



Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT: Ruth Miller, ruthmiller@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Celebrates National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and Highlights Life-saving Investments in Next Generation 911

*A central PA call to 911 in February highlighted the real-world impact and value of
NG911 technology*

*In 2025, Gov. Shapiro signed legislation to extend funding for the Commonwealth's 911
program through early 2029.*

Selinsgrove, PA – Today the **Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)** highlighted the **Shapiro Administration's** life-saving investments in Next Generation 911 (NG911) and is celebrating [National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week](#), which is April 12 – 18, 2026.

“Our 911 system is the foundation of emergency response, from answering calls to dispatching police, fire and emergency medical services to help those who need it,” said **PEMA Director Randy Padfield**. “The Shapiro Administration has prioritized intentional investments in both the technology and the people.”

Pennsylvania's [NG911](#) system is designed to support regional interoperability among counties and ensure that all individuals who contact 911 for help receive the same standards of service and care regardless of which county Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) – commonly called 911 center – answers the call.

In late February, the Mifflin County 911 center experienced a surge in emergency calls. To ensure callers reach a 911 telecommunicator quickly, calls are automatically routed to an overflow queue shared by multiple PSAPs during times of high call volume. One call was answered by staff at the East Central Emergency Network (ECEN), the consolidated PSAP serving [Columbia](#) and [Montour](#) counties.

Meanwhile, a dispatcher with Central Susquehanna Regional ([CSR](#)) 911, which serves Snyder, Union, and upper Northumberland counties, noticed on the shared computer-aided dispatch system that ECEN dispatch was experiencing a delay in reaching Mifflin County 911. Following established protocols, the CSR dispatcher contacted Mifflin County directly to provide rapid assistance to the caller. The event highlighted the

partnership and interoperability among Pennsylvania PSAPs to support the public in emergency situations.

“I’m proud of how our team and regional partners worked together to ensure this call was handled quickly and effectively,” said **Josh Pennepacker, 911 Manager at Mifflin County Office of Public Safety**. “This incident not only demonstrates the strength of Pennsylvania’s Next Generation 911 System but also shows the dedication and teamwork of the 911 Professionals across three different counties to ensure that every call for help is answered when it matters most. The success of the North Central Region phone system would not be possible without the continued support from our state and local partners.”

"This incident is one of many that highlights the ongoing technology-sharing efforts among North Central PSAPs over the past decade. Through the consolidation of 911 centers and the integration of regional phone systems, CAD, radio communications, and logging recorders, we continue to advance collaborative solutions that enhance interoperability, strengthen regional resilience, and support our ability to address staffing shortages while managing daily operational demands and workflows,” said **Chad Aucker, CSR Technical Services Director and [PA APCO](#) President**. "This level of progress would not be possible without the continued support of our local and state government partners, as well as our industry partners, Pennsylvania Chapter of [APCO International](#) and [Pennsylvania National Emergency Number Association](#). Their advocacy for critical funding and commitment to advancing public safety communications play a vital role in making initiatives like these both achievable and sustainable."

“The East Central Emergency Network is grateful for the opportunity to assist with this incident,” said **ECEN Director Jeremy Brown**. “This collaborative effort was made possible through the dedication and commitment of the North Central PSAPs and their stakeholders to engage in shared services.”

In 2025, Gov. Shapiro signed legislation to extend funding for the Commonwealth’s 911 program through early 2029. Fees collected through monthly phone bills help cover county costs associated with 911 services, including personnel, technology, training, facilities as well as ongoing technological advancements and operations of the statewide NG911 system.

Since 2015, the surcharge has been essential in supporting support the planning, coordination, testing, and implementation of NG911 service across the Commonwealth. The NG911 infrastructure prepares individual county PSAPs to provide many of the services that callers have come expect, such as Text-to-911 and the routing of emergency calls to the appropriate 911 center.

In April 2025 the initial phase of the NG911 project was completed when all 61 PSAPs were connected to the system. This phase modernized the infrastructure that delivers emergency calls to PSAPs across Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is one of only 13 states that operates fewer PSAPs than there are counties. This consolidated approach allows 911 services to be delivered in an efficient and cost-effective manner, through the sharing of technology and resources across jurisdictional boundaries.

[National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week](#) is celebrated every year during the second week of April to honor and recognize the thousands of professionals who answer calls for help and direct emergency responders to those in need.

“Telecommunicators serve as the steady, professional presence for individuals during their most critical moments. Far from being automated, these individuals bring profound empathy and compassion to every call,” said **ECEN Day Shift Lead Phil Yoder**. “They are tasked with meeting rigorous [NENA](#) standards—capturing vital information within 90 seconds and coordinating dispatch while expertly managing high-stress situations. It requires a unique set of skills and a deep commitment to public service to excel in this demanding role.”

In Pennsylvania, telecommunicators process approximately 14 million calls for assistance every year. In a 2025 statewide survey, counties reported that on average, one in five telecommunicator positions was vacant.

As the NG911 system continues to develop in Pennsylvania, this an excellent time to explore a fulfilling career as a 911 telecommunicator in your county. These critical positions typically offer competitive benefits, opportunities for advancement, and a rewarding career serving your local community. All the required training is provided at no cost to the applicant. Anyone interested can learn more about working for 911 on the [PEMA website](#).

###