

2017 LEGISLATIVE SNAPSHOT

Next Generation 9-1-1

From the Montana State Library

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SNAPSHOT #4

Two years ago, a woman in Georgia accidentally drove into a lake early one morning while delivering newspapers. Although she called 9-1-1, the dispatcher wasn't able to immediately discern the site of the accident based on the cell phone call, and the woman died as the dispatcher frantically asked for her location.

Montana's 9-1-1 call centers are built on a system originally developed for land-line telephones, which are tied to street addresses, for responding to emergency calls. Stakeholders are working to develop an implementation plan for a statewide "Next Generation 9-1-1" (NG 9-1-1) service, which will use advanced computer networks and real-time location information from mobile phones and other devices to better coordinate emergency response.

- NG 9-1-1 transitions the current 9-1-1 technology, developed in the 1960s, to an all-digital system.
- By going digital, it means you can use a cell phone, tablet or computer to call, send a text, photos or a video to a 9-1-1 call center. This is important in situations like school lockdowns, when a person is afraid to talk to a dispatcher for fear of being discovered.
- Montana State Library already has successfully worked with some local governments to develop many of the statewide datasets required in a NG 9-1-1 system. However, additional work is needed to develop completed statewide datasets that meet NG 9-1-1 standards.
- Stakeholders involved to date include the Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee, Public Safety Communication Bureau, Montana State Library, Montana Association of Counties, representatives from local 9-1-1 systems, local and state-based

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telecommunication industry representatives, and local government representatives.

- The Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee has drafted HB61 to modernize the 9-1-1 funding statutes; fund infrastructure upgrades to the network; fund a statewide 9-1-1 plan; and fund a statewide assessment of 9-1-1 datasets to find out what's needed to integrate an upgraded system.
- NG 9-1-1 is a big project that needs a lot of planning and time. As the state moves forward with implementation of the plan, the Montana State Library has the basic datasets and the geographic information experts who can help coordinate the NG 9-1-1 GIS requirements.