

# **LBA Performance Audit Report Summary:**

Enhanced 911 System Performance Audit Report – January 2006

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The purpose of this audit was to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the enhanced 911 (E-911) system operated by the Department of Safety's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BEC). The audit period included State fiscal year 2000-2005.

## **Findings**

The BEC provides citizens and visitors in the State with communications to local emergency responders and provides medically related instructions over the telephone. The State's E-911 system currently operates from a single call center, or public safety answering point (PSAP), and handles about 400,000 calls a year. The PSAP, located in Concord, maintains a high level of service by meeting national performance standards for emergency medical dispatch, maintaining its accreditation as an E-911 dispatch center, and continually monitoring its telecommunicators' performance. The Bureau has adequate controls over its primary function – taking and transferring emergency calls in a timely manner. During its ten-year operation, the BEC has developed and improved its address identification for wireline calls, as well as its capability to receive wireless data and estimate the location of callers using cell phones.

Most of the audit's 16 observations and recommendations deal with management and rulemaking matters. In part, the audit concludes the Legislature may wish to review whether laws need updating in light of new technologies. Three of the observations are addressed to outside entities.

### **Improve Contract Procurement Practices**

We found the BEC's overall handling of its contracts for telephone network services and its telephone number and street address database improper in some instances and poorly managed in others. A \$1 million per year network and database contract extension was not submitted for required Governor and Council approval. This is not a new issue; it was brought to management's attention in our 2003 financial audit. We note part of the problem facing BEC management and the E-911 Commission has been insufficient cooperation and responsiveness by the vendor. By not entering into a five-year contract with its vendor, the BEC has paid more for network services under month-to-month pricing and a new fully equipped PSAP in Laconia has remained unused since the end of 2002, while equipment at the Concord PSAP goes unrepaired.

### **Improve Management Of Surcharge**

We identify several areas where the BEC can improve its handling of surcharge payments, some of which would require Legislative changes. Currently, the Bureau does not have administrative rules requiring a standardized reporting format for monthly surcharge payments. In addition, the Bureau is not consistently tracking payments from wireless and wireline companies, thereby inaccurately reporting payments. Statutorily, the Bureau is unable to set and collect a surcharge

on users of new communication technologies, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), accessing the E-911 system. We also determined the BEC cannot collect additional fees from companies making late payments without the Legislature granting this authority.

### **Develop And Implement Reimbursement Rules**

We found the BEC faces potentially significant financial liability with implementing cost recovery for wireless companies. While this requirement has been in place since 1997, very little was done to implement it until 2004.

### **Improve Reporting**

We found the BEC's required annual reporting could be improved. Only three reports have been produced during the past six years. In addition, the reports contained information the E-911 Commission determined confidential. In addition, the Bureau could better distribute and identify its progress for mapping communities to aid in locating callers. The Bureau has fully mapped individual addresses for 35 percent of the State's communities, while other communities are in various stages of data collection.