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## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

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### **WSTA Applauds State Senate Vote Promoting Public Safety**

#### ***New 911 Grant Program Could Begin in July 2011***

MADISON – On Wednesday, June 17, 2009, as part of the 2009-2011 biennial state budget, the Wisconsin State Senate voted to support the creation of a new 911 grant program, beginning on July 1, 2011, designed to better reflect today's and future telecommunication technology, as well as to address citizen expectations related to public safety when they dial 911 for assistance. The Senate action also included an important two-year sunset of a newly created Police and Fire Protection Fund. The Police and Fire Protection Fund will receive its monies from a \$.75 surcharge collected on the monthly bills of Wisconsin's telecommunications customers.

The Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association (WSTA) would like to express their sincere appreciation to Senate Majority Leader Russ Decker (D-Weston), Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee), who co-authored the original 911 Motion during Joint Committee on Finance budget deliberations, Sen. Jeff Plale (D-South Milwaukee) and Sen. Pat Kreitlow (D-Chippewa Falls) for their leadership on this issue and for supporting this important public safety initiative.

Over the past eight months, representatives from various counties, municipalities, wireline and wireless providers, and 911 association members have met to discuss reforming the current 911 program. The goal was to provide a stable funding source for 911 operations while still keeping a telecommunications surcharge affordable for Wisconsin families. Through a truly unique collective effort, this team of diverse representatives developed a proposal that better aligns the laws with the needs of citizens, the county 911 centers and the communications industry, while still retaining the fundamental principles underlying the current state statutes.

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WSTA looks forward to working with the Assembly Leadership and Governor Jim Doyle to ensure these provisions are ultimately signed into law as part of the state's 2009-2011 biennial budget. The winners will ultimately be the citizens of Wisconsin who will benefit from much needed updated and improved 911 services and operations.

WSTA is a Madison-based trade organization representing 70 of Wisconsin's local telephone companies, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and wireless carriers.

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