

# STRATEGIC PLAN



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## **Core Values and Beliefs**

### **Mission Statement**

The Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority is committed to supporting 9-1-1 Emergency Communications throughout Larimer County. We will assume a leadership role by identifying current and future 9-1-1 communication system needs and establishing sustainable equipment standards. To support these standards, we will collect, responsibly manage, and distribute telephone surcharges collected by the Authority.

### **Vision Statement**

The Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority strives to provide high levels of 9-1-1 service through technical excellence, leadership, and open collaborative communication to maintain a unified approach to future 9-1-1 needs.

### **Values**

Our Values;

We achieve our mission through;

- Integrity
- Fairness & Equity
- Personal Responsibility
- Teamwork
- Planning & Problem solving
- Accountability

### **Integrity**

Our position in the community relies greatly on respect and confidence of the public. The integrity of each individual as well as each vendor we partner with relates to this value. Without this trust, we cannot expect to form a partnership with the community.

### **Fairness and Equity**

We are committed in providing consistent and reliable Enhanced 9-1-1 services throughout Larimer County.

### **Personal Responsibility**

Each of us has personal responsibility. We respect and encourage individual responsibility and talent, while recognizing members have a right and an obligation to represent their respective discipline and agency. It is essential for each Board member to work together and that personal and department agendas are not present in Board decisions.

### **Teamwork**

Teamwork is essential to the successful operation of the LETA Board. The team must include all agencies represented and the appropriate personnel within those agencies. The team-members must all work in partnership with each other and the community to complete our mission.

### **Planning and Problem Solving**

In developing plans, goals, and a vision, we must anticipate problems and opportunities, and seek to deal with them in innovated and cost effective ways. The process must involve feedback and participation from all levels of each organization represented and the community.

### **Accountability**

As the Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority, we hold the responsibility to make well-informed decisions for delivering Enhanced 9-1-1 service throughout Larimer County and are accountable to the citizens of Larimer County.

## **Historical Review**

**1981** – The Colorado Legislature authorized the creation of emergency telephone authorities. The legislation allowed for governing bodies in Colorado to join through intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to provide emergency telephone services.

**1990** – November 14<sup>th</sup>, the cities, towns, county, fire and hospital districts in Larimer County signed an IGA forming the Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority (LETA). It was decided in discussions between the County Administrator, Town Managers, Fire Chiefs, and EMS Chief/ Director that the LETA Board should consist of equal representation of the government partners. Leadership at the time decided that the County should have one seat on the Board, and each City should have one seat. The towns would share two seats, the fire district would share one seat, and the hospital district would share one seat. This equated to a 7-member board representing all government partners. The LETA Board set their surcharge at \$.50.

**1990-1995** – LETA created their first MSAG, established call routing decisions, and ESN boundaries. During the meeting's it was decided to route 911 calls based on Fire/EMS boundaries vs. Law boundaries. Routing 911 calls based on law boundaries is standard across the nation. In speaking with individuals involved in this decision the historical facts reveal that the decision was made based on staffing levels between Larimer County and Fort Collins. At the time, Fort Collins had a higher staffing level and it was perceived they would be able to handle the 911 call volume. The LETA Board lowered their surcharge to \$.45.

During this time, LETA hired their first contract employees, an Administrative Assistant – Debbie Tellez, and a Master Street Address Guide Technician – Lorie Digliani.

**1995**- LETA went live with an Enhanced 911 System.

**1995**- LETA decided to move the accounting, budget, and attorney advisement from the County to being managed directly by LETA. LETA hired Attorney John Frey.

**1998** – LETA hired two additional contract employees, Willy Geyer and Ron Anderson to maintain Call Boxes.

**1999** - LETA revised the IGA to amend the powers of the Authority, and their operational procedures with regard to budget and funding. The amendment also added Windsor/ Severance Fire District and Colorado State University as a signatory to the IGA.

**2001**- LETA hired Jennifer Anderson as a contract employee to oversee the EMD program.

**2002** - LETA revised the IGA to include the Towns of Windsor and Johnstown as signatories to the IGA. LETA decides to terminate the contract with the call box technicians and to contract with Tellez Corporation separately for these services.

**2002-2005** – LETA contracts with Compass Com to create a county- wide 911 centerline for the routing of Phase II Wireless calls. LETA terminates the position of EMD coordinator.

**2005** – LETA moves the GIS contract from Compass Com to the City of Fort Collins.

**2006** - LETA hires an Executive Director to oversee the operation. LETA eliminated the contract position for managing the MSAG. LETA establishes office space at the Loveland Police Department. LETA joined with three other 911 Authorities for a joint lawsuit against Qwest. The lawsuit claimed billing was incorrect for the 911 tariffed lines. LETA also started the replacement process for the voice logging records at each PSAP. This project was complete in 2007.

**2007** - LETA eliminated the Administrative Assistant contract employee position. Qwest settled the lawsuit and LETA received credit on their networking charges for \$226,811.00.

The 911 Task Force worked with Qwest on the rewrite of the tariff. From the rewrite, LETA saved 30% on their monthly bill with Qwest.

**2008** - LETA moves their office to Fort Collins at a location that supports temporary office staff through office evolution. This allowed LETA to have one full time employee and then access to administrative support as needed through office evolutions.

LETA worked with the Task Force on legislation to capture prepaid and VOIP surcharge on phone line. The measure passed with VOIP phones required to remit the 91-1- surcharge.

LETA released an RFP for a new emergency notification system. The process ended with LETA collaborating with Everbridge for these services. This project ran from April – August of 2008.

**2009- 2010** - Office Evolutions leaves 1200 S. College Ave.

LETA worked with the 911 Task Force on legislation to capture the 911 surcharge on prepaid wireless phones and phone cards. The legislation was adopted in 2010.

LETA applied for the Federal 911 Act Grant and was one of four Counties to be awarded a Grant for their Next Gen 911 Project. LETA received, in December of 2011, \$197,500 in grant funds.

## **LETA Today**

**Employees/Contracts** - LETA's staff remains at one full time employee.

LETA has the following contract staff in place;

John Frey – Attorney

Lee Novotny with Stream speed – Call Box maintenance

City of Fort Collins - 911 Centerline File / County wide GIS

**Office Space** - LETA moved their office space to 380 N. Wilson in Loveland. This facility will provide LETA with five flexible and configurable rooms to support their operation.

**Responsibilities / Duties** - To our government partners; LETA provides project management, ongoing support, maintenance, funding, and oversight to the following programs and equipment;

Coplink, GIS, Everbridge, Pictometry, 911 Phone System, 911 Trunks, ALI – circuit, MSAG, Metro Optic Ethernet, Voice Logging Recorder, Call Boxes, EMD and dispatcher training.

LETA is also actively involved in the State 911 Task force, and National 911 issues.

One of the most public programs LETA supports is the Emergency Medical Dispatch Program (EMD). The EMD program is 100% funded by LETA. LETA provides the initial CPR and CPR refresher courses, initial EMD and refresher EMD courses, ongoing continuing education curriculum and oversight to the quality assurance program.

Historically LETA has provided funding for projects but it was not until 2007 that LETA embarked on project management oversight for each of the projects that LETA funds.

Today, LETA is project managing four separate projects that reach out to each of the five 911 centers which equates to 20 separate project maps, resource tracking/allocation, and internal governance issues. Those projects are;

microDATA

Metro Optic Ethernet

911 CAMA trunks and Circuits

Voice Logging Replacement

**Financial Status** - LETA's surcharge is \$.45 per line per month. The surcharge is set annually and is established by the LETA Board.

**2012 Projects** - LETA will be completing the following projects that will cost LETA roughly \$2.5 million dollars in 2012;

Metro Optic Ethernet: private Ethernet dedicated to the 911-phone system in Larimer County. The Ethernet will provide redundancy and diverse routing of 911 calls and allow the five 911 centers to work as one unit in the call handling of emergency calls. **Project complete 1/9/12.**

Replacement of the 911-phone system in all five of the 911 centers. The replacement positions the LETA 911 centers to be next generation 911 compliant with NENA's i3 standards. The installation of the phone system allows the 911 centers to communicate to each other and create a new level of interoperability in call handling. **Project projected to be complete 4/2012.**

Replacement of the voice logging recorders. The voice logging recorders are used to record all radio and phone audio that occurs in the 911 center. The replacement project will begin with the release of a request for proposal on February 1<sup>st</sup> with the project aiming to be complete by **August of 2012.**

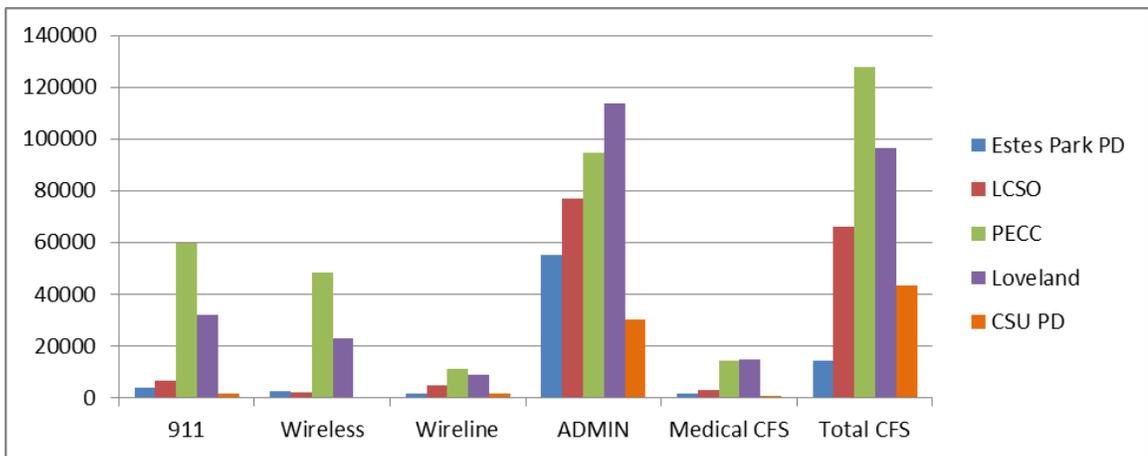
## Population

Larimer County’s population in 1990 was 186,136. The estimated population for Larimer County in 2012 is just over 311,000 residents all needing access to the 911 system. In addition to the full time residents in Larimer County, the 911 system supports over 3 million tourists and an estimated 30,000 students at CSU.

Our current population challenges are unique to our county as we serve a high student and high tourist population as well as rural farmland, border communities, and mountain towns.

In reviewing the 2011 call statistics for our five 911 centers, Estes Park, Loveland and Fort Collins received more wireless 911 calls than wireline. Fort Collins received four times as many wireless calls than wire line calls, which is higher than the national trend. Our 911 system processed a total of 103,462 911 calls and we handled 33,666 medical calls.

Agency	911 Wireless	Wireline	ADMIN	Medical CFS	Total CFS	
Estes Park PD	4,051	2,431	1,620	54,958	1,580	14,169
LCSO	6,537	1,931	4,596	76,733	2,706	65,963
PECC	59,535	48,451	11,084	94,871	14,433	127,805
Loveland	31,996	22,937	9,059	113,765	14,666	96,417
CSU PD	1,343		1,343	30,020	281	43,532



## **Financial Outlook**

Historically LETA has never raised the surcharge. This does not mean that LETA was over charging our citizens during the years that products cost less than they do today.

The following are factors that contribute to LETA's ability to keep our surcharge at \$.45. LETA's surcharge is the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in the State with our neighboring Counties of Weld at \$1.12 and Boulder \$.70.

1. The first factor was the litigation with Qwest that occurred in 2007/2008. The settlement allowed LETA to save \$226,881.00 on our networking fees, which equaled 15 months of credit on our networking bill with Qwest.
2. The tariff rewrite reduced our monthly expenses for networking costs to Qwest by 30%.
3. In 2006 and 2007, LETA eliminated contract positions and consolidated the duties to the Executive Director's office.
4. In 2006, LETA adopted the financial philosophy to challenge and question all monthly expenses. LETA completed audits on every invoice and found thousands of dollars owed in refunds for overcharges (over \$74,000 was refunded or credited back to LETA).
5. Planning and preparation. LETA has done a great job planning for capital replacements and preparing for projects that are on the horizon. This has allowed for LETA to budget years in advance for projects that are significant. The Next Generation account was created in 2009 in preparation of the phone system replacement project. We saved and planned for this project from 2009 – 2011 allowing LETA to dedicate 2 million dollars for this project that will enhance our infrastructure and the handling of 911 calls throughout the County.
6. The legislation in 2008 that LETA actively participated in captured VOIP 911 surcharge revenue. Our collections for VOIP surcharge grew by 125% after this legislation passed.
7. The legislation in 2010 that LETA actively participated in captured Prepaid Wireless surcharge revenue. In 2011, we captured over \$25,000 of surcharge that we would have previously not received. State wide in 2011 they have collected 1.3 million dollars in prepaid wireless surcharge.
8. The LETA Board has been conservative in their interpretation of the 911 statute. LETA has limited the funding for the PSAPs to focus around supporting their phone systems and public safety programs. Other Authorities in our State have expanded their funding philosophy to include paying for personnel in the PSAP,

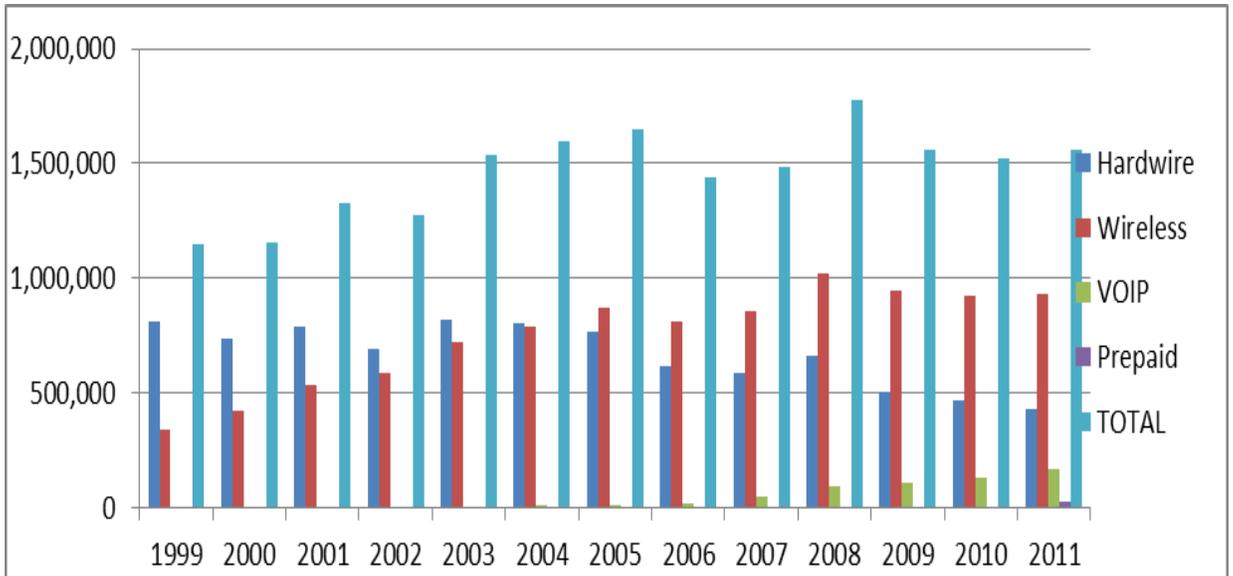
radio systems in the PSAPs and patrol vehicles, and MDT's in the patrol vehicles. With LETA's conservative funding model, LETA qualified to apply for federal grant funding. One of the requirements was to submit an affidavit with supporting budget documents demonstrating funding for 911 phone systems and not public safety operation costs. LETA was one of four Counties that received grant funds for our Next Generation phone system project. The funds were \$197,500 and were received December of 2011.

LETA's budget for 2012 is \$4,054,852.00. We have adequate funding to support our projects for 2012 and our projected projects for 2013.

It is a fact that our surcharge income has decreased over the years based on the number of phone lines our residents have in their homes and the number of wireless lines that are registered to their address. Even with the population growth over the years, the surcharge has slightly decreased.

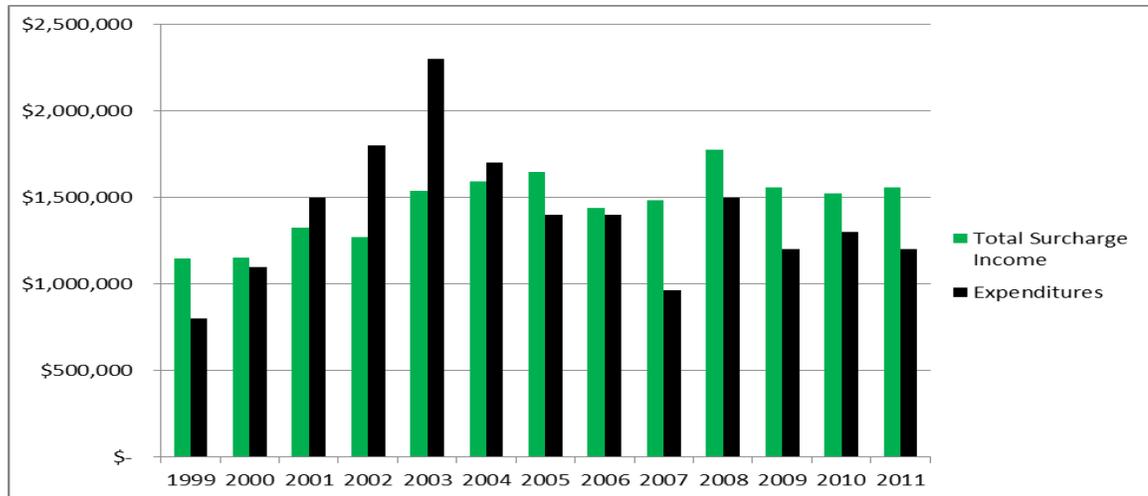
This graph represents the total amount of income received from surcharge. The highest years of surcharge income received were in 2005 with 1.6 million dollars received and in 2008 with 1.7 million dollars received from surcharge revenue.

	<b>Hardwire</b>	<b>Wireless</b>	<b>VOIP</b>	<b>Prepaid</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>1999</b>	\$811,000	\$339,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,150,000
<b>2000</b>	\$733,000	\$422,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,155,000
<b>2001</b>	\$792,000	\$535,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,327,000
<b>2002</b>	\$689,000	\$584,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,273,000
<b>2003</b>	\$817,000	\$724,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,541,000
<b>2004</b>	\$806,000	\$788,000	\$1,200	\$0	\$1,595,200
<b>2005</b>	\$767,000	\$872,000	\$9,000	\$0	\$1,648,000
<b>2006</b>	\$615,000	\$809,000	\$17,000	\$0	\$1,441,000
<b>2007</b>	\$583,000	\$854,000	\$46,000	\$0	\$1,483,000
<b>2008</b>	\$663,000	\$1,024,000	\$90,000	\$0	\$1,777,000
<b>2009</b>	\$503,000	\$947,000	\$111,000	\$0	\$1,561,000
<b>2010</b>	\$470,000	\$924,960	\$131,000	\$0	\$1,525,960
<b>2011</b>	\$430,000	\$933,000	\$169,000	\$25,000	\$1,557,000



This graph represents the total amount of surcharge income received compared to our total amount of annual expenditures.

	<b>Total Surcharge Income</b>		<b>Expenditures</b>	
<b>1999</b>	\$	1,150,000	\$	800,000
<b>2000</b>	\$	1,155,000	\$	1,100,000
<b>2001</b>	\$	1,327,000	\$	1,500,000
<b>2002</b>	\$	1,273,000	\$	1,800,000
<b>2003</b>	\$	1,541,000	\$	2,300,000
<b>2004</b>	\$	1,595,200	\$	1,700,000
<b>2005</b>	\$	1,648,000	\$	1,400,000
<b>2006</b>	\$	1,441,000	\$	1,400,000
<b>2007</b>	\$	1,483,000	\$	964,000
<b>2008</b>	\$	1,777,000	\$	1,500,000
<b>2009</b>	\$	1,561,000	\$	1,200,000
<b>2010</b>	\$	1,525,960	\$	1,300,000
<b>2011</b>	\$	1,557,000	\$	1,200,000



The question with surcharge revenue is how much revenue do we need to sustain our current operation and is there a need to raise the surcharge to sustain our current operation going into the future.

LETA is able to plan for our capital replacement program and we are able to maintain our networking fees, personnel costs, and operation overhead. In addition, LETA is able to support our PSAPs with the costs associated with the handling of 911 calls.

The following are trigger factors that could cause a need for LETA to raise the 911 surcharge.

**1) Change in the business model.**

Currently LETA is conservative in the funding model for the programs, equipment, and overhead that LETA funds for the five 911 centers. If LETA decided to expand this business model, LETA would need to raise the surcharge to support the one time or ongoing funding for new programs and equipment.

**2) Increase in personnel.**

Currently LETA supports one full time employee and several contractual employees (individuals or agencies). If LETA decided to expand their operation and employee additional staff, LETA would need to raise the surcharge.

**3) Diversion of current surcharge.**

If there is a diversion of our current surcharge due to legislative measures, LETA would need to raise the surcharge to offset the amount of funds being diverted.

**4) Increase in Reserve Funds**

Currently LETA requires 1.2 million in reserves to support the LETA operation and our current obligations. If LETA decided to increase their reserve funds, an increase in surcharge may be needed.

**5) Decline in surcharge revenue.**

If LETA continues to experience a decline in our surcharge revenue and is not able to adequately cover costs into the future with the anticipated loss of revenue, LETA will need to raise the surcharge.

<b>Surcharge</b>	<b>Lines - based on 2011 remittance</b>	<b>Estimated Revenue</b>
\$0.45	288,333	\$1,557,000
\$0.50	288,333	\$1,729,998
\$0.55	288,333	\$1,902,997
\$0.60	288,333	\$2,075,997
\$0.65	288,333	\$2,248,997
\$0.70	288,333	\$2,421,997

\*this is estimated, as prepaid wireless surcharge is not included.

## **Strategic Objectives**

### **Immediate (2012)**

The Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority is a unique 911 authority that has been the role model for funding, budgeting, and strategic planning throughout the state. The addition of the new office space at 380 N. Wilson will provide a facility for LETA to host meetings, trainings, and our contract staff as they perform LETA duties. Previously LETA struggled with finding meeting space to support their meetings and trainings that LETA hosts. The new space at 380 N. Wilson provides ample opportunity to centralize LETA's activities.

LETA's budget for 2012 is manageable in this economic time because of several years of conservative spending. LETA began allocating funds for the next generation project in 2009. The expenditures for 2012 will exceed the revenue for 2012 however due to LETA's planning and preparation, LETA's revenue can support this cost intensive project. Overall, LETA is operating smoothly, achieving their long-term goals, and positioning themselves with a robust and "next generation" 911 network.

LETA is currently managing the Metro Optic Ethernet Project as well as the Next Generation microDATA project. These projects reach out to each of our five PSAPs and require significant oversight and involvement.

LETA is planning to release a RFP for a new voice logger to replace each logger that is located at the PSAPs. This project is estimated to be complete in August of 2012.

LETA will work with the Communication Managers to evaluate the need of a backup PSAP to be located at 380 N. Wilson Ave, Loveland.

LETA needs to be engaged with the 911 Task Force and any sub groups that emerge from the discussion on the creation of a State 911 Authority or State 911 Next Generation Network. The potential for this to create a financial hardship on LETA is significant and the governance along with the funding needs to be carefully considered as these discussion and decisions unfold.

### **Short Term (2013)**

A short-term issue is the amount of activities that require LETA's direct attention. The involvement of LETA staff on countywide projects is creating a scenario that some of LETA's programs are not receiving the time needed to be successful.

Public education is a program that historically LETA has invested funds and time to support. This program included the making of educational DVD's, creation of educational pamphlets, creation of coloring books, and attendance at various public safety fairs. LETA has the tools to allow elementary aged children to practice calling 911 on our education simulators, we have participated in speaking with special groups (boy scouts, disabled adults, citizen academies), and we supply our government partners with training and materials that is specific to 911 in Larimer County.

In speaking with the Communications Managers, one area that they would like to see LETA play a more central role in is with training of their dispatchers. This training would focus on topics that are specific to LETA, which would include;

- Everbridge
- MSAG
- Call routing; wireless phase I, wireless phase II
- Next Gen 911
- GIS / Mapping
- microDATA CPE equipment
- Pictometry
- EMD / EMD continuing education

In the short term, LETA needs to make a decision as to their support and investment in the education program as the current work demand and staff cannot support the public education program or internal training for our dispatch centers without a modification in other areas. Staff recommendation is to hire an Administrative Assistant/ Education Coordinator in 2013.

**Long Term (2014-2015)**

Long Term LETA needs to continue to be involved with the 911 Task Force to ensure LETA's voice is heard in all statewide endeavors.

LETA should continue involvement in National NENA from a technology and regulatory perspective.

LETA should consider contract staff vs. employees and review the potential of bringing the contract staff internal for greater control and optimization of the workload.

## **LETA's SWOT**

### **Strengths**

LETA's strengths are in the conservative funding model that LETA has historically used to support the five PSAPs in Larimer County as well as their daily business decisions.

LETA has strong controls on the equipment that is funded for the PSAPS and has established a competitive process that allow for solid solutions and successful project implementations.

LETA has historically attempted to collect revenue and challenge expenses prior to raising the surcharge. This business model has allowed LETA to capture lost revenue from VOIP and Prepaid as well as to capture revenue from litigation.

LETA has engaged Board members, engaged Comm. Mangers, and good partnerships throughout our County and throughout the State.

### **Weaknesses**

LETA's weakness is the lack of control over the PSAP operation. In order for LETA to complete projects, LETA must compel the PSAPs and their leadership to comply and work cohesively on projects.

### **Opportunities**

LETA is in the process of providing intelligent routing for 911 calls, which is a first in the State. Intelligent routing will allow the system to redirect calls throughout the 911 network as needed based on call volume or call taker availability.

LETA's new 911 network will expand our personnel from the number of employees working a shift at one 911 center to all of the personnel working in our dispatch centers. This gives us an opportunity to act as a consolidated center, with complete redundancy and interoperability.

### **Threats**

LETA's threat is our loss of surcharge revenue and the loss of funds in our investment accounts. LETA's only funding source is through the 911 surcharge. As the surcharge declines, LETA will be forced to make a decision to raise the surcharge to cover the loss of revenue or to cut programs and capital expenses.

## 9-1-1 – Industry Alliance

In 1968, at the outset of 9-1-1 efforts in the United States, *Life* magazine observed, “It won’t be long before 911 takes over as the most memorable trio of digits in American culture.” Today, this is largely the case. Wherever an individual needs help, a call to 9-1-1 usually goes through and, in many cases reports the caller’s number and location to the 9-1-1 operator. An estimated 99% of the population and 96% of the geographic United States have access to at least basic 9-1-1 services.

Most importantly, the success of our 9-1-1 system has saved lives. Due to the system’s success over the past four decades, American citizens now reasonably expect that access to 9-1-1 is a critical public service, which is ubiquitous and reliable.

The 9-1-1 story, however, is at an inflection point. The balkanized nature of 9-1-1 systems across jurisdictions and their funding mechanisms obscure a simple but profound development: our nation’s emergency system is being left behind by technological change. The original provision of 9-1-1 arose in a world where a single carrier (AT&T in most cases) provided service to customers using analog voice connections from fixed locations. Today, by contrast, there is a multiplicity of providers, almost all of which use digital technology and many of which offer “nomadic” or mobile services. In response to technological innovation, our current 9-1-1 infrastructure is a clever but “jury-rigged” system that uses yesterday’s technology to provide service in a world very different for which it was designed. The limits of the legacy technology used in emergency communications can be best understood by viewing today’s 9-1-1 system as an analog island in a digital sea. To be sure, the ingenuity of the engineers who have stretched the current system to accommodate wireless telephony and other services is admirable. However, we, the governing bodies must recognize that the system is stressed to its limits and change is required.

In the telecommunications industry overall, competitive forces and technological innovation have ushered in an era of digital, mobile, and often Internet Protocol-based communications capabilities. At the same time, limited competition in portions of the 9-1-1 system and analog bottlenecks have conspired to restrain the capabilities of today’s 9-1-1 systems. Because the system continues to work and policymakers largely do not appreciate the system’s technological limitations, decision-makers not only fail to focus on this challenge, but instead are all too willing to raid 9-1-1 funds to put them to other purposes. Accordingly, our emergency communications networks are unable to accommodate what is increasingly viewed as basic functionality inherent in many of today’s advanced technologies. This chasm between the capabilities of modern networks and today’s 9-1-1 system needs to be bridged. Put differently, it is a grave policy failure that, compared to state-of-the art commercial networks, our emergency communications networks are less efficient, less technologically advanced, and, as a consequence, less able to provide the public with the level of protection it deserves.

LETA has taken the steps to be on the curve with technology and ahead of the curve with the 911 industry. With the creation of a countywide Metro Optic Ethernet that is

dedicated for 911 we have bridged the landmasses of PSAPs. The microDATA solution will allow LETA to optimize intelligent routing and true redundancy that reaches each PSAP throughout the County. LETA is a true leader to see the need that is raised by our citizens and to take the steps to provide a solution.