



METRO COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY RECEIVES \$369,000

Metro Communications Agency is one of ten public safety answering points in the state to receive funds through a \$910,000 federal grant awarded to South Dakota for the upgrade of 911 emergency communications services.

Metro Communications Director Daren Ketcham says “The grant funds will be used to upgrade the agency’s telephone system. This is the first step in preparing for NG911.” The new system is called the “Next Generation 911 (NG911)” and will eventually allow individuals to contact 911 through text messaging, along with other enhancements.

Metro Communications Agency’s current phone system is Phase-Two compliant and was installed in 2004. According to Ketcham, the agency plans to upgrade to NG911 in 2011. Total cost of the upgrade is estimated to \$965,000. The local share of the project costs will be funded with 911 surcharge revenue, along with city and county support.

Governor Mike Rounds was quoted in an October 5, 2009 press release saying “The transition to next-generation emergency response systems is important to continued public safety in South Dakota. These funds will allow the upgrade of hardware and software to meet enhanced 911 needs as they develop. The upgrades will result in a much safer and more responsive network of emergency communications.

The South Dakota 911 Coordination Board applied for the grant and notice of approval came from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.