

Next generation 911 projects on the rise

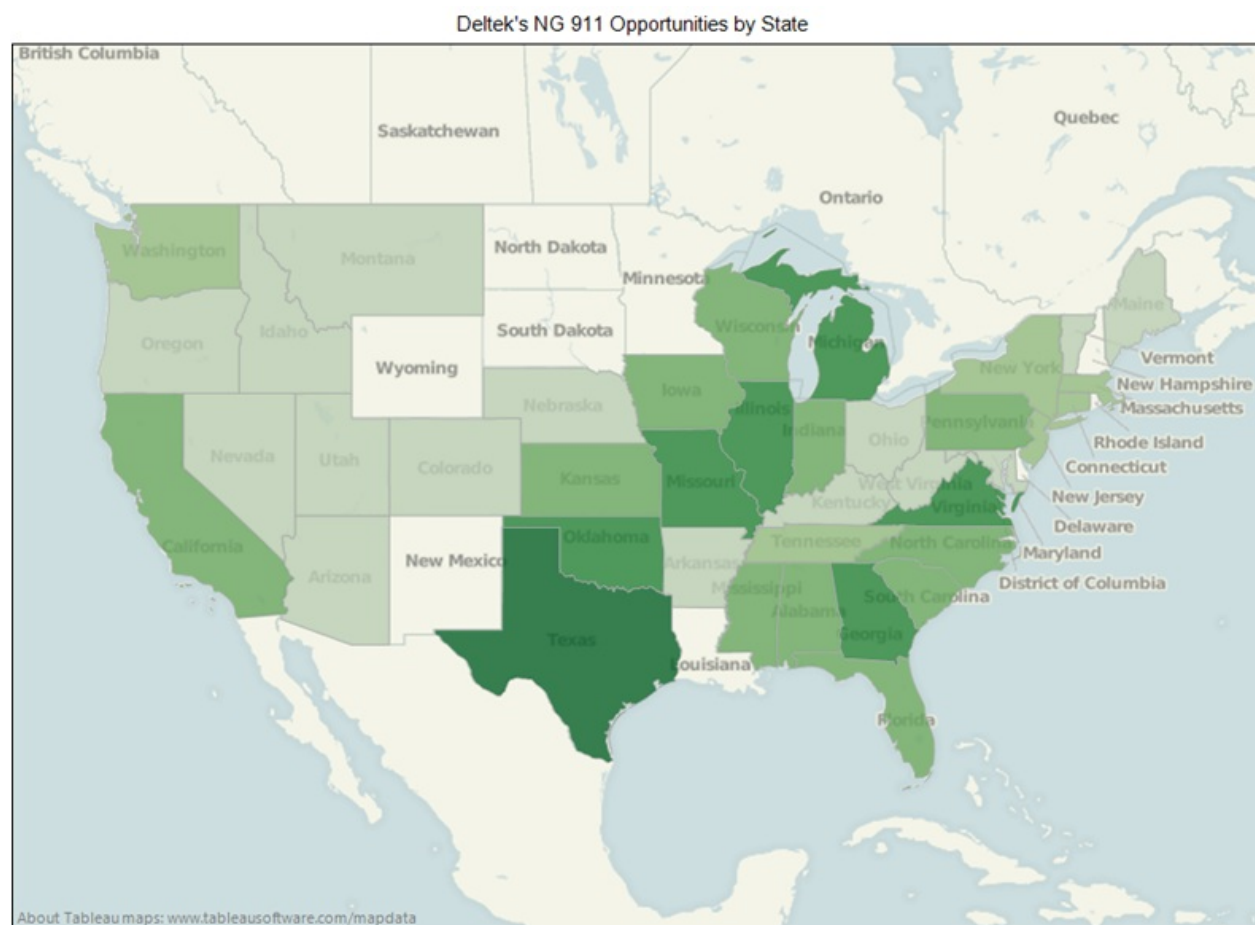
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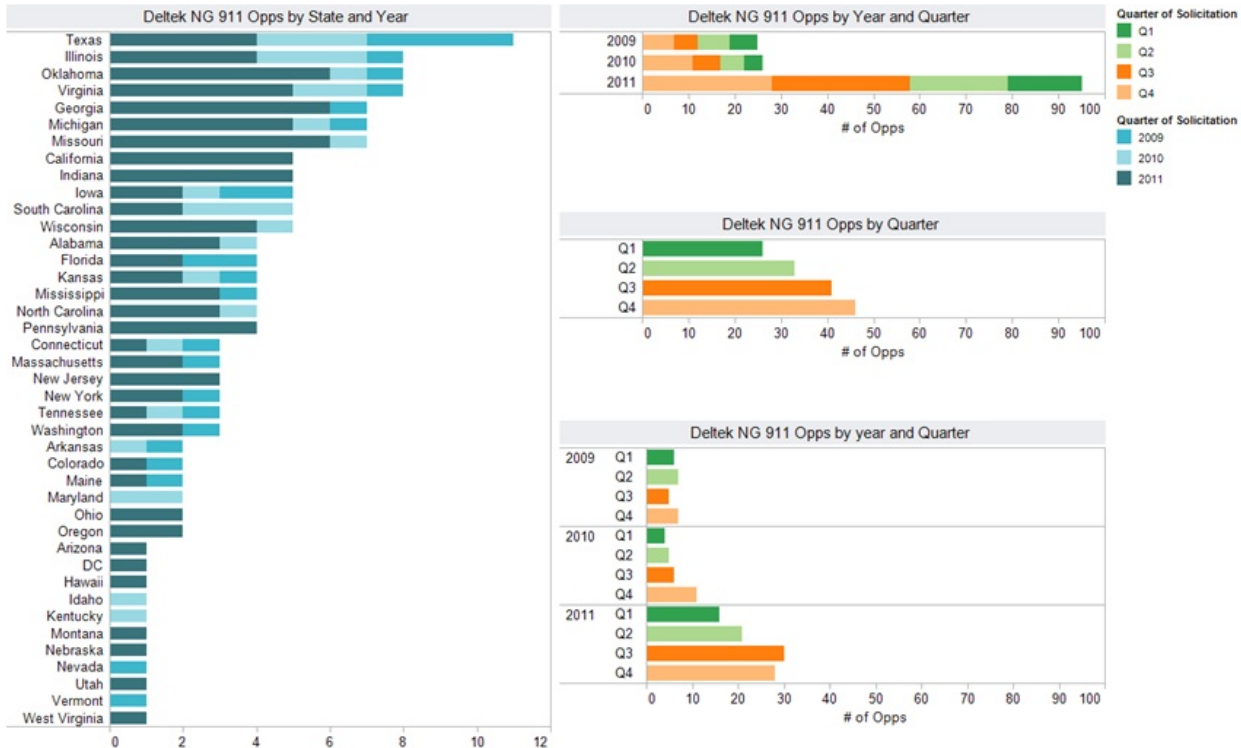
Over the last few years, many rural state and local agencies have strived to ensure that citizens receive the best possible enhanced 911 (E911) coverage. Phase one of E911 only required networks to identify the phone number and cell tower within six minutes of the public safety answers points' (PSAPs) request. By 2005, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) required PSAPs to move to phase two E911 to ensure full location capability from a 911 call. As nearly all PSAPs are phase-two compliant, the next logical step for these agencies is next generation 911 (NG911) capabilities. While it is likely that NG911 implementation will move slowly at first, there will be a period of time when agencies are moving in force to upgrade PSAPs to be equipped to handle future NG911 service.

This past month, Deltek updated its E911/NG911 vertical profiles to include details on the number of yearly procurements issued by states. Procurement data was made available for 2009 through 2011; we opted to leave out 2012 until the calendar year has concluded.

Moving forward, Deltek will provide profiles updates on yearly procurement activity every January. The map below provides a graphic representation of where the most procurement activity occurred. We can see that Texas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Virginia, Georgia, Michigan and Missouri were the top seven states, each with seven or more solicitation released during the three-year period.



When further breaking down the data, the most glaring piece of information is the number of opportunities by year. In 2009 and 2010, there were less than 30 total procurements each year. However, when moving into 2011, we see the number more than triple, with more than 95 solicitation issued. Is this merely a coincidence, or is there something deeper that can be yielded from these numbers? The latter seems more likely due to the movement by many state and local agencies to look at NG911 technologies. It is important to note that Deltek identified procurements for this analysis from not only NG911-capable hardware, but also NG911 consulting services. Many agencies are hesitant to move to NG911 without at least conducting needs assessments, studies and other consulting efforts to ensure the move toward NG911 is the right one. With that in mind, it seems even more reasonable to conclude that 2011 saw a significant jump in 911/NG911-related activities because of more agencies' willingness to consider the technology despite complete federal standards.



Analyst’s Take

Despite the fact that NG911 standards have not been fully established by the FCC and the federal government, more agencies are considering the technology and seeing its future value in ensuring citizen safety. Even with the interest to move to the technology, agencies want to ensure the path to an IP-based 911 system is developed properly. At the conclusion of the 2012 calendar year, Deltek will reevaluate the data and determine the number of procurements that took place in 2012. Based on the trend, it would seem likely that 2012 would have an even greater number of procurements for 911/NG911 technology.

The National Emergency Numbers Association (NENA) is set to complete its NG911 standards in the fourth quarter of 2012; however, this date may be pushed back again. Vendors who provide consulting services should continue to reach out to consolidated dispatch efforts and to county-level consortiums to determine if they have considered moves to NG911. On the vendor implementation side, agencies may still be cautious with regard to NG911, but NG911-capable technologies should be a goal in order to not be left in the dust of an outdated technology just a few years down the road. The path to nationwide NG911 implementation won’t be easy, but it will continue to move faster than ever before.