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WSTA Honors Senator Testin for Leadership on Public Safety and Next Generation 911

Madison, WI - Wisconsin's premier telecommunications industry association recognized Senator Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point) for his leadership and support of public safety and Next Generation 911 (NG911). Senator Testin received the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association (WSTA) Excellence in Legislative Leadership Award earlier this week at WSTA member company Solarus in Wisconsin Rapids.

"Wisconsin is fortunate to have advocates like Senator Testin willing to lead on public safety and the future of the NG911," said Bill Esbeck, WSTA executive director. "Senator Testin's leadership on legislation creating provider cost recovery for NG911 expenses was critical to this important bill becoming law. Current law allows cost recovery for 911 expenses, and the new law will continue that practice after the transition to NG911."

"With emergency callers being more mobile now than ever, dispatchers equipped with outdated 911 systems are simply unable to meet the demands of today's digital society," Sen. Testin said. "Switching to updated infrastructures with Next Generation 911 technology has proven essential for dispatchers to provide quick and effective response services to every community. I am proud to have helped get legislation signed into law that ensures residents across Wisconsin can count on receiving timely emergency assistance when they need it the most."

Senator Testin authored legislation which continues provider cost recovery after the transition to the digital NG911 Emergency Services Internet-Protocol Network (ESInet). The bill was signed into law earlier this year as 2023 Wisconsin Act 222. In the new law, providers will get cost recovery for IP-based transport of NG911; purchasing, installing, and maintaining NG911 equipment; and NG911 database management. Without the new law, provider cost recovery for NG911-related expenses would end after the transition to the ESInet.

Solarus CEO Jamey Lysne praised Senator Testin for helping providers use their capital for broadband investments. "At Solarus, we want to focus our investments on the expansion of our fiber-based broadband networks," said Lysne. "Senator Testin's successful legislative efforts related to our NG911-related expenses will help us use our capital for broadband expansion."

Wisconsin's recently renamed 911 Fee (formerly the Police and Fire Protection Fee) is appropriately used to pay for the NG911 provider cost recovery in 2023 WI Act 222. The new law allocates $6 million annually for a grant program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs (DMA).

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