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(S.D.)- State Panel Working To Upgrade SD 911 Service



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PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - The head of a state board that oversees South Dakota's 911 operations says a new system should be in place in the next few years to improve emergency response and take advantage of new telephone technologies.

Ted Ruffedt (ROOF'-leht) Jr. of Rapid City says the current 33 call answering centers now use old technology and each has its own expensive phone equipment. The Next Generation 911 system will be based on the same lines as the Internet and use a single operating system that allows them to communicate better. The new system also will eventually allow people to send text messages, photos and videos to 911 centers.

The South Dakota 911 Coordination Board met Wednesday in Pierre with a consulting firm that will help develop a new state 911 system.