



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 14, 2005

CONTACT: Patrick Halley
(202) 466-4911, media@nena.org

NENA Supports Working Draft of DTV Transition Bill
Applauds Leadership of Chairman Stevens and Ranking Member Inouye

Washington, DC – NENA President David Jones, ENP, sent a letter today to Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-AK) and Ranking Member Daniel Inouye (D-HI) praising their leadership and support of federal funding for 9-1-1. In the letter Jones stated that, “NENA fully supports the October 13th staff working draft of the Digital Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005. We are particularly pleased with the inclusion of Section 5 of the draft which establishes the ‘Digital Transition and Public Safety Fund’ in the US Treasury and states that the Secretary of Commerce or the Secretary's designee shall make payments from the Fund for a program to implement the ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004.”

While most areas in the United States have basic 9-1-1 service, there are still many communities operating without it. Over 350 counties still do not have enhanced 9-1-1 (automatic location information and a call back number) for their landline telephone service. Additionally, only fifty percent of the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), covering under sixty-five percent of the population in the United States, have the necessary technology to locate wireless 9-1-1 callers. A major reason for these limitations is simply due to a lack of funding.

NENA also appreciate the needs of America’s first responders who rely on interoperable radio communications to effectively do their job. Lack of available spectrum for public safety is an increasingly important issue as highlighted once again by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Jones said, “We understand and support the requests of groups such as the Alliance in Support of America’s First Responders who have advocated the need for a hard date to clear the 700MHz spectrum already allocated for public safety as early as the end of 2006.”

In addition to the praise of Chairman Stevens and Ranking Member Inouye, NENA is grateful for the continued leadership and support provided by Commerce Committee Member and E9-1-1 Caucus Co-chair, Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT). Thanks to their leadership, the actions being taken in this legislation will have a dramatic impact on the continued success and sustainability of our nation’s 9-1-1 system.

A copy of the NENA’s letter, as well as the draft legislation, is available on the NENA Government Affairs web site at www.nena.org/govtaffairs

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About NENA

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. With more than 7,000 members in 46 chapters across the U.S. and Canada, NENA serves as "The Voice of 9-1-1" through policy advocacy, the establishment of national standards, certification and testing programs, and a wide variety of educational offerings. For more information, visit www.nena.org.