

TESTIMONY OF ELLEN M. WERNICKE
BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019

Chairman and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of Johnson County Government in support of House Bill 2084 amending the current Kansas 911 Act. Since implementation of the 911 Coordinating Council's hosted solution it has proven to be an effective and efficient system across the state. However, without amending the current Kansas 911 Act future progress is not sustainable, which comes at a cost to the citizens of Kansas.

Fee Increase

Johnson County Government is not currently on the hosted solution. Johnson County is part of the Mid America Regional Council and operates on a 911 platform common to the MARC region. The 911 fee that is received by our county is used to support our ongoing 911 expenses. The current funding mechanism is not sufficient enough to support 911 capital expenditures and ongoing daily operating expenses of the 911 centers.

Kansas 911 networks and 911 emergency communication systems must continue to be improved to meet the citizen expectations that they can contact 911 with the technologies that they use every day. Future Enhanced 911 systems must also have the capability to transmit digital information and images received from citizens at 911 Centers, to the public safety responders in the field, to incident command centers and to hospital emergency rooms. The cost to continue modernizing our 911 systems in Kansas to address ever changing technology as well as being able to pay ongoing operating and maintenance costs will require additional funding to sustain our operations.

Because Johnson County is part of the MARC region and is not part of the statewide NG911 hosted solution, we would be contributing an additional \$.23 above the \$.144 we currently contribute towards providing statewide equality of 911 service in the State of Kansas. While there is some return to the MARC region through statewide GIS, orthoimagery, and other statewide projects, the majority of the additional money is going towards the shared statewide call handling system. There will be cost savings benefit to Johnson County, as an agency in the MARC area, in integrating our ESInet to the Kansas ESInet when we take that step, however, the bottom line is that Kansas is a leader in NG911 and Johnson County is willing to be foresighted enough to share our resources with the rest of the State of Kansas to ensure we stay on the leading edge and have the ability to sustain the system that is currently in deployment.

GIS Data

Johnson County Government receives nearly 70% of our 911 calls via wireless devices and seconds are critical when trying to locate citizens. All too often 911 calls are routed inappropriately because cellular calls are routed based on of which tower the call "hits" off of and/or which tower face. As Kansas migrates to NG911, calls will be sent to the appropriate 911 center via geospatial call routing. Geospatial call routing is based off of the caller's cellular device, rather than a tower location.

This legislation provides the authority to ensure GIS data integrity. It is critical that GIS data be 100% accurate in order to quickly route 911 calls to the closest 911 center.

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Johnson County feels strongly that this legislation should move forward to ensure the continued deployment and sustainment of the statewide NG911 hosted solution. The progress Kansas has made with NG911 as a leader in the nation should be recognized and the 2011 legislative mission should be honored. It has enabled the state to move forward versus becoming a state of standalone systems and technology that would result in further isolation, lacks interoperability, increase costs and would put those who live, work or travel through our great state at risk. I think we can agree that all of us have an expectation that no matter we are in the state that we will receive the same level of service when we call 911 and that simply won't happen without a standardized, statewide NG911 hosted solution.

Thank you for this opportunity to present this testimony on this critical public safety issue affecting jurisdictions of all sizes in Kansas. I would welcome any questions that you may have of me.

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