

MCSA Leads Public Safety Effort to Upgrade America to Next Generation 9-1-1

The nation's 9-1-1 systems needs an upgrade. Our citizens live, work, and play in a mobile and multimedia world. They are used to getting services where and when they need them. When they really need services they call 9-1-1. America's largest sheriffs' offices provide that service for over 100 million people. MCSA members are responsible for many of the largest dispatch centers in the country.

Getting federal support to help upgrade to Next Generation 9-1-1 has been on public safety's wish list for over a decade. The estimated cost will be at least \$15 billion for NextGen technology and training. When MCSA joined with an alliance of public safety groups a decade ago to successfully push Congress to authorize a dedicated broadband service for public safety – now known as FirstNet – we identified NextGen 9-1-1 as another key need. We finally have a window of opportunity to upgrade this part of our nation's critical infrastructure.

Last month, MCSA took the lead and co-hosted along with the Major Cities Chiefs Association a meeting of public safety groups at the Willard in Washington, DC. Leadership of



associations and labor groups representing law enforcement, fire, EMS, and 9-1-1 groups were present. The objective was to get agreement to move forward as a coalition in a consensus-based process to improve legislation that would authorize funding for a nationwide upgrade to NextGen 9-1-1. Sheriff Koutoujian opened the meeting and Sheriff Bouchard led the discussion on behalf of MCSA.

As a result of that successful meeting, the Next Generation 9-1-1 Public Safety Coalition has been meeting virtually for the past month to collaborate on details of legislative language. Oakland County Sheriff's Captain Mel Maier has been chairing the coalition's meetings, with daily involvement by Executive Director Kim Wagner and support from MCSA's legislative team at Brooks Bawden Moore, LLC.

Once the coalition reaches consensus on language, all MCSA members can help by engaging with their members of Congress to urge them to support upgrading the entire nation to Next Gen 9-1-1.

