

Vonage Claims 'Breakneck' 911 Progress

In tracking its nationwide progress to meet the **Federal Communications Commission** order that Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service providers handle 911 emergency services, **Vonage** says, as of yesterday, it's turned up enhanced 911 services in more than 1,900 official public-safety answering points (PSAPs) that field the public's emergency calls.

Vonage Marketing, a subsidiary of **Vonage Holdings**, says its current U.S. figure includes recently added 911 calling capabilities in 41 PSAP call centers in 25 new counties during a one-week period, reflecting the industry's rush to comply with the FCC order that went into effect Nov. 28, 2005. Since that time, Vonage says it has coordinated its efforts with PSAPs across the country to turn on E911 for as many customers as it can.

"Vonage continues to work at breakneck pace with the FCC, regulators, Congress and public-safety officials to turn up a national E911 system and will not stop until there is equal access for Vonage customers," said Jeffrey Citron, chairman and CEO, in a prepared statement. One milestone was said to be deploying E911 throughout the entire state of Massachusetts this past November.

There are believed to be more than 8,000 PSAPs in the United States, but many reportedly are underfunded and ill-equipped to handle E911 landline and wireless calls with location-display information or IP-intensive communications.

Vonage, which last year became the poster child for VoIP's E911 shortcomings, has been issuing periodic updates since December 2005 in light of the FCC's edict that gave the business a 120-day deadline to create E911 systems from scratch.

The company also has endorsed a number of initiatives by the public-safety community to upgrade VoIP's 911 capabilities as well as to expedite compliance with the FCC order. This includes support for the new **National Emergency Number Association** (NENA) technical standards for enhanced E911 on VoIP architectures (*TelecomWeb news break*, Dec. 8, 2005) along with an industry recommendation to **Congress** and the FCC that an emergency pseudo Automated Number Identification (pANI) administrator is needed to supervise E911 numbering resources for nomadic phone numbers.

The pANI administrator position (*Telecom Policy Report*, Dec. 5, 2005, p. 1) was crafted by NENA, the **North American Numbering Council**, the **Emergency Service Interconnection Forum** and the **Alliance of Telecommunications Industry Solutions**.

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