide range of public and private networks, such as phone carrier networks, the internet, and public safety networks, and this puts PSAPs at risk.

An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) mission is to promote American "innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve our quality of life." NIST has developed a framework that helps organizations better understand and improve their management of cybersecurity risk. See table on the right:

Here is a link to more information:
https://www.nist.gov/cyberframework

Function	Category
Identify	• Asset Management • Business Environment • Governance • Risk Assessment • Risk Management Strategy • Supply Chain Risk Management
Protect	• Identity Management and Access Control • Awareness and Training • Data Security • Information Protection Processes and Procedures • Maintenance • Protective Technology
Detect	• Anomalies and Events • Security Continuous Monitoring • Detection Processes
Respond	• Response Planning • Communications • Analysis • Migration • Improvements
Recover	• Recovery Planning • Improvements • Communications

There are a number of initiatives districts can take to improve their cybersecurity posture, and costs range from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of dollars, based on the size of the PSAP. There are many things districts can do that don't require capital at all, rather just labor time. For example, districts can document a cybersecurity policy, an incident response plan, a risk remediation plan, etc., but also implement stricter rules internally such as a frequent password change policy for all network users. These fairly simple steps can have a tremendous benefit.
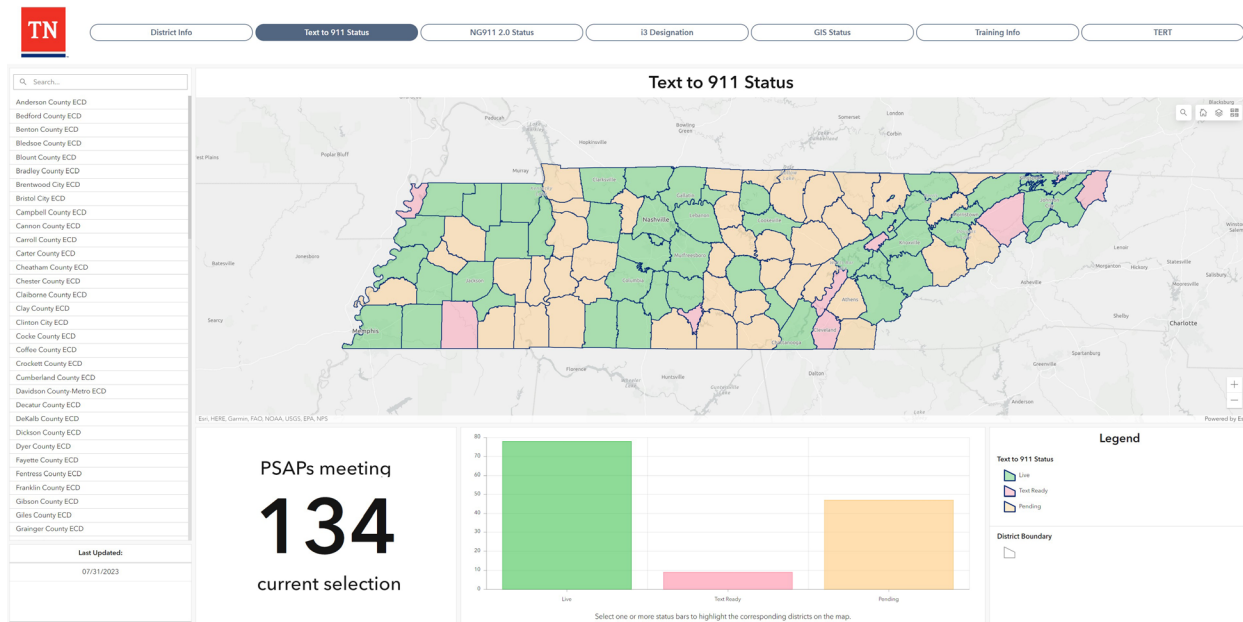
As part of the cyber grant program the TECB is implementing, districts can engage in a number of focus areas, including training, documentation, simulations, and various technical initiatives. The technical initiatives span the NIST framework—identification and assessment of a district's vulnerability, prevention and resolution of vulnerabilities, as well as monitoring for risky network activity.

The TECB will be providing additional information regarding the grant program in the coming months, with detail on how to apply for the grant and what types of cybersecurity projects are eligible for the grant.

TENNESSEE ECD CONTACTS AND NG911 STATUS DASHBOARD

The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board (TECB) is rolling out an interactive Project Dashboard to communicate the status of individual aspects of the state's migration to a full Next Generation 911 (NG911) solution. Building upon the current Emergency Communications District (ECD) Contact Page hosted by the TECB, the enhanced Dashboard provides PSAP-level information on in-person Training opportunities throughout the state, Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT) participation levels, and updated reports on each ECD's migration.

Continual updates of each ECD's progress with Text to 911, NG911 2.0 connectivity, i3 Designations, and recent GIS match rates are readily assessable via the map-based portal, which provides a quick reference guide and ample searchable information.

Changes to the ECD Map and Contact Information include the ability for each ECD to designate their preferred method of contact; be it phone, email, or website. In addition. ECD's can designate additional points of contact for other services, such as GIS, addressing, public records requests, etc. Please contact Eddie Burchell (Eddie.Burchell@tn.gov) to update your contact information and advise of your preferred contact method and any other additional points of contact you may want to publicize.

The Training Information page incorporates responses from the PSAP Survey and highlights the Telecommunicator training provided by individual PSAPs, to include agencies that allow students from other agencies to participate. Search by class type, location, and/or availability to locate classes that could support your team. Please contact Jennifer Schwendimann (Jennifer.Schwendimann@tn.gov) directly to update your PSAP's information or secure guidance in this area.

GIS

AT&T has been scheduling kickoff meetings and forecasting cutover dates for various Emergency Communications Districts (ECDs) to transition to i3. Intrado will also be contacting you in the coming months about implementing the Transactional Data Management System (TDMS); there will be more about this in the next newsletter, so stay tuned. On the geographic information system (GIS) side of the house, that means several things, as discussed below:

First, before any ECD can be eligible to cut over to i3, the automatic location identification (ALI) -to-GIS match rate must be at or above 98%. Specifically, the address/community name combinations in the telephone number records must match those in the site address points. The trend we have been seeing as we move across the state is that the majority of changes need to be made in the ALI records. The AT&T Public Safety Portal (PSP) is the conduit by which these changes are submitted, and there have been some questions about the workflow. What follows is a high-level overview of the steps necessary to make changes in PSP and click here for a more detailed workflow document with screenshots.

1. Navigate to www.e-access.att.com/911psp-ui/911psp and login.
2. Perform a master street address guide (MSAG) query to search for the affected records and check the box to select those records.
3. Click on "Mass Change."
4. Enter only the information that needs to be changed and enter a CR comment.
5. Once submitted successfully, the system will return a MSAG CRID which is captured for the next steps.
6. Perform a TN query to search for the affected ALI records and check the box to select those records.
7. Click on "Mass Change."
8. Enter only the information that needs to be changed and enter a CR comment.
9. During the submission process it will ask for the MSAG CRID, which is pasted in.
10. Wait and monitor the Activity Log for any feedback or completion notices from AT&T staff.

All ECDs should have already received login information to PSP. If you have issues logging in or experience other issues inside the app, send an e-mail to the DIU team at att911database@att.com.

Secondly, it is just as necessary that the emergency service boundaries (Police, Fire, and EMS) be provisioned into our Next Generation Core Services (NGCS) before a cutover can happen. Now is the time to start reviewing the service boundaries you have for geometry and attribute fitness. These boundaries should match the external boundaries of your Emergency Service Number (ESN) polygons to ensure a seamless fit when integrated into the statewide composite. Section 4 of the GIS Data Standards for NG9-1-1 also address the attribution and naming conventions when submitting to the True North spatial interface.

If you have questions or need assistance creating or modifying your service boundaries, please contact True North Support at support@tngeo.com or James Wood at JamesWood@MissionCriticalPartners.com.

As a reminder, you should be receiving GIS error report e-mails from True North regardless of whether there are errors. If you are not receiving these e-mails at least twice a week, please contact True North Support at support@tngeo.com.

SWATTING

Swatting is the practice of reporting an incident/emergency that did not occur for the purpose of eliciting an emergency response, ideally one that involves a SWAT team (Special Weapons and Tactics team).

Over the course of the last year, there have been numerous swatting incidents in Tennessee, most notably:

- December 2022 – Memphis area PSAPs were involved in a string of swatting calls involving Atlanta, Georgia and Louisville, Kentucky. The caller was claiming to be a dispatcher from one of these out-of-state areas and was reporting incidents at various local establishments like McDonalds. The bad actors were calling each center simultaneously with these false reports, causing confusion between telecommunicators and tying up both 911 lines and non-emergency lines.
- May 2023 – Twenty or more Emergency Communications Districts (ECDs) in Tennessee reported swatting incidents in early May of this year. The bad actors were reporting school shootings across the state causing immense stress among the public safety community.

These are just two examples, but across the nation this is happening almost daily—often with the threat of the most agonizing and distressful incidents that people have to deal with today, mass shootings. In all swatting cases, the caller's phone number is either blocked, spoofed, or they are calling from an unregistered phone, so the bad actors are difficult to identify.

How can swatting be prevented? The most impactful way would be for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to require voice-service providers to implement the STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication framework for 911. This framework provides a methodology for reducing the effectiveness of illegal spoofing, thus making it easier to identify bad actors. It was originally developed to combat illegal spoofing of robocalls, but it could be applied to the 911 system, and voice-service providers could be required to participate by a certain date. Additionally, the 911 community can work with state legislators to increase the penalties for swatting convictions, thereby deterring bad actors from targeting their state. In the absence of federal and state assistance, there are a few things ECDs can do at the local level to better prepare themselves and decrease the likelihood that they are targeted:

- Increase Training – By increasing telecommunicator awareness and developing an enhanced caller interrogation training program, skillful questioning can uncover hoax calls.
- Improve Security – By ensuring the ECD/PSAP network is secure, the likelihood of a bad actor getting inside information about a particular system or individual, and using it to make a swatting attempt more believable, is lessened.

If it happens to me, what do I do? Notify the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as your neighbors and local law enforcement. There are seven TBI field offices: Chattanooga, Cookeville, Jackson, Johnson City, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville. There are 14 FBI field offices in Tennessee: Chattanooga, Clarksville (2), Cleveland, Columbia, Cookeville, Jackson, Johnson City, Knoxville (2), Memphis, Nashville, Oak Ridge, Tullahoma.

Note, other types of cyber crime should be reported to the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at https://www.cisa.gov/report.

TRAINING

The new contract with Virtual Academy, the online training platform, was finalized in April. The site contains new course content and features available to Tennessee users. These features include Certification Manager 2.0 and Course Assignment Due Date, and you can learn more about them by clicking on the following links:

Certification Manager: https://share.vidyard.com/watch/SNfSauoZvzarc7bNLtQ5M2?

Course Assignment Due Date: https://share.vidyard.com/watch/8BzJfm8GRVULp2PACCtMmk?

Virtual Academy continues to produce new course training for 911 professionals. Some of the new courses currently available on the Virtual Academy platform are: Public Education, Blending Mission, Vision, and Values, Fitness for First Responders: Yoga, and Understanding the Mission. Courses focusing on 988, Cybersecurity, and Video to 911 will be available later this year. A full list of Virtual Academy courses can be found at https://www.virtualacademy.com/courses.

The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board (TECB), in partnership with the National Alliance on Mental Illness Tennessee (NAMI TN), continues to host free in-person Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trainings across the state. These eight-hour training courses are focused on the 911 Telecommunicator's role in CIT. The CIT Dispatcher course consists of an introduction to CIT, mental health awareness, a Hearing Voices exercise, and call-taking scenarios in which attendees apply information learned. Hearing Voices is an auditory hallucination simulation in which participants are given tasks to complete during the simulation. The purpose of this course is three-fold: to provide a better understanding to 911 professionals of the role they play in crisis intervention, impart a better understanding of persons with mental illness, and provide tools to utilize when dealing with callers or family members experiencing a mental health crisis.

STAFFING

Public safety answering points (PSAPs) operate very differently today than they did in the past. The essence of the position is still the same—answer calls for help and send the right resource to the right place as quickly as possible. Telecommunicators still take calls from the field, but they must now operate more sophisticated technology such as computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems, text-to-911, and geographic information systems (GISs) and work with additional information from other applications such as automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems and video applications. There are so many screens that one telecommunicator must monitor that it boggles the mind of anyone that hasn't worked in a PSAP. Telecommunicators use all this technology and data to direct law enforcement, fire, and EMS personnel and keep them out of harm's way.

Sounds like an amazing job, right? And it is. How many of us can say we perform work that actually saves lives and protects the public and first responders?

Then why is this industry facing such a staffing shortage that appears to be getting worse and not better after COVID? A recent survey conducted by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) and the National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA) reports that more than half of 911 centers across the country are facing a genuine staffing shortage. More information about this study can be found at: More Than Half of U.S. 911 Centers Are Facing Their Own Emergency - IAED (emergencydispatch.org). There are several root causes to these increased shortages:

- Funding: It is becoming more difficult to compete with private sector compensation.
- Lack of Proper Recognition: The federal government classifies telecommunicators (call-takers and dispatchers) as clerical workers, making it difficult to increase compensation and creating a negative view of the job, thereby reducing the candidate pool.
- Stressful Environment: Making life-and-death decisions, along with long hours, increased overtime due to staffing shortages, and all the changes in technology, creates a very stressful environment.
- Negative Impact of Social Media: Disgruntled personnel use social media to vent their frustration, but there is also the negative public perception of law enforcement and provision of this valuable public service.
- Baby Boomer Retirements: Many people are retiring who have been in the industry for some time.
- Increase in Desire for Work/Life Balance: The younger workforce recognizes the need for work/life balance, especially since COVID.

Several industry stakeholder associations collaborated with the National 911 Program, housed within the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) office, to create a quick "how-to checklist" of ways to improve recruiting efforts in the PSAP, which can be found at: Facing Staffing Challenges, Industry Stakeholders Share Tips to Attract and Retain Telecommunicators | 911.gov.

Another great resource created by the National 911 Program is the Telecommunicator Reclassification toolkit (see Telecommunicator Job Reclassification | 911.gov). Here you can find resources on how to:

- Update telecommunicator job descriptions
- Establish or expand your telecommunicator training program
- Ensure operational integration of technology and tools—aligning policies and procedures with the changing environment
- Develop an advocacy strategy for proper job classification

TECB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The TECB met on August 2, 2023.   The Board directed the staff to convene the Policy Advisory Committee to study changing the surcharge subsidy it provides to the districts. The subsidy is the method the Board developed to distribute projected revenue generated from the increase in the 911 surcharge that took effect January 1, 2021.   The Board is not seeking to increase the surcharge , rather it is interested in whether there is a more effective method of distribution.

The Board requested ECDs that are not in compliance with T-CPR requirements to report to the Board at the November meeting.
The Board also authorized staff to use and issue new Call Handling as a Service agreements to the ECDs that will pass along savings to the participating ECDs. The following GIS Committee recommended updates to the GIS standards:

- NENA-STA-006.2-2022 details/hyperlinks updated
- Release and versioning updated for 7.3.5
- 4.1.10 ServiceURN: New examples
- 4.1.12 AV card URI added
- 4.1.13 DsplayName added
- 4.5 Sample Data three figures added

The Board is convening the GIS Committee to review a request from Rapid Deploy to learn what GIS data would be the most beneficial for the ECDs.

The Board staff was directed to submit proposed TECB Bylaw changes to the Policy Advisory Committee for review and recommendations. The Board also directed the Financial Study Committee and the Operations Committee to review the feasibility and efficacy of updating the budget years from the statutory funding model to 2020, 2021, 2022.

A video of the entire meeting can be found and watched at the bottom of the page here.

The next TECB Board meeting will be on October 25, 2023.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH TECB!

TN Department of **Commerce & Insurance** | Tennessee Emergency Communications Board

500 James Robertson Parkway | Nashville, Tennessee 37243
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