



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tennessee Emergency Communications Board to Focus on Enhancing Statewide Cybersecurity

Assessment will help guide the state's 911 agencies in increasing cybersecurity preparedness

State College, Pa., (July 29, 2020)—The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board (TECB), today announced a partnership with [Mission Critical Partners \(MCP\)](#), a leading mission-critical communications consulting and information technology (IT) support services firm, on a new project focused on assessing the cybersecurity status of the state's 142 public safety answering points (PSAPs). When completed, the cybersecurity assessment will provide the PSAPs with an understanding of their baseline status and increased awareness of vulnerabilities.

The project will generate greater visibility into Tennessee's 911 infrastructure, which is growing in complexity and sophistication as the state transitions to Next Generation 911 (NG911), a broadband, Internet Protocol (IP)-based system that enables the transmission of real-time text, images, video and voice calls. Tennessee is a leader in implementing NG911 technology with a nationally recognized, redundant Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESInet) known as NetTN. This network, which has been operating for seven years, processes more than 20 million calls annually and helps to keep Tennessee's citizens and visitors safe.

"Building a strong partnership like the one between the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board and Mission Critical Partners is crucial to serving Tennesseans and maintaining Tennessee's role as a national leader when it comes to emergency response," said Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance Commissioner Hodgen Mainda. "This partnership will help better protect Tennesseans and Tennessee's public safety answering points from cybersecurity threats that may occur."

In conjunction with the cybersecurity program, the TECB is transitioning its PSAPs from an Internet Protocol (IP)-based selective-routing (IPSR) solution to an ESInet that leverages Next Generation Core Services (NGCS). NGCS are the fundamental elements that enable 911 calls to be processed in a NG911 environment. The NENA i3-compliant solution will provide enhanced technology services outlined in the TECB's NG911 Strategic Plan. The board projects that all Tennessee PSAPs will be offering NG911 service in 2021.

Because IP-based networks inherently are more vulnerable to cyberattacks, the cybersecurity initiative being undertaken by the TECB and MCP takes on even greater importance as the state's PSAPs transition to NG911, according to Curtis Sutton, TECB's executive director.

"Across the country, public-safety leaders increasingly are viewing cybersecurity as a priority, recognizing that cybercriminals are targeting 911 operations because of their mission-critical nature," Sutton said. "The TECB is committed to providing excellent customer service to Tennessee's 911 community. Understanding the vulnerabilities of our 911 network is a critical step toward implementing a proactive cybersecurity risk-prevention program in the state."

The project is funded in part by the 911 Grant Program jointly provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Department of Commerce in 2019. The program—which authorized \$109 million in grant funding to 34 states and two tribal nations—is designed to support state and local efforts to deliver modernized 911 services. Any Tennessee PSAP

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opting into the statewide cybersecurity project will receive:

- An assessment of the PSAP's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and call-processing networks
- An assessment of the PSAP's physical security
- A report that identifies resolvable cybersecurity vulnerabilities and recommendations so that plans may be developed to address deficiencies

"We are honored to partner with the TECB in this effort, and we applaud their vision to be confident in the security surrounding the state's 911 infrastructure," said Kevin Murray, MCP's chairman, chief executive officer and cofounder. "Taking this proactive approach will help them safeguard against threats that could disable them or interrupt their ability to serve Tennessee's citizens and visitors and will ultimately help to improve emergency response."

About Mission Critical Partners (MCP)

Mission Critical Partners (MCP) is an independent consulting and IT support services firm that helps clients enhance and evolve their public safety systems and operations through our extensive experience, knowledge and resources. By providing insight and support every step of the way, our clients are able to transform their mission critical operations, maximizing the value of their investments and ensuring optimal performance and success. Additional information and career opportunities are available at www.MissionCriticalPartners.com.

About the Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance (TDCI)

Fostering fair marketplaces, public safety, and consumer education that promote the success of individuals and businesses while serving as innovative leaders. Our divisions include the State Fire Marshal's Office, Insurance, Securities, Regulatory Boards, Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy, Tennessee Emergency Communications Board, and TennCare Oversight.

About the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board (TECB)

The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board is a self-funded nine-member board located within the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance. The Board was created to establish emergency communications for citizens across the state and assist emergency communications districts ("ECDs") in the areas of management, operations, and accountability.

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