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From: BroadbandUSA <BroadbandUSA@ntia.doc.gov>
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To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: U.S Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Transportation Issue Final Rules for \$110 Million 911 Grant Program

U.S Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Transportation Issue Final Rules for \$110 Million 911 Grant Program

Today, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Transportation announced final rules [2] for a grant program that will offer up to \$110 million to help states, territories, tribal organizations and the District of Columbia upgrade their 911 call centers to Next Generation (NG911) capabilities.

"Today's announcement means we are a step closer to bringing the benefits of the latest technology to 911 call centers around the country," said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. "In an emergency, the public safety community must have every tool at its disposal to keep Americans safe."

"In emergencies, quick access to the right resources can save lives," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao. "The 911 Grant Program will make it possible for states and local jurisdictions to improve their emergency technology while providing the support first responders need to do their jobs."

The program, which is jointly administered by the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Transportation Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), will take an important step toward modernizing today's 911 services so that citizens, first responders, and 911 call-takers can use IP-based, broadband-enabled technologies to coordinate emergency responses.

Information on how to apply for grants will be released in a forthcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Background:

Today, 70 to 80 percent of all 911 calls are placed from wireless phones, but most 911 call centers rely on decades-old networks capable of carrying only voice calls and limited amounts of data. The call centers have not kept pace with advances in consumer technology, and as a result cannot support callers who wish to send text messages, images, video, and other communications that utilize large amounts of data.

NG911 enables 911 calls to contain digital information such as photographs and video. The technology will improve coordination among the nation's 911 call centers, dynamically re-route calls based on location and call congestion, and connect first responders to key health and government services in the event of an emergency.

In 2009, the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration and Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration oversaw more than \$40 million in grants through the ENHANCE-911 (E911) Grant Program. The Next Generation 911 Advancement Act of 2012 provided new funds for the program and broadened the eligible uses of those funds. These new uses include adoption and operation of NG911 services and applications; the implementation of IP-enabled emergency services and applications enabled by NG911 services; the establishment of IP backbone networks; and training of public safety personnel in 911 services.

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