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OVER 93 PERCENT OF STATE'S POPULATION IS PHASE II E-911 CAPABLE

LINCOLN – More than 93 percent of Nebraska's population has the highest level possible of E-911 location technology available in their area, the Nebraska Public Service Commission has announced.

The Nebraska Telecommunications Infrastructure and Public Safety Department reported to the Public Service Commission that 93.5 percent of the state's population now is Phase II capable with at least one carrier in summoning emergency services by wireless telephones. The Nebraska E-911 Advisory Board had previously established a goal of having 90 percent of Nebraska Phase II capable by January of 2009.

Phase II permits 911 call centers to receive the caller's wireless telephone number as well as the specific location of the caller by latitude and longitude. Phase II is now available in 73 of Nebraska's 93 counties, which provides coverage for 93.5 percent of the state's population.

Four more counties – Frontier, Jefferson, Kearney, and Nemaha – are expected to implement Phase II sometime in the first two months of 2009. In addition, four counties – Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha, and Rock – are finalizing plans to share equipment to allow them to move to Phase II capability.

Eight counties – Dundy, Franklin, Garden, Hayes, Hitchcock, Morrill, Richardson, and Webster – have basic 911 service, however, six of those counties are taking steps to achieve the level of enhanced 911 service. Four additional counties – Box Butte, Gage, Sheridan, and Wayne – have achieved the level of Phase I capability, the report said. Phase I means counties can receive the wireless telephone numbers of callers, but can trace the location only to the cellular tower that transmitted the initial signal.

On June 30, 2007, just 12 Nebraska counties were Phase II capable. Eighteen months later, the list has grown by 61 counties, representing significant movement in one and one-half years, the report said.

The E-911 system was mandated by the Nebraska Legislature. It is administered by the Public Service Commission which provides funding for allowable costs through a 50-cent monthly surcharge on all wireless customers with Nebraska billing addresses.

All wireless customers in the state, including those traveling in Nebraska from other states, benefit from the network.

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