

National Emergency Number Association Press Release

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NENA, Leading 9-1-1 Vendors Demonstrate Next Generation Capabilities at Industry Collaboration Event

College Station, TX – Yesterday, the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) successfully concluded a three-day event designed for vendors of Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) system components to test for interoperability with applications, products, and systems produced by other vendors in the NG9-1-1 arena. The first of its kind, the inaugural NG9-1-1 Industry Collaboration Event (ICE), hosted by NENA at Texas A&M University's Internet2 Technology Evaluation Center, involved 16 leading suppliers of NG9-1-1 components.

"I was impressed by the level of openness and collaboration exhibited by the participating vendors," said Dr. Walt Magnussen of Texas A&M. "This testing event supports the objective of public safety entities being able to buy components from vendors that will deliver the openness and interoperability envisioned in the NG9-1-1 environment."

Nate Wilcox, the CTO of microDATA and the chair of the committee that oversaw the planning and execution of the ICE, observed that, "The tests were based on draft and final standards developed by NENA's Technical Committees, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), and other standards development organizations." Additionally, he was quick to point out that, no proprietary vendor solutions were tested, only standardized or open interfaces were allowed." microDATA was one of the 16 participating vendors.

Ray Vilis, the VP of Solacom's iTel Business Unit, and Bill Mertka, the Vice President of Product Management at RedSky Systems, led their companies' participation in the ICE. Vilis was active in the development of the test scripts that were used in the event. "This was as close to a real-world deployment as we could get in a laboratory environment," he said. "This was not a mock up for demonstration purposes. It was a real test of the systems." Mr. Mertka, who chaired the event planning committee, added, "This is the first time we have done a full test of interoperability between components from multiple vendors, simultaneously, using the same test scripts. The results are sure to be invaluable to the participating vendors as the development of NG9-1-1 continues."

This was the first in a series of events that NENA has planned to address different aspects of NG9-1-1 development and readiness. All vendors with NG9-1-1 development efforts will be actively encouraged to participate in future events.

ICE planning was led by a steering committee with representatives from all the major stakeholder groups, including vendors, users, leading industry associations, and federal agencies that are active in NG9-1-1. NENA President Craig Whittington, ENP, highlighted the importance of this type of collaboration, observing, "The benefits of NG9-1-1 will be realized by all organizations involved in emergency response, regardless of their size or function. NENA's ICE activities will facilitate increased interoperability and will clearly move us towards widespread deployment of NG9-1-1; for that we appreciate the efforts of these 16 important vendors."

More information about Next Generation 9-1-1 and the Industry Collaboration Events, as well as a list of participants from the inaugural Industry Collaboration Event, can be found at www.nena.org.

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About the National Emergency Number Association (NENA)

NENA serves the public safety community as the only professional organization solely focused on 9-1-1 policy, technology, operations, and education issues. With more than 7,000 members in 48 chapters across the United States and around the globe, NENA promotes the implementation and awareness 9-1-1 and international three-digit emergency communications systems. NENA works with public policy leaders, emergency services and telecommunications industry partners, like-minded public safety associations, and other stakeholder groups to develop and carry out critical programs and initiatives, to facilitate the creation of an IP-based Next Generation 9-1-1 system, and to establish industry leading standards, training, and certifications. Find out more at www.nena.org.