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National Emergency
Number Association



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Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act (S.800) is Signed Into Law— 9-1-1 is Now The Universal Emergency Phone Number

Columbus, Ohio (October 26, 1999)—Today, President Clinton signed Senate Bill 800 (S.800), officially making 9-1-1 the universal emergency number for America. Previously, the U.S. House of Representatives passed S.800 in a 424 to two vote, with the support of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and other public safety organizations. The Law, known as the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999, is now final.

“The Law is important for Public Safety officials because it recognizes 9-1-1 as **the** universal emergency telephone number in the United States. This designation applies to both wireline/land line and wireless telephone services. The new law is considered a building block for an eventual end-to-end emergency response system in America,” said William H. Hinkle, NENA’s President.

“The Law should spur the implementation of location technology for 9-1-1 calls as well,” Hinkle said. “The Law provides wireless users, operators and telephone companies the same protection from liability that is currently enjoyed by wireline telephone companies,” noted William H. Hinkle, president of NENA. “This protection will now allow wireless carriers to move forward in providing critical life saving technology for the benefit of the American public. We applaud the President’s signing of this Bill.”

“NENA also is grateful to the members of congress, especially Senator Conrad Burns, Representatives Tom Bliley, Billy Tauzin, John Dingell, Ed Markey, John Shimkus and Speaker Hastert, and Senators John McCain, Byron Dorgan, Majority Leader Lott and Assistant Majority Leader Nickles, who had the foresight to extend the benefits of 9-1-1 services to America’s wireless users,” Hinkle concluded.

The S.800 legislation is available in PDF format on the NENA web page at www.nena.org.

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The National Emergency Number Association, a not-for-profit corporation, was founded in 1982 as a result of the first three national 9-1-1 meetings and to further the goal of "One Nation, One Number." NENA has experienced tremendous growth within a short time. Its membership tops 6,700 and continues to climb with new chapters joining its present 45-chapter network.

NENA's Mission is to foster the technological advancement, availability and implementation of a universal emergency telephone number system. In carrying out its mission, NENA promotes research, planning, training and education. The protection of human life, the preservation of property, and the maintenance of general community security are among NENA's objectives.