



Historically public safety has been slow to adapt to new technologies. For example, there was a 20+ year time gap between basic 9-1-1 (9-1-1) and enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1), not to mention the implementation of wireless technology and now NG9-1-1. Why does public safety respond slowly to technological changes? Technology is evaded for multiple reasons: it's untested, it's expensive, there are other high-priority problems (understaffed anyone?), or the benefits of the technology are not fully appreciated or understood. The primary reason why NG9-1-1 has been slowly embraced is cost. According to NENA, the estimated cost to implement Wireless Phase II technology was \$8 billion.¹ In contrast, according to a study completed by the National 9-1-1 Office, the estimated NG9-1-1 lifecycle cost (including equipment refresh costs and ongoing operational costs) will be \$13.5-\$16 billion, and the cost estimate for NG9-1-1 deployment is \$9.5-\$12.7 billion.² Although the cost and the technology as a whole can be intimidating, it is time for public safety telecommunicators to step out of our comfort zones and welcome and embrace NG9-1-1.

We hear the term NG9-1-1 repeatedly in our industry, but what does it really mean? NG9-1-1 is used to mean a variety of different things. The real meaning behind the use of NG9-1-1 is bringing public safety technology up to date. Right now, this is most evident with the slow implementation of text-to-911. However, "the primary goal of NG9-1-1 is to save lives, health, and property by improving emergency services access and response in the United States,"³ according to the Industry Council for Emergency Response Technologies. The council goes on to say that NG9-1-1 accomplishes these goals because it can:

- Enable E9-1-1 calls from any networked communication device.
- Enable geographic-independent call access, transfer, and backup among and between ECCs and other authorized emergency organizations.
- Encourage a flexible, open, non-proprietary and secure architecture to facilitate the implementation of an interoperable internetwork (system of systems).
- Foster increased coordination and partnerships within the public safety community.
- Encourage standards coordination and interoperability across the United States and with other emergency services network providers within North America (Canada and Mexico), recognizing the global impacts of routing emergency calls in an IP environment.
- Maximize emergency services capital, operating and maintenance cost savings.

This will mean having an internet-protocol based phone system, a computer-aided

NG9-1-1 should be welcomed and embraced not only because it is the next inevitable phase in our profession, but also to ensure that 9-1-1 will not once again become antiquated and stagnant.