

ORAL TESTIMONY OF RICE COUNTY
BEFORE THE
SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE
SENATOR TY MASTERSON, CHAIR
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13th, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Rice County, in support of House Bill 2084 amending the current Kansas 911 Act. Since implementation of the 911 Coordinating Council’s hosted solution it has proven to be an effective and efficient system for today. Rice County is a proponent of this bill. However, on February 26th HB 2084 was amended from the floor; this hand-written amendment reducing the fee from \$1.03 to .82 cents has detrimental impact on the citizens and emergency responders of Rice County. Therefore, Rice County does not support the amended fee amount.

Fee Increase

Rice County 911 Emergency Communications Center transitioned to the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council’s hosted Next Generation 911 (NG911) solution in December of 2016. The current funding mechanism is not sufficient to provide adequate funding for the Citizens of Rice County. Previously Rice County was able to utilize the Wireless Advisory Board Grants to fund our 911 call handling equipment. The cost of the NG911 call handling system must now come from our existing 911 funds.

One of the major changes proposed in the original bill was an increase of the 9-1-1 user fee from the current \$.60 per device to \$1.03. Of this increase, \$.19 from every device fee remitted with a billing address in Rice County, would come directly to the Rice County Emergency Communications Center. This fee provides fiscal support of 9-1-1 operation equipment, \$.01 would go to a statewide grant fund, and the remaining \$.23 would support the statewide, Next Generation 9-1-1 system. While this may seem to be a large percent increase, it is significantly less than the data overage fees incurred by my two daughters. The fee increase is \$.43 per month or \$5.16 per year. This seems a small price to ensure that every 9-1-1 Center maximizes the protection of life and property for every Kansan.

Rice County has recently invested 2.5 million dollars to replacing our County’s antiquated radio system infrastructure. This is a critical component of providing 911 service by dispatching emergency responders, which ultimately helps the citizens of Kansas. Funding of this radio infrastructure project will have included the utilization 75% of Rice County’s existing 911 funds. That dollar amount is \$167,900.00 which required fiscally responsible budgeting for over 10 years and is 6% of the project total. Any funding short fall could require an increase to local property tax. However, a 911 fee increase is fair and equitable to all users; because typically individuals will call 911 at least twice in their lifetime. Rice County supports the proposed .43 cent fee increase for delivery of 911 service. Which is less than recommended in the 2018 Legislative Post Audit.

	<i>Current Funding .60 cents</i>	<i>HB 2084 Amended at .82</i>	<i>HB 2084 as Proposed at \$ 1.03</i>
Rice Co Annual 911 Revenue	73,000.00	70,560.00	97,324.00
Rice Co Annual NG911 Equipment Lease	36,600.00	36,600.00	36,600.00
Rice Co Annual NG911 Connectivity Costs	7,536.96	7,536.96	7,536.96
Rice Co Annual Infrastructure Fiber Connectivity Costs	28,668.00	28,668.00	28,668.00
Rice Co Annual Infrastructure Tower Lease	8,450.00	8,450.00	8,450.00
Rice Co Funding Short Fall / Sustainment	8,254.96	10,694.96	16,069.00

The funding short fall or sustainment figures above do not account for all the 911 expenditures in Rice County. (e.g. Training Expenses, Radio Infrastructure Repairs, or other allowable expenses) and reflects the detrimental impact of HB 2084 as passed by the House on February 26th, 2019.

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Additionally, Rice County does not receive any equal distribution funds now nor would we receive any under HB 2084. Due to this fact Rice County has concerns with the grant fund. Because of the House amendment another unintentional consequence was created. Resulting in PSAPs that receive equitable funding truly are not contributing to the newly created grant fund. The LCPA is collecting their \$.01 cent when remitted by the telecommunications providers. Then the LCPA distributes the remitted fees back to the local jurisdiction along with their minimum funding payment. According to the bill "There shall be a minimum county distribution of \$60,00.00 and no county shall receive less than \$60,000.00 of direct distribution moneys." This unintentional consequence means that the counties who receive more than \$60,000.00 and those counties who receive less than 100% of their local funding are subsidizing the grant fund.

GIS Data

Rice County receives 78.9 % of our 911 calls via wireless devices and seconds are critical when trying to locate citizens. All too often 911 calls are routed inappropriately because cellular calls are routed based on of which tower the call "hits" off of

and/or which tower face. As Kansas migrates to NG911, calls will be sent to the appropriate 911 center via geospatial call routing. Geospatial call routing is based off of the caller's cellular device, rather than a tower location.

The ongoing GIS data and maintenance are critical to geospatially 911 call routing. Due to the size of Rice County we don't have a GIS department, so we are currently expending existing 911 funds to maintain this critical component of NG911. Rice County currently contracts with one of the several GIS vendors recommend by the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council. This ongoing maintenance has added a fiscal component to 911 centers that did not use to exist. We look forward to deploying geospatial call routing when provided by the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council. Rice County supports the proposed changes in House Bill 2084, these changes allow the development of rules and regulations which are key to successfully locating citizens and saving lives.

Thank you for this opportunity,

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