HIGH SPEED INTERNET

AND PUBLIC SAFETY

OVERVIEW

The application of high speed Internet technology to public safety initiatives – ranging from emergency services to homeland security – can save countless lives by improving on current responder-to-responder voice networks. Broadband networks enable police, fire and emergency medical personnel to react to crises more quickly while facilitating cooperation among multiple safety agencies. Advanced two-way, public networks allow safety officers to quickly access online resources, connect to network-enabled devices and rapidly transfer critical video and data files during crisis situations. High speed Internet also promises to improve victim-to-responder communications by enabling digital transmissions to and from the broadband-enabled public, like detailed public safety announcements sent over broadband networks. Expanding affordable broadband will let more people reach the help they require, and allow safety workers to provide emergency services of a higher caliber in less time.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Americans are increasingly tech-savvy, but many of our emergency service systems have failed to modernize. Although the public continues to use more broadband tools, they cannot interact with emergency services using these tools today because many first responders do not have the necessary capabilities. For example, for an individual capturing a digital photo or video of a crime, no standard process exists for transmitting that information to authorities in a timely way, such as calling 911.

The nation's public safety infrastructure is fragmented into thousands of independent local jurisdictions of police, fire and emergency services. The aftermaths of Hurricane Katrina and Sept. 11, 2001 demonstrated the challenges of communicating on multiple bandwidth frequencies across numerous safety agencies. A universally available high speed Internet network could begin to address the challenge of integrating our nation's numerous public safety networks.

BENEFITS OF HIGH SPEED INTERNET

*   **Fire & Emergency Services:** Faster connections let first responders receive area maps, view video on situations such as how to pry open a broken train door or how to safely shut off electrical power, and allow multiple responders from numerous agencies to view the same images and data simultaneously. Better and faster data can be sent to emergency rooms to prepare them for incoming accident victims. Fire commanders can direct their units using voice, video and data-enhanced communications at an emergency scene or from a remote location.
*   **Police**: High speed Internet allows the rapid upload of video and data from on-the-ground law enforcement personnel to police command centers, and allows monitoring of officers or suspects in high-risk situations. Images and fingerprints of suspects, video clips of criminal activity, and layouts of areas can be downloaded to police vehicle computers. An individual who snaps a cell phone photo of someone they believe may be the abductor of a missing child can share this with the appropriate authorities in an instant.
*   **National Security**: Broadband facilitates biometrics screening - the measurement of personally identifiable physical characteristics like fingerprints or retinas - at entry points into a country or a sensitive facility, and enhances remote surveillance of borders, airports, ports, train stations, and government buildings. In the event of damage or destruction to vital government office space, high speed Internet can restore government services by enabling public officials and their staff to work remotely.

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