



The VON Coalition

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VoIP Leaders Announce Significant Progress on 9-1-1

Washington, D.C. – The nation's leading VoIP companies today announced that they are answering the call for 9-1-1 emergency service in an Internet world. As policymakers consider the proper regulatory framework for VoIP, today the Voice on the Net (VON) Coalition, the foremost voice on VoIP policy issues, is releasing a progress report on the one-year anniversary of its landmark agreement with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), on efforts to implement life-saving 9-1-1 technologies for VoIP.

The VON Coalition surveyed original signators of the VON-NENA agreement and other VON Coalition members to gauge the progress made toward providing emergency service for VoIP users. The survey finds that 100 percent of the respondents who offer a residential VoIP replacement service also offer a 9-1-1 calling capability that allows a caller to connect to an emergency answering center. Of those, 60 percent offer an emergency calling capability for fixed VoIP users comparable to fixed wireline E9-1-1 that includes automatic call-back number and location information, with 30 percent expecting to implement this type service within a year, and 10 percent expecting to roll out new services as the next generation standards are developed. The survey also found that 75% of signators to the original VON-NENA agreement also collect and remit state and local 9-1-1 fees for their retail VoIP customers – either directly or through an intermediate telecommunications provider.

The VON Coalition joined with NENA on December 1, 2003 to forge a voluntary agreement to develop the technical and operational mechanisms for providing effective access to emergency services by users of VoIP. The VON-NENA effort is not only proactively supporting solutions that ensure that when 9-1-1 is dialed the call will be routed for emergency response, but also will enable even more robust solutions than today's legacy wireline 9-1-1 system can provide.

"In just a year, the VoIP industry is stepping forward, making great progress, and providing 9-1-1 solutions comparable with traditional E9-1-1 functionality – a level of functionality that took the wireless industry more than a decade to begin offering," said Rick Jones, Operations Issues Director, National Emergency Number Association. "We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the VoIP community in the weeks ahead to find additional steps we can take together in order to ensure continued progress on delivering E9-1-1 for VoIP," said Jones.

To advance these solutions, progress is being made on all areas of the original agreement. In fact, industry is already stepping into the marketplace with E9-1-1 solutions that are more technologically sophisticated than were available at the time the agreement was developed. The industry is not just answering the call for emergency services but is on the path toward an even more robust emergency response system for the future, capable of delivering a host of improvements in emergency response technologies.

“By migrating to an IP based emergency network, 9-1-1 calls could one day be accompanied by much more information, such as a callers’ medical status, language preference, or maps of commercial buildings,” said David Svanda VON Coalition spokesperson and immediate past president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

Even though the volume of VoIP 9-1-1 calls is not expected to surpass two percent of all 9-1-1 calls in the next three years, the industry understands that 9-1-1 is the most important call those people will ever make and, therefore, is committed to ensuring access to emergency services is just a phone call away.

“Today’s announcement demonstrates that a competitive marketplace and forward thinking industry leaders can make progress on 9-1-1 solutions without the need for regulation,” said Svanda.

About the VON Coalition:

The Voice on the Net or VON Coalition consists of leading VoIP companies, on the cutting edge of developing and delivering voice innovations over Internet. The coalition, which includes AT&T, BMX, Callipso, CallSmart, Convedia, Covad, IceNet, iBasis, Intel, Intrado, Level 3, MCI, Microsoft, PointOne, Pulver.com, Skype, Teleglobe, Texas Instruments, USA Datanet, VocalData, and Voiceglo, believes that Americans are fundamentally better off with a generally hands off regulatory approach to Internet and Internet based services like VoIP. Since its inception, the VON Coalition has consistently advocated that federal and state regulators maintain current policies of refraining from extending legacy regulations to Internet services, including VoIP. More information about the VON Coalition can be obtained at the following website: <http://www.von.org>

About the VON-NENA Agreement:

In order to make further progress on developing proactive solutions, the Voice on the Net (VON) Coalition, the leading voice on VoIP policy issues in the United States, and the National Emergency Number Association, the leading emergency services organization in the United States, came together to forge a landmark agreement to find workable 9-1-1 solutions for VoIP. In December of 2003, the two groups joined forces to lay out a vision of collaboration and consensus in which the public safety community works with industry to accelerate the abilities of new services, technologies and devices to handle 9-1-1 calls in times of an emergency. Companies that signed onto the agreement -- including 8 X 8, AT&T Consumer Services, Broadsoft, Dialpad, ITXC (now TeleGlobe), Level 3, PointOne, Pulver.com, Vonage, and Webley – identified six key points for making progress including the implementation of interim 9-1-1 solutions, informing local emergency centers when they do, supporting continued funding for 9-1-1, and informing consumers about service shortcomings.

Copies of the original VON-NENA agreement can be found at:

Release: http://www.von.org/usr_files/VOIP%20press%20release%20FINAL%20112803
Key Elements: http://www.von.org/usr_files/VON%20NENA%20911%20Agreement.pdf