

Bradley County 911 Communications Center

Joe Wilson
Director

The Bradley County ECD is not unlike many of the districts in Tennessee. We are a consolidated dispatch facility serving a county close to 100,000. We provide direct dispatch service to all local public safety facilities. We do not perform addressing. We receive funding of nearly one million dollars annually from local governments—that is the county government and two municipalities. We handle roughly 185,000 calls for service each year through our single PSAP.

While our PSAP is well equipped and well staffed, we don't have to look far to see where many more dollars are going to be needed in the near future to keep up with the level of service our citizens have come to expect and rely on.

I won't go into all the details about the wireline revenue decline. That's common knowledge and is universal in most every state. What may be different is the short term, nearly exponential demands that will be placed on our PSAP and our local governments over the next few years.

A German company named Wacker Industries announced a few months ago they will build a new plant in northern Bradley County. This one billion dollar project is expected to ultimately bring 500+ new jobs into Bradley County with a pay rates of \$17-22 per hour. Construction of the facility is scheduled to be completed in around 18 months with actual production scheduled to begin in 4-5 years. The first wave of suppliers will need to be up and running within two years.

The addition of this company combined with anticipated growth in southwestern Bradley County at the completion of the new Volkswagon Plant in nearby Chattanooga, is going to require a great deal of change in our county. New roads, a rework of an exit on the Interstate, new schools, utilities and a new airport are all in progress or very close to implementation. These improvements will require a huge financial investment from our taxpayers. In addition, the local public safety community is gearing up for increased demands for law enforcement, emergency medical and fire protection. New fire stations are on the drawing board as well as a revamp of patrol zones for more effective coverage of expected subdivision development.

While our public safety agencies are facing increase demands for funding, some are actually suffering significant declines in revenues. An example is our EMS. This fiscal year that agency took a \$230,000 cut in Medicaid crossover payments for local transfers. Those dollars will have to be made up by county government.

Our local governments ^{have} has long been a solid supporter of our 911 center and they continue that commitment. They fund our operations at the rate of about \$10 per citizen. However, our ECD is very hopeful we can improve the flow of revenue via the wireless phones.

At our 911 board meeting yesterday, we discussed the need for a fixed backup facility in our county. We may incorporate that into the blueprints for one of several new fire stations now in the planning stages. Doing so will enable us to use existing kitchen, restroom and break areas in a facility staffed round the clock. Other benefits will be added security and backup electrical power. Obviously all this will cost money but will be a valuable addition to our emergency communications effort.

The Bradley County ECD along with all others in this state want to be the best we can be. 911 in Tennessee is a source of pride and with proper funding we can continue serve our citizens well. The ECB, at the state level is doing much to help us get into the NexGen 911 world. Our local ECDs want to do our part at our level. An improved and consistent level of funding directed toward the local districts would be a major help as we face the demands of population growth and technological advancement.