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The National 911 Program Celebrates 50 Years of 911

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NHTSA Recognizes 50 Years of Dedication

Deputy Administrator, Heidi King, participated in a number of events celebrating the 50th anniversary of 911 in Washington D.C. in February 2018, including the presidential signing of Kari's Law and the NG911 Institute's 15th Annual 9-1-1 Honor Awards.

Learn more about her history in public safety as she shared some of her personal experiences as a 911 dispatcher.

[Read More](#)

[\(911connects/issue-5/50-years-911.html\)](#)

The first call to 911 was placed in February of 1968. Thanks to 911, throughout the country, a call to 911 can quickly connect you with the help you need.

Before that first call, individuals needed to dial local 10-digit phone numbers to reach police, fire or emergency services. In 1966, the National Academy of Sciences published "Accidental Death and Disability: The Neglected Disease of Modern Society (<https://www.ems.gov/pdf/1997-Reproduction-AccidentalDeathDissability.pdf>)," a landmark report highlighting how accidental death and injury, particularly from motor vehicle crashes, had become an epidemic in the U.S. The report urged a series of steps to reduce these needless deaths and injuries, including exploring the "feasibility of designating a single, nationwide, telephone number to summon an ambulance."

Two years later, a Senator in Haleyville, Alabama placed the first 911 call. It wasn't long before other cities followed the trend. Only six days later, the second 911 call was placed in Nome, Alaska. Since then, the system expanded nationwide and is continuously improving to keep pace with advancing technology.

Today, many states and regions are implementing Next Generation 911 (https://www.911.gov/issue_nextgeneration911.html), an IP-based system which will allow 911 to easily transfer calls to other call centers, re-route calls in case a PSAP experiences call overload, and eventually receive photos and videos of caller events.

Since the 1960s, NHTSA has supported public safety efforts to connect communities with emergency services. Since its inception in 2004, the National 911 Program has focused on supporting state efforts to continually improve 911 services by creating resources and disseminating grant funding for 911 technology and operations.

This year, as the country recognizes 50 years of answered calls and lives saved, we celebrate the 911 system and its advancement over the last several decades, while also looking to the future of Next Generation 911 and improved emergency communication across the country.

See below for more information about the history of 911:

History & Timelines

History of 9-1-1 (iCERT and 911 Education Foundation) (https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/b8d2ce_e6b60db90b47454dbb047f451278aa66.pdf)

9-1-1 Origin and History (NENA) (<https://www.nena.org/?page=911overviewfacts>)

9-1-1 Saves Lives (APCO) (<https://911saveslives.org/>)

A History of Advancing 911 (National 911 Program) (<https://www.911.gov/historyof911.html>)

Videos

Benefits of NG911 Video (National 911 Program) (<https://www.911.gov/ng911movie.html>)

Connie Britton Celebrates 50th Anniversary of 9-1-1 (NENA) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbC5b8MBpA0>)

NG9-1-1 Institute's 50th Anniversary Gala Video (Including Deputy Administrator Heidi King) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBMLZLRLtQI&feature=youtu.be>)

Press Releases & Articles

The Call: Official Publication of NENA (http://pages.nxtbook.com/naylor/NENQ/NENQ0417/offline/NENQ_NENQ0417.pdf)

How a Small Alabama Town Pioneered the First 9-1-1 Call (NPR) (<https://news.wbhm.org/feature/2018/how-a-small-alabama-town-pioneered-the-first-9-1-1-call/>)

Recognizing Heroism: The Annual 9-1-1 Honor Awards (CTIA) (<https://www.ctia.org/industry-data/blog-details/blog-posts/recognizing-heroism-the-annual-9-1-1-honor-awards>)

50th Anniversary of 911 (Emergency Management) (<http://www.govtech.com/em/emergency-blogs/disaster-zone/50th-anniversary-of-911.html>)

Dispatchers Mark 50th Anniversary of First 911 Call (Firehouse) (<http://www.firehouse.com/news/12398129/dispatchers-mark-50th-anniversary-of-first-911-call-firefighter-news>)

Current Projects

NG911/PSBN Interconnection

(/project_NG911_Interconnection.html)

COVID-19 Resources

(/project_coronavirus_covid-19_resources.html)

Telecommunicator Job

Reclassification

(/project_telecommunicatorjobreclassification.html)

Next Generation 911 Self-

Assessment Tool

(/project_ng911tool.html)

Next Generation 911 for Public

Safety Leaders

(/project_ng911publicsafety.html)

911 Grant Program

(/project_911grantprogram.html)

NG911 Roadmap: Connecting

Systems Nationwide

(/project_ng911roadmap.html)

911 DataPath

(/project_strategicplanningfor911data.html)

CPR LifeLinks


(/project_cprlifelinks/index.html)

Get 911 Program News and Updates

Sign Up

(<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOTNHTSA911/subscriber/new>)


911 System Resources (911systemresources.html)

 State of 911 Webinar Series

(webinars.html)

 911.gov Connects Newsletter

(connectsnewsletter.html)

 Documents & Tools

(documents_tools.html)

Frequently Asked Questions (frequently_asked_questions.html)

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NHTSAmmedia@dot.gov (<mailto:NHTSAmmedia@dot.gov>)

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FOIA ([HTTPS://WWW.TRANSPORTATION.GOV/FOIA](https://www.transportation.gov/foia)) PRIVACY ([HTTPS://WWW.TRANSPORTATION.GOV/DOT-WEBSITE-PRIVACY-POLICY](https://www.transportation.gov/dot-website-privacy-policy))

NO FEAR ACT ([HTTPS://WWW.TRANSPORTATION.GOV/CIVIL-RIGHTS/CIVIL-RIGHTS-AWARENESS-ENFORCEMENT/NO-FEAR-ACT](https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/civil-rights-awareness-enforcement/no-fear-act))

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WHITEHOUSE.GOV ([HTTPS://WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/)) SITEMAP ([HTTPS://911.GOV/SITEMAP.HTML](https://911.gov/sitemap.html))

If you need emergency assistance, dial 911 immediately. Emergency assistance is not available through the National 911 Program.

The 911.gov website is maintained by the National 911 Program, which is housed within the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Office of Emergency Medical Services.