

The Call Must Go Through—Improving Wireless Communications For The Nation's Public Safety Community



(NAPSA)—The nation faces an increasingly dangerous situation—law enforcement officers and fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel who cannot talk with one another via radio. This inability to communicate has often left public safety personnel without the support needed to apprehend a dangerous suspect, rescue an injured person, or fight a fire. One of public safety's most vital tools is an effective radio communications system.

A new report card released by the Public Safety Wireless Network (PSWN) Program shows that many states across the country are taking significant steps to improve wireless communications among public safety agencies in emergency situations.

"This nationwide report card, which is the first of its kind, provides the first assessment of the nation's progress in improving wireless communications among public safety officials," said Rick Murphy, PSWN Program Manager. "The ability for fire, EMS,

and law enforcement personnel to communicate when needed means that no man, woman, or child will lose his or her life because public safety officials cannot talk to one another."

The PSWN Program, an initiative jointly sponsored by the Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury, works with the public safety community at all levels of government to improve interoperability. Interoperability refers to the ability of public safety personnel from one agency to communicate via radio with personnel from other agencies, on demand and in real time.

Using data collected from key public safety personnel at the state level, the report card assessed each state's interoperability status in six key areas: (1) shared systems development, (2) coordination and partnerships, (3) funding, (4) spectrum, (5) standards and technology, and (6) security. These six areas were charted individually for each state and then combined to form a composite

state interoperability score, falling into one of four levels: mature, established, developing, and new.

"The results show that Delaware and Michigan are leading the charge nationally, while other states are just getting started," said Murphy. "The PSWN Program will now take the study's findings and work with states to develop technical approaches and policy-oriented solutions to each state's interoperability challenges."

The PSWN Program brings together officials from all levels of government and the public safety community to increase wireless interoperability among the nation's fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical service departments. The program conducts pilot projects and symposiums nationwide, and provides the public safety community with comprehensive information on wireless interoperability through its Web site and information clearinghouse. For more information, visit the PSWN Program Web site at www.pswn.gov.