

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA

The PSAP Regionalization Concept

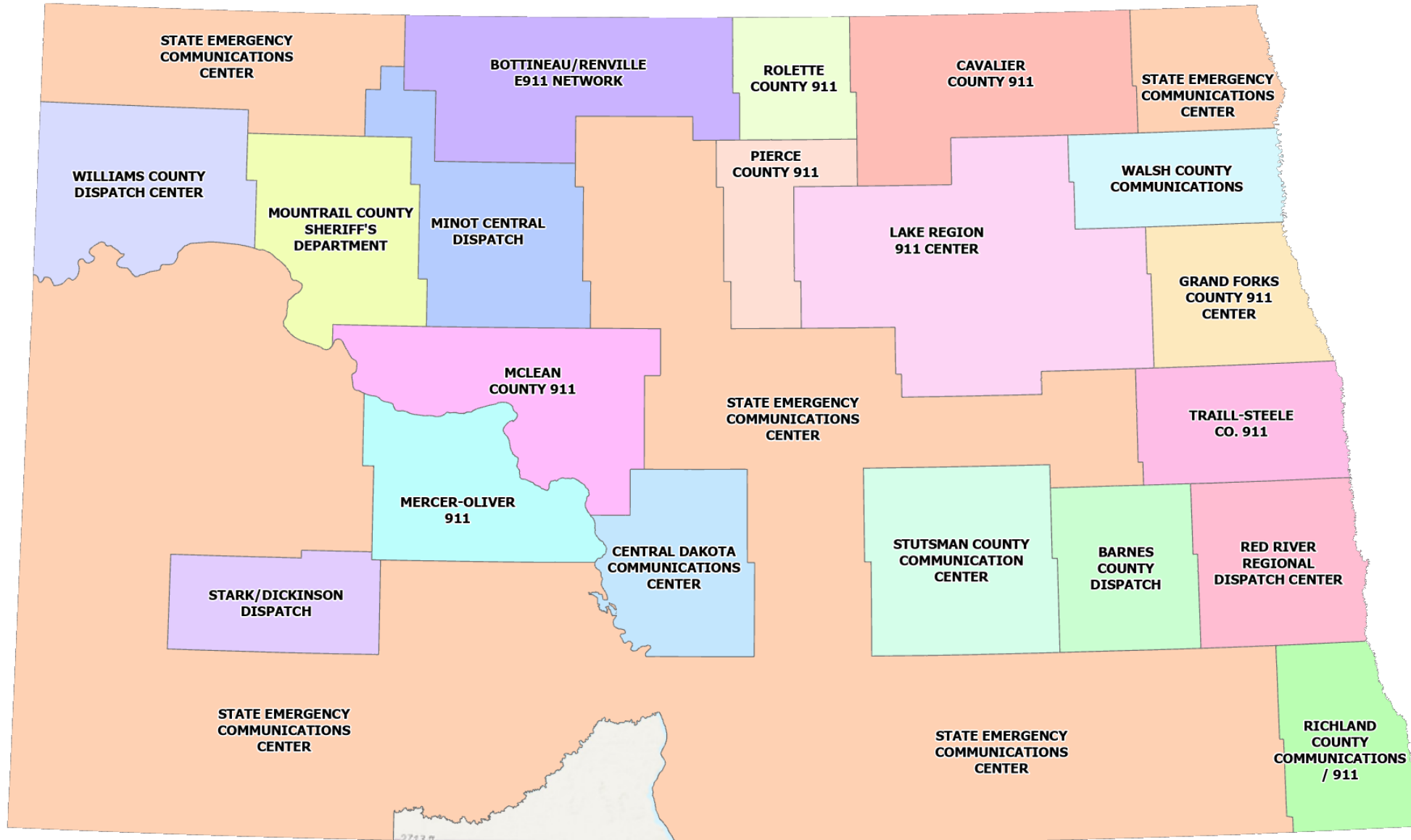
Seeking sustainable, local, 911 service

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2026 NDACo Annual Conference & Expo · 10/13/2026

OCTOBER 2026 - PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT JURISDICTIONS JURISDICTIONS



20

PSAPS



Share of 911 calls



19 local

~90% of 911 calls



1 state

~10% of 911 calls

WHY NDACO IS HERE

Bringing ideas like this forward is what NDACo exists to do

MISSION

NDACo provides leadership and services to foster effective and efficient government for the good of all counties.

VISION

NDACo will be a recognized leader in proactively addressing challenges and opportunities affecting local governments.

PURPOSE (EXCERPT)

- Provide a means for the exchange of ideas, information and experiences of all county officials.
- Facilitate cooperation with other levels of government.
- Propose and support legislation for county governments.
- Engage in other activities that strive to achieve more effective county government in North Dakota.

OUR CONCERN RE: 911

If the public safety community doesn't come up with a plan the legislature may find one and it may not be one the public safety community likes.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

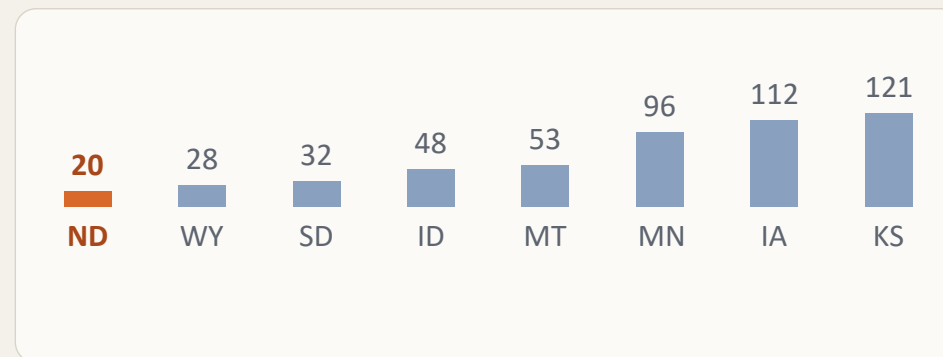
The past twenty years...

Legislature

Why do we have so many PSAPs?

Our answer

We have fewer than our neighbors



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The past three years...

2024

- Legislative study of public safety communications governance (SIRN, 911).
- NDACo hosts **first emergency communications governance summit**. Consensus that governance has room to improve and more discussion is needed.

2025

- NDACo hosts **second emergency communications summit**. Funding, governance concepts, and "if we built 9-1-1 again, how would we?"
- NDACo delegates pass resolution 2025-07 supporting "structural changes along with increased funding"

2026

- Interim study of SIRN funding and 9-1-1 fees. ESCCC asks the Legislature to rethink Chapter 57-40.6 in light of new technology and roles/responsibilities.
- NDACo presents regionalization concept to NDACo and NDCCA boards.

WHO HAS BEEN AT THE TABLE: AGENCIES REPRESENTED AT NDACO'S EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SUMMITS

State Emergency Communications Center

NDACo

ESCCC

ND 911 Association

SIEC

NDIT

NDDES Homeland Security

ND Highway Patrol

ND Game and Fish

ND Sheriffs and Deputies

ND Emergency Management Association

ND EMS Association

ND Fire Chiefs Association

ND League of Cities

Richland County

Red River Regional Dispatch Center

STEPS

Legislature

WHY NOW: THE DRIFT & REALITY

9-1-1 is consolidating to the state, by default rather than by design

Past

22

counties dispatched by the state in 2002

Present

26

counties already dispatched by the state today

Future

29

counties dispatche by the state by end of 2026

WHY NOW

What is driving the drift?

Two primary factors, and they feed each other.



1

Funding

Expenditures are increasing, Revenues are Flat

Local budgets fill the gap.



2

Staffing

Finding and keeping telecommunicators is hard.

We hear the issue. We lack the data.

WHY NOW: FUNDING

In 2025, local budgets covered a \$12.6M gap



Fee revenue includes the \$4.8M SIRN share; costs include SIRN payments.

In 2005, revenues and expenditures at balance



Sources: ESCCC 2026 Biennial Report (CY2025), ESCCC 2006 Biennial Report (CY2006)

WHY NOW: FUNDING

Our 9-1-1 cost per person is significantly higher than average

COST PER CAPITA, 2024

\$41.43

North Dakota

\$20.06

National

WHY NOW: STAFFING

We hear it. We don't have the data.

What we hear

"Staffing is always the greatest challenge and the 'cost of readiness' continues to grow as we remain competitive in the job market."

PSAP survey respondent, 2026

What we know

~45%

of reported 9-1-1 spending goes to staffing, the largest category.

What we don't know

- How many positions are vacant
- How many people leave
- How quickly people leave
- How long it takes to fill a seat
- How pay compares with competing employers

WE BELIEVE

Local control of 9-1-1 can be protected by demonstrating counties and cities can work together to deliver 9-1-1 services statewide.

WE'VE DONE THIS BEFORE

Examples of counties working together

Wireless / NG9-1-1 JPA

- Shared NG9-1-1 core services
- Led to several nationwide firsts
- Every PSAP i3-ready by end of 2026

9-1-1 Fee JPA

- Central collection of postpaid fees
- Lowered county administrative overhead
- Consistent collection and remittance

9-1-1 Call Handling

- Shared call handling equipment
- Expedites 9-1-1 service deployments
- Simplifies support
- 17 of 20 PSAPs

WHAT COMES NEXT

The next step would be much bigger



Restructuring

Local governments coming together in an organized way. Common governance structure.



Consistent technology

Common call handling and CAD, mobile CAD for responders, all first responders on SIRN.



Balanced workload

Telecommunicators handling similar call volumes.



Common standards

Shared procedures, training, and policies statewide.

CONCEPT A

What could this look like?

One possible design, a starting point for the study to test.



BEING CLEAR

What this effort is, and what it isn't

It is

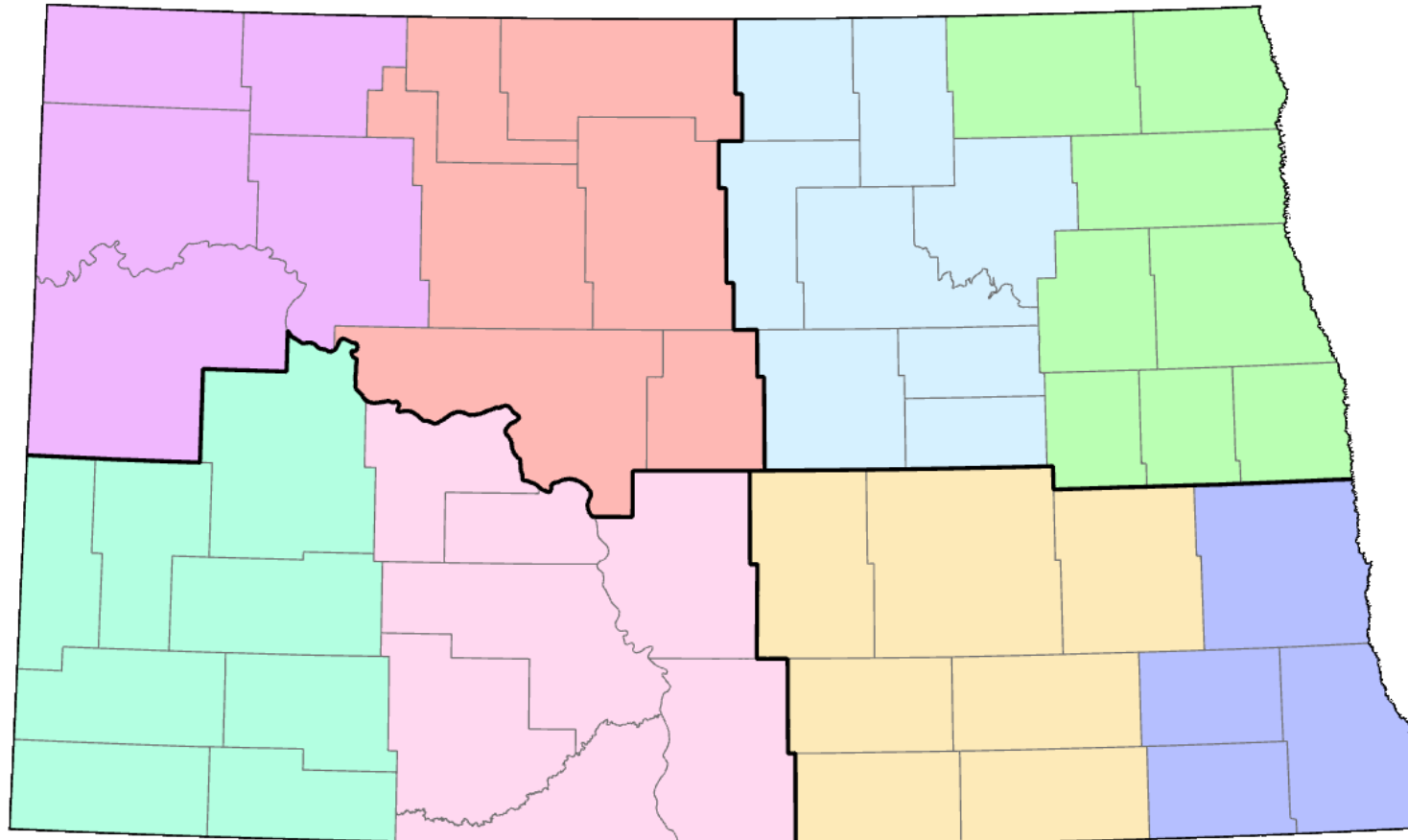
- Led by local governments (counties and cities)
- A starting point for discussion
- One possible way to keep 9-1-1 local (there are others)

It isn't

- A state takeover
- A consolidation mandate
- A final design
- A decision being made today

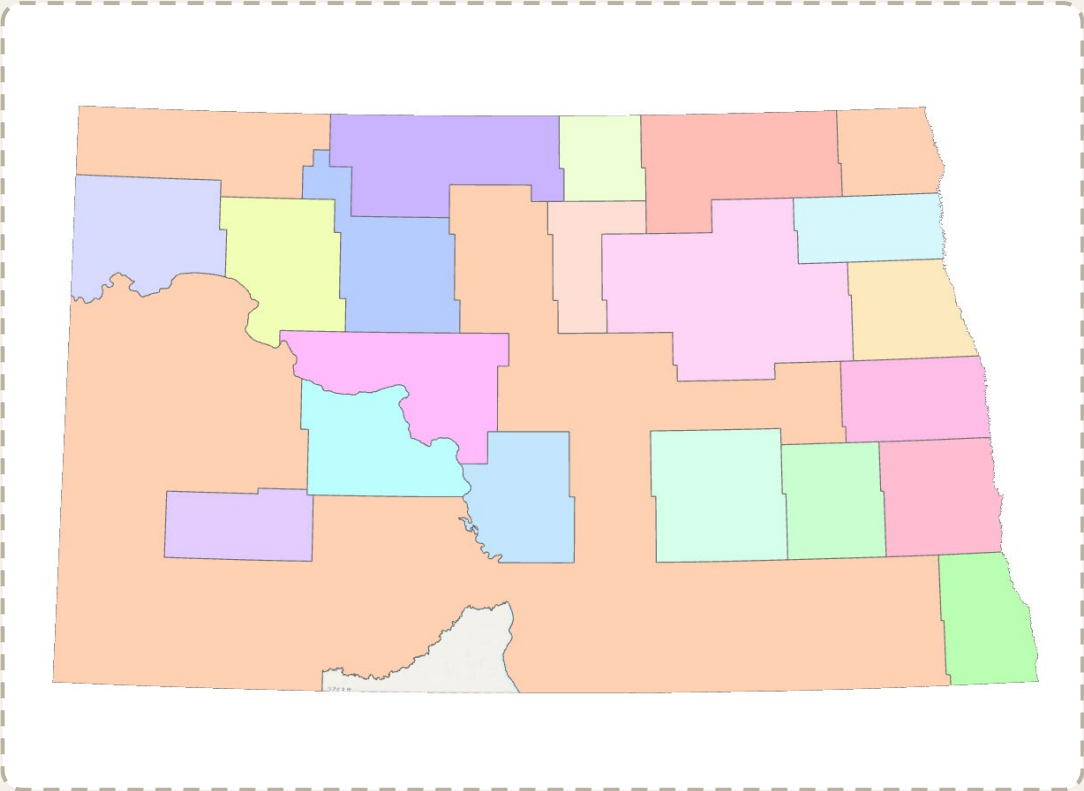
CONCEPT A: A STARTING POINT

One possible design: 4 regions, 8 PSAPs, all Locally Managed

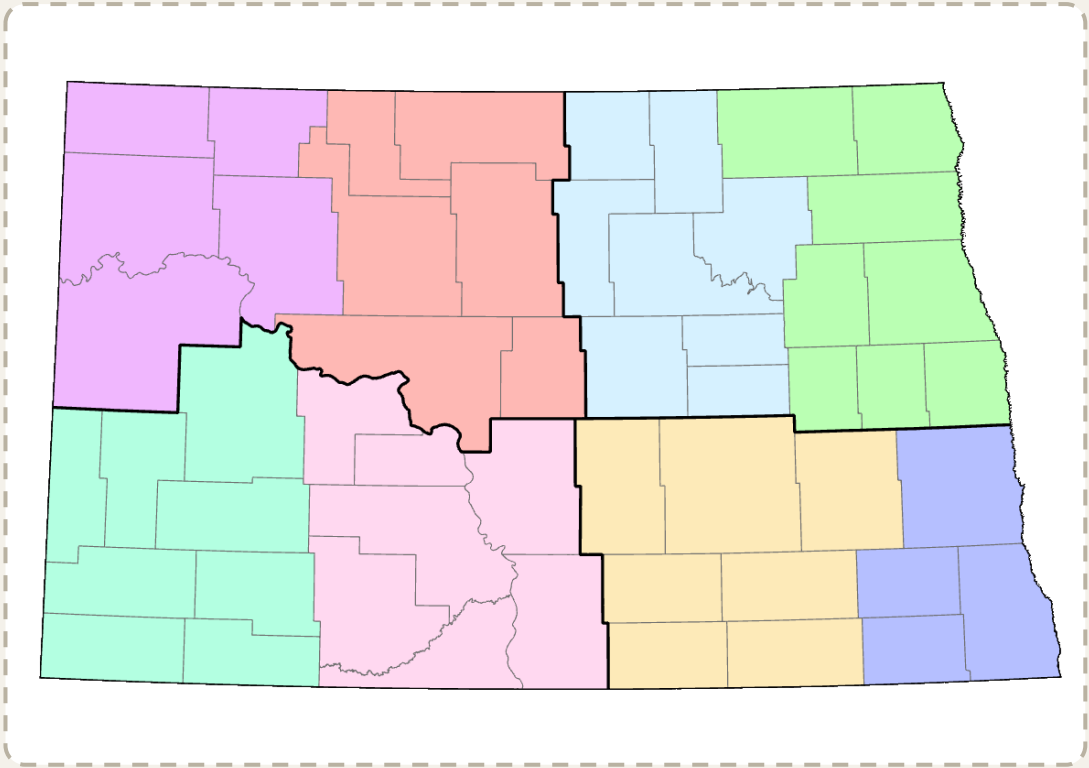


CONCEPT A: A STARTING POINT

Present

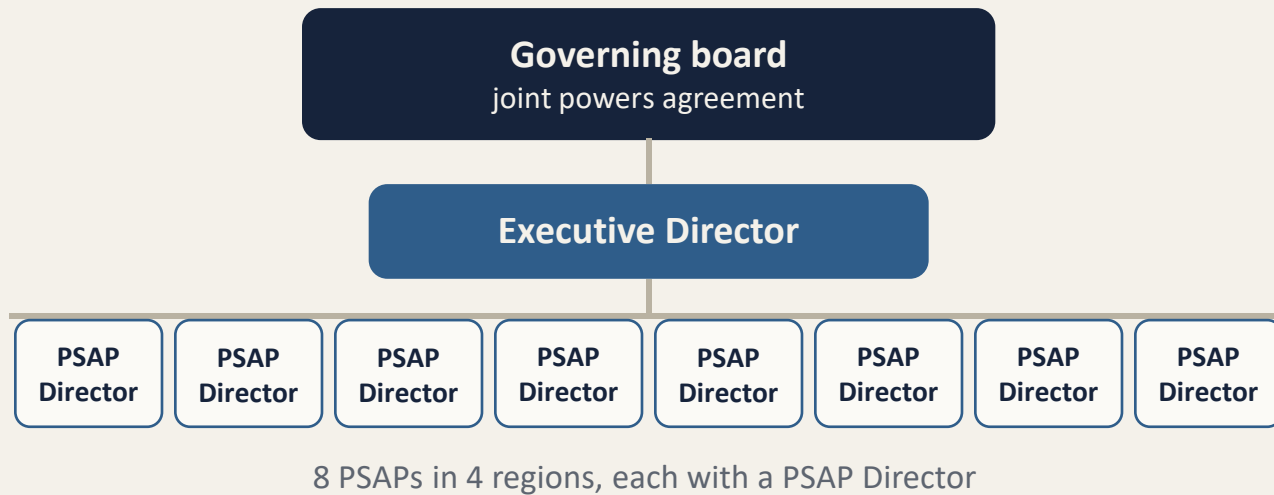


Potential Future



HOW IT WOULD WORK: GOVERNANCE

One governing board, one executive director, eight PSAPs



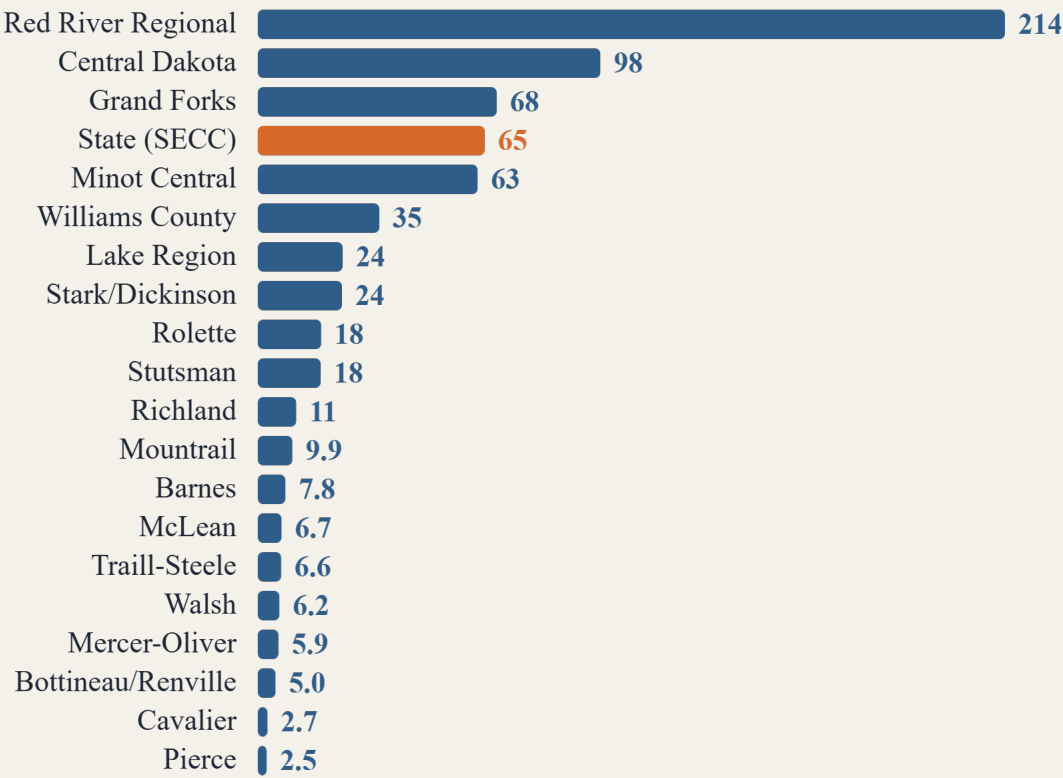
Who sits on the board

- **Local Government** holds the majority, as the primary funders
- Tribal Government
- Emergency management
- Law enforcement, fire, and EMS, each with a defined role

WHY IT MAKES OPERATIONAL SENSE

Today's 9-1-1 workload is very uneven

INITIAL 9-1-1 CALLS PER DAY, 2025



214 vs 2.5

911 calls a day at the busiest PSAP versus the quietest

8 of 20

PSAPs take fewer than 8 calls a day

6%

of statewide 911 calls handled by those 8 together

911 calls only. Administrative calls, radio traffic, and support support work add to every PSAP's day; the study would would measure all of it.

Source: 2025 IEN voice event counts by PSAP (252,090 initial 9-1-1 calls statewide). SECC serves 26 counties.

HOW IT WOULD WORK: OPERATIONS

Same standards, same tools, every PSAP, 24/7/365

Calls and dispatch

Receive 9-1-1 calls and dispatch resources

Administrative calls

Receive administrative calls and dispatch as needed

Alerting

Public notification, with Emergency Managers

Law enforcement support

Support local and tribal law enforcement requests requests

Resource monitoring

Track resources on scene and en route

Coordination

Work with the State Emergency Communications Center as needed

One call-handling system for every PSAP
Everyone on SIRN, PSAPs and responders

One CAD for all PSAPs
Mobile CAD for all responder agencies

Each region has two PSAPs that back each other up, and any PSAP could back up any other in extreme circumstances. Procedures, training, and policies are common statewide. are common statewide.

CONCEPT A: PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

What regionalization alone could save each year

Category	Annual estimate
Technology savings, shared call handling, CAD, and radio	≈ \$0.8M
Personnel savings, regional staffing sized to peak-shift need	≈ \$11.6M
Total from regionalization	≈ \$12.4M

Note:

- Preliminary, concept-level estimates
- Excludes one-time transition, facility, severance, and contract-termination costs
- The study should validate or replace every number

No change to the 9-1-1 fee is assumed.

For scale: in 2025, costs ran \$12.6M above fee revenue.

THE ASK

Commission an independent study

Objective: optimize the use of the 9-1-1 fee and improve services to the public.

Workload: 9-1-1 and admin calls, radio traffic, support functions

Facilities: needs and one-time transition costs

Governance: options and required legal changes

Technology: CAD, call handling, logging, mapping, consoles

Performed by: a third party experienced in PSAP regionalization

Staffing: minimum levels by region and PSAP

Funding: test concepts and setting realistic expectations for savings

Impacts: SECC, state agencies, and every county

Statute: separate local 9-1-1 from statewide radio

THE ASK

Who guides it, and when

Steering group

- County officials
- City officials
- PSAP directors
- ND 9-1-1 Association
- Law, fire, EMS, and emergency management
- Others (federal, state, tribal, etc.)

Rough Timeline

- December 2026: NDACo Board approves a study
- April 2027: Consultant selected
- February 2028: Findings shared with stakeholders
- July 2028: Recommendations to the Legislature
- 71st Leg Assembly: Statutes updated accordingly

THE OBJECTIVE, ONE MORE TIME

If the public safety community doesn't come up with a plan the legislature may find one and it may not be one the public safety community likes.

Thank you

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WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

The plan for the 70th Legislative Assembly

IN 2027

70th Legislative Assembly: fee reform

- 1 Remove the 50¢ SIRN fee from the 9-1-1 fee**
Separates local 9-1-1 funding from statewide radio.
- 2 Set the 9-1-1 fee at \$2.00 statewide**
Today 42 jurisdictions are at \$1.50 and 11 are at \$1.00.
- 3 Update the prepaid percentage as needed**
Keeps prepaid parity with the \$2.00 postpaid fee.



BETWEEN 2027 AND 2029

The interim: study PSAP structure

- 4 Take a serious look at PSAP structure**
Study it between assemblies, then bring recommended changes to the 71st the 71st Legislative Assembly in 2029.

NDACO DELEGATES RESOLUTION 2025-07

The 2027 efforts directly address call for structural changes and increased funding.

YOUR TURN

Questions and discussion