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# ★ The TENA Transfer ★

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## **RFO is VIP (Very Important Project) in Texas** **An Update by Laverne Hogan**

Recently, the State of Texas General Services Commission, in conjunction with the Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications, released a "Request for Offers" (RFO) document, for Database and Advanced Intelligent Network Services. This document, as most 9-1-1 entities across the State know, has been in process for some months, with representatives of 9-1-1 entities working as a Consumer Committee, to come to some agreement on its contents.

In this article, I'll touch on the "whys" of the project; what the RFO requests; and what it could mean for those 9-1-1 entities who choose to use the services outlined in the document. I will draw heavily on the document itself, to cite some of the services which would be available for those who choose to participate.

Need for such a project came from those in the 9-1-1 community who requested assistance in dealing with database problems with various wireline telephone companies. That call for assistance boiled down to "greater accuracy, more timely updates, and a single point of contact." As the idea for the project took hold, other problems were expressed and delineated, as stated in the document itself: "Changes in technology, coupled with commensurate growth and change in the nation's telecommunications industry have ushered new challenges to public safety. The proliferation of local wireline and wireless telecommunication services, competition for those services, the expansion of private telecommunications networks and the explosion of enhanced consumer service offerings all potentially complicate the proper delivery and processing of 9-1-1 calls." In addition, the explosion of wireless calls to 9-1-1, and the need for being able to transfer voice and data from one 9-1-1 area to another contributed to the development of the RFO Project.

Goals of the RFO: The document specifies an Advanced Intelligent Network selective routing solution which could be subscribed to by all telecommunications providers in the State. The document states: "The ability to manage the consolidation of rate centers, local and geographic number portability, wireless roamers, Poison Network connectivity, and jurisdictional overlap requires participation by all Texas carriers." It is hoped that the solution would do the following:

- Enable a transitional, migratory path that would allow interested 9-1-1 entities to take advantage of immediately, or

- over time in a phased-in fashion, as needs would dictate;
- Retain autonomy for agencies to choose from a range of database services;
- Meet current and future functional network and database needs by exploiting modern public switched network intelligence and current data platforms and operating systems;
- Enable optional Service Provider arrangements and Networking solutions;
- Procure advanced solutions in a cost-effective manner.

What should 9-1-1 entities expect?: From a Database Management System, 9-1-1 entities could expect error resolution and quality control of data; ease in management of data from multiple providers; accurate information content; accurate and timely data input, along with quality standards; timely record retrieval; database integration; overall uniformity; database software updates; enhanced ALI availability throughout Texas. The RFO also addresses management of wireless 9-1-1 calls, and requests responders to suggest solutions dealing with management and coordination of antenna coverage areas and routing data.

Some of the database requirements in the RFO include real time updates to ALI as service orders are processed; database accuracy and structure consistent with established standards; ability to measure/monitor accuracy and produce statistical reports; real time query of telephone number records; supplemental ALI; ease of MSAG database management; record history, migration of database and audit trail of customer record changes; non-specific carrier standard data access platform; audit of current data; fault tolerant system; transfer of data on a real time basis from one PSAP to another PSAP/PCAP; direct customer involvement in the development of provider implementation plans impacting 9-1-1; graphical ALI display; ability to develop, maintain and display latitude and longitude coordinates within the 9-1-1 database, compliant with applicable NENA standards; ability to provide competitively neutral systems integration support in a multiple

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## *From the President...*

*Toni Dunne*

*tonidunne@acsec.state.tx.us*



As my term as President comes to a close, I have been reflecting on the years I have been fortunate to serve the NENA - Texas Chapter. It has been, no doubt, one of the most gratifying and rewarding experiences in my life. And if I were asked to describe this past year in one word, I would have to say we had synergism!

Synergy is a term used to mean that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It means the relationship that the parts have to each other is a special part in and of itself. The relationships then become catalytic, empowering, and unifying. It is the most exciting part! To be synergetic is to work together in cooperation with each other and that is certainly what has happened this year within the Board and throughout our membership.

The Texas Chapter has accomplished many things over the past 18 months, not the least of which is to lead the nation in total membership. From restructuring our election process and revamping our C&B's to providing more membership benefits through offering regional based training and joining statewide efforts to recognize front line professionals - our telecommunicators, the list, when enumerated, is extensive. It truly has been a banner year! And we did it all through synergism!

I would like to give a round of applause to the Board and Committee Chairs. A special thank you goes to ALL who have helped in various ways. Time and effort is such a valued commodity, these days, that we truly appreciate your contributions. Dedication to this organization is beyond compare. It warms my heart to see the interest generated in serving on the Board for 1998-1999, as was demonstrated on the election ballot. Casting your vote will not be easy with the bounty of qualified professionals who stand ready and willing to accept the

challenges we face over the next year.

We are embarking into a future that will require close attention be given to the advancing technologies and operational issues within the public safety arena. Issues such as wireless, location determination technologies (LDT), and "Y2K" (Year 2000) are already on our plate. It will be up to us to see that we are not overlooked or left behind.

I ask for your continued support of the Chapter and new Board by getting involved. The new Board and Committee Chairs cannot row the boat alone. They are there to help steer us, but it is up to us to jump in and be part of the crew. Don't wait to be asked. Let your interest be heard! Also, continue to let others know the value we have when we are 'one', working together towards a common goal.

Again, thank you for allowing me to work in this top-notch organization. I am truly proud to have played a role!

Toni Dunne

### *Calendar of Events*

April 5	Time Change - Spring forward!
April 12-18	National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week
April 20-22	NENA-Texas Chapter Spring Conference and Texas Telecommunications Awards, Waco, 512-305-6934
May 17-22	Interagency Emergency Communications Instructors Training Course, DPS, Austin. Call 512-305-6934.
June 1-3	APCO Communications Center Supervisor Course, \$279, DPS Academy, Austin. Call 888-272-6911 to register.
June 21-25	NENA Conference, Cincinnati, OH
August 9-13	APCO Conference, Albuquerque, NM

## *Across Texas - News from Your Regional Coordinators*

### **North Coordinator - Marsha Reed**

Spring's just around the corner, everyone around the region is really busy. Work on the TENA conference continues to pick up pace in the upcoming weeks. We look forward to a spectacular event this year with the combination of the TENA Spring conference and 9-1-1 Day events. I hope to have some of the 9-1-1 celebrity golfers join us Monday morning at the Waco Country Club for a fun day of golf and 9-1-1 camaraderie.



Extend a big welcome to Ric Atkins as the new Assistant Director of the Tarrant County 9-1-1 District. Ric is new to the job, but not new to 9-1-1, having been with Southwestern Bell for 22 years. The last 12 years at SWBT were exclusively devoted to supporting 9-1-1 services. We would like to wish Ric much success in his new position.

In March, Plano P.D. dispatcher, Sandra Fulcher, was a guest on the Montel Williams show. The theme for the show was "Unsung Heroes". Sandra was chosen to be guest because of a call that she had taken concerning a 7 month old baby who had fallen 4 feet from her changing table, landing head-first on the floor. The baby became unconscious and began to vomit a sign of head injury. Sandra calmed the mom and talked her through pre-arrival instructions. It turned out the child had a severe concussion and the doctor told the mother if the child had fallen an eighth-of-an-inch to the left, the fall would have broken the baby's neck. Sandra and the parents were contacted and agreed to go on the show. Sandra didn't know the outcome of the call or that the parents were there to meet her. She was surprised on the show and got to meet the people she had helped. Although she was the only 911 dispatcher on the show, she was there to represent 911 operators who never know how much they help others.

### **East Coordinator - Brenda Pope**

Rain, rain go away! It will be nice to welcome in Spring time. We have had more than our share of that "Wet Stuff" here in the coastal area.

With Spring comes our conference in Waco, Telecommunicator Awards, and lots of busy folks.

I have been really busy with CLECs (aka ALECs). Just as we get past one hurdle with our wireless payments being disbursed through the State 911 Commission, and not having numerous checks from wireless each month, along come CLECs. I have been sending out CLEC contracts to resale and non-resale companies and have had lots of response. Already we are collecting fees from those CLECs in our area and it seems some are appearing "in business" overnight! So beware! If they are not in your area (yet), it won't be long!

Remember, school is out soon, so involve your Public Educators in making students aware of when to call, how to call, and what to say in an emergency. Use Red E. Fox in your training program. It's been very successful in Galveston County and I am sure in yours as well.

Here in my area we started a quarterly meeting with our neighboring COGs and Districts. With all the changes in 911; equipment, CADs, intelligent work stations, etc., it's good to keep our lines of communication open with our neighbors. We call ourselves, L.O.G. (Loosely Organized Group) - not sure who tagged this name!! Please check the calendar in this newsletter for upcoming dates to remember. Hope to see you at a conference!

### **South Coordinator - Hilda Arredondo-Gariby**

Greetings from South Texas! Everyone is diligently working in their prospective areas.

The Council of Governments are currently gearing up to work on the Strategic Plans which are to be sent to the Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications in September 1998. The administrative budgets are due to their offices no later than April 15, 1998 and they will be reviewed and approved during the July 16, 1998 Commission meeting.

In the mean time, we are all eager to see what comes out of the RFO for the statewide database.

Many of the different areas continue to work on their addressing projects. While some of the counties are still busy addressing, mapping, and

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vendor environment.

The RFO specifies the provision of database support for a Service or Signal Control Point (SCP) operating within an Advanced Intelligent Network. Ultimately, the goal is "the proper routed, delivered and completed 9-1-1 call to an appropriate PSAP." The RFO is careful to point out that the data management service bureau function would not actually provide the SCP, but that the bureau should support that function by managing the data involved and making that data available to the SCP provider in an automated fashion.

From the Advanced Intelligent Network Services, the 9-1-1 community should be supplied with solutions based on an ANI, providing the "ability to move routing intelligence away from central office, switch-based selective routers (with internal selective routing tables) to a Signal Control Point. This would represent a migration to mainstream technology and a more modern network architecture." Essentially, a "9-1-1 access tandem, serving as a Signal Switching Point, will dynamically query the Signal Control Point for routing instructions. The Signal Control Point will provide those instructions. "By consolidating and shifting database functions away from the switch physically routing the call, the network can more easily cope with number portability, rate center consolidation, multiple providers and other complex issues."

The intent, as outlined in the document, "is to migrate away from current direct trunked and dedicated, tandem based selective routing to a more cost effective, efficient and flexible architecture that will allow the 9-1-1 community to address the many challenges confronting them."

Throughout the document, care is taken to inform prospective responders of: the three kinds of entities providing 9-1-1 service in Texas; the independence of each entity's operations as a critical aspect; the various levels of 9-1-1 service throughout the State; accommodation of multiple platforms utilized for addressing and map development for the display of coordinate information at a 9-1-1 call-taker position; other points of information to insure that 9-1-1 entities across the State could benefit from participation in the program, if those entities choose to participate, initially or at a later date.

The 9-1-1 community in the State of Texas un-

derstands the challenges facing all of us, and has demonstrated that it is open to exploring better, more efficient ways to serve citizens seeking emergency assistance. Hopefully, the responses to the RFO will provide some of those better, more efficient ways. Formal responses are due at the General Services Commission on May 7, 1998.

*About the author - Laverne Hogan has been executive director of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network since its inception in 1984. She currently serves as Vice President of the National Emergency Number Association for the Southeast Region which includes 12 states.*

(Continued from, *The Legal Eagle*, page 5.)  
petition, Keating' reply echoed the feeling of the public safety participants in WEIAD.

I realize the issues themselves are confusing, and space limitations do not allow an analysis of each of the points raised by the CTIA, but this will serve to give you some insight into the complexity of the Wireless 9-1-1 issue and the legal struggle to bring it into reality. At the time of this writing the public safety community, through NENA, APCO, and NASNA, were drafting a response for filing with the FCC. Point A is the only point with which the public safety groups really agree, although it is not considered within the power of the FCC to grant this (and this was acknowledged by CTIA in their filing).

## TC WEEK CELEBRATION

*The League City Police Department and Police Officers Association are proud to host the 1998 National Telecommunicators Week Conference to be held Thursday, April 9th, from 5 - 10 p.m., at the League City Civic Center at 300 W. Walker, on State Hwy 3 South, one light south of FM 518. All public safety personnel are invited to attend, meet fellow professionals and exchange "war stories" in a relaxed atmosphere. A guest speaker from Galveston County S.O. and an awards ceremony will follow dinner. For more information, contact Rebecca Baumgart at 281-332-2566.*

## ***THE LEGAL EAGLE -***

### *Woody Glover, Legislative Coordinator*

On February 17, 1998, the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) filed a Petition for Reconsideration and Clarification of the FCC Docket 94-102 as it pertains to Wireless 9-1-1. This filing by CTIA was considered particularly annoying by public safety groups as they have been working with the wireless industry through the WEIAD to jointly seek resolutions to the issues.

***“Point A is the only point with which... public safety groups really agree...”***

WEIAD is the Wireless Enhanced 9-1-1 Implementation Ad Hoc and is composed of the public safety groups, a consumer interest group, wireless telephone carriers, and equipment manufacturers. The CTIA filed its petition for reconsideration without informing the public safety groups of their action, or giving them a chance for input prior to the filing.

The following are the issues raised by CTIA:

- A. Uniform Nationwide Use Of The 9-1-1 Dialing Code For Emergency Assistance Will Promote The Commission’s Public Safety Goals.
- B. The Commission Should Promote Ubiquitous Availability Of Wireless E911 By Encouraging Federal Agencies To Facilitate Use Of Federal Property For Wireless Facility Siting.
- C. CMRS Carriers Should Receive The Same Limitations On Liability Traditionally Afforded To Communications Common Carriers, Including Wireline.
- D. The Commission Should, On Reconsideration, Remove Ambiguities Surrounding E911 Implementation.
- E. The Commission Should Clarify That PSAPs May Not Limit CMRS Carriers To Recovering Their E911 Implementation Costs Solely From Their CMRS Customers.
- F. The Commission Should Clarify That It Is The CMRS Carriers’ Responsibility To Select The Means By Which The Caller’s ANI And Cell Site Location Is Transmitted To The Appropriate PSAP Consistent

With The Phase I Obligations.

- G. The Commission Should Clarify That a CMRS Carrier Is Obligated Under Its Rules To Comply With a PSAPs Phase I Request Within Six Months.
- H. The Commission Should Address How Handset-Based Solutions May Fit Into Phase II Requirements.

Thomas Wheeler, President of CTIA, apologized for their action to Jack Keating, President-Elect of APCO. Keating responded with “...I accept the apology stated in your letter of March 5. We were indeed most disturbed by CTIA’s actions which I assure you, did nothing to enhance our working relationship. Nonetheless, APCO will continue to work with CTIA and all interested parties to ensure the timely implementation of Phase I and Phase II wireless access to 9-1-1, since we believe such an approach offers the best opportunity for optimum results for all concerned.” As discussed in a conference call to begin preparation of the Public Safety response to the  
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tion, Keating’s reply echoed the feeling of the public safety participants in WEIAD.

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To reach  
Woody  
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(continued from page 3, Across Texas)

working with postal conversions, other counties are in the maintenance phase which also requires many hours of work. Still other counties are upgrading and replacing their equipment. There is always something going on!

I'll leave you with some "words of wisdom" I try and remember each day:

*Oh Lord, help my words to be gracious  
and tender today, for tomorrow I may  
have to eat them!!!!!!*

### West Coordinator - Sherri Sevey

Hello from West Texas!! Hope everyone had a nice refreshing Spring Break, I know we did!!

I spoke with Gail Otte at the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission (PBRPC) they have been busy working with the counties to finalize address assignments in her area. Gail is also working on distributing the Red E. Fox Public Education Videos and Packets to all her 14 counties!! By Summer, PBRPC will upgrade their last three counties to ALLI. They are a very busy group!!

In Lubbock, March 13, LECD released a Request for Proposals for their E9-1-1 system upgrade. The desired system will include a progressive combination of integrated workstations, digital telephone switching, E9-1-1, and CAD with electronic mapping. The RFP calls for all applications to integrate on a common, open systems platform in a client/server environment. This multi-agency system will provide for open communication between seven agencies, the LECD offices, and an additional location to be used for both training and back-up. All proposals are due May 8, 1998.

Several cities and counties in the South Plains area will receive new 9-1-1 equipment. System upgrades were implemented in 1996-97 for Cochran, Crosby, Garza, and Lynn Counties to provide both ANI and ALLI. New high-tech equipment will provide more capabilities to accommodate rapid changes in today's technologies. Other systems will be replaced between April and August. Equipment at Bailey, Dickens/King, Floyd/Motley, Hockley, Lamb, Terry, and Yoakum Counties are due for replacement between April and August.

The South Plains Emergency Educators Division (SPEED) is the

9-1-1 speakers' bureau for the South Plains Regional Emergency Communications program. This group of volunteers from public safety agencies was created and trained to provide 9-1-1 public education programs throughout the region.

Pizza Hut served as co-sponsor of the 1997-98 South Plains Regional 9-1-1 poster contest. Winning students, their teachers, and families were invited to a pizza party celebration hosted by Pizza Hut! Approximately 45 people attended the event with special guest, Red E. Fox. The winning artwork was developed into a 1998 calendar and is being used as a public awareness tool in the region.

The Midland and Ector 9-1-1 Districts are working together with SWB and area cellular companies to get tower locations to identify and route to the appropriate PSAP. Both counties have also been working Red E. Fox to the bone!! Red E. has made several guest appearances at the new Hockey Arena, home of the Odessa Jackalopes and many visits to local schools and clubs. Next time you are on the Internet, take a look at Ector County's website. The address is [www.ector911.org](http://www.ector911.org) and it looks great!

We are looking forward to the ACSEC Telecommunicator Awards and NENA, Texas Chapter Spring Conference in Waco this month!

### Your 1996-98 NENA - TX Board

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## The TENA Transfer

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### Spring

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Finding the information you are looking for on the Internet can often be a fairly daunting task. Although searching the Internet has come a long way, most often you may find your search results consisting of a few links that are exactly what you are looking for, several that are similar to what you are looking for and a great many that you are not sure why they ended up in your results.

One way to simplify your quest for information is to decide where to start. More specifically, determine if you should be searching a Directory or a Search Engine. I should mention that the once clear cut line between a Directory and a Search Engine has blurred somewhat in the last few years, as many Search Engines now provide some categorization of content similar to that of a Directory.

Directories are sites made up entirely of “thoughtfully” categorized content (web pages). By “thoughtfully,” I mean that all listings in the Directory are placed there by the Directory’s web staff based on Uniform Resource Locator (URL) submissions made by site designers, webmasters, etc. for their site to be included in the Directory. The Directory staff evaluates the content for usefulness, appropriateness, subject matter, etc. and places the link in the proper category in the Directory’s structure. The most popular example of a Directory Service is Yahoo [www.yahoo.com].

Directories are good for searching for information which is easily categorized and broken down by subject matter. For example, if you are searching for “9-1-1” related web sites, a Directory is a good place to start. More than likely, the 9-1-1 site designer/webmaster submitted their URL to the Directory which was then placed by a human in one or more appropriate categories for the 9-1-1 site.

Let’s assume, however, you are searching for something like “emergency communication services,” you might be better off starting with a Search Engine. Search Engines rely more on

software programs called “robots” or “bots.” These programs spend all their live-long-day roaming from site-to-site, link-to-link exploring the web. When you search a Search Engine you are placing a query against it’s database of sites visited and your results are only as good as the Search Engine’s past explorations. Personal experiences have shown Digital’s Altavista [www.altavista.digital.com] to be one of the most accurate Search Engines.

I should clarify, however, that web designers and/or webmasters still submit their URL to a Search Engine, but the web site submitted is not reviewed by a human to determine the proper category based on the site’s content. The proper placement of the web site is left up to the individual submitting the URL and/or the bot. This sometimes leads to web sites which might work in one category, but would be better suited in another. Or in some cases designers will submit their site in as many categories as possible, suitable or not, to increase their site’s exposure when searches are performed.

Many Directories and Search Engines provide for alternate location searches. For example, if you search Yahoo and don’t find what you are looking for, there are links to other Directories and Search Engines on the search result’s page. When you select one of these alternate search locations your search string is automatically queried against the selected Directory or Search Engine for you.

When using Directories and Search Engines look for a link for “advanced” or “optional” search criteria. Many sites make use of Boolean operators to enhance your search, so be sure to check out each site’s advanced search options to help you locate your information more efficiently. Also, it helps to begin with a more broad search, narrowing your search criteria as you progress. Often, too narrow a search will get you nothing. A good resource for 9-1-1 related sites and articles on Public Safety and the Internet see the January/February 1998 issue of 9-1-1 Magazine or visit their web site at www.9-1-1magazine.com. Also, be sure to check out www.nena9-1-1.org for the latest information which affects us all.

Happy surfing, Mark  
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# The TENA Transfer

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In This Issue...

*CTIA pulls a fast one on the 9-1-1 Community! See "The Legal Eagle," page 5*

## Have You Registered Yet??



**Don't Miss Out!**

**Monday, April 20 - Wednesday, April 22**

- ◆ 1998 ACSEC Telecommunicator Awards honoring the Best of Texas' 9-1-1 emergency communications professionals.
- ◆ NENA-Texas Chapter Spring Conference, with educational workshops, dynamic presentations, motivating speakers, and vendor demonstrations. pre-
  - ◆ Golf Tournament, Lake Waco Country Club
  - ◆ Red E. Fox Bun Run
  - ◆ Texas 9-1-1 Public Educator's Workshop
  - ◆ Installation of the 1998-1999 NENA-Texas Chapter Board
- ◆ Taste of Texas Reception at the Texas Ranger Museum and Cadillac Jacks, and MORE!

For registration information call the ASCEC: 512-305-6911 or register on-line at [www.nena9-1-1.org/texas/index.htm](http://www.nena9-1-1.org/texas/index.htm)