



## El Paso – Teller County 9-1-1 Authority

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Proposed Increase in Emergency Telephone Charge Moves Closer to Final PUC Approval** **Stipulated Agreement With PUC Staff Would Set Total Fee At \$1.35 Per Month**

The El Paso Teller 9-1-1 Authority has reached a stipulated agreement with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) staff that would allow the Authority to add \$.65 (sixty-five cents) per month to the emergency telephone service charge in El Paso and Teller counties bringing the total to \$1.35 per month.

In order to fund 9-1-1 service, all Colorado residents and businesses with telephone service pay a 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Charge. These charges are applied to monthly bills by telephone companies who provide landline, wireless or VoIP telephone service. Some telephone service providers identify this fee as a separate line item on the customer's monthly bill, and others lump this charge in to the broader package offered to the customer.

The charge is applied to each line of telephone service in the two-county area. It is used to build and maintain the extensive information technology and telephone infrastructure and provide training for the call takers necessary to respond to approximately 350,000 calls for help annually. "The current El Paso Teller charge was set at \$.70 (seventy cents) per month back in 2004 so it's been more than twelve years with no increase," said Authority Board Chair Dave Rose. "During the process of developing the 2015 and 2016 budgets, the Authority Board determined that the 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Charge would need to be increased in order to continue its support, training and certification programs for emergency dispatchers and to address critical technology needs. Recording equipment, file servers, software programs and data transmission lines were nearing capacity, approaching end of life or both."

In Colorado, 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Service is provided through 57 different local jurisdictions or governing bodies. Most of these governing bodies correspond closely with one of Colorado's 64 counties. The El Paso-Teller 9-1-1 Authority Board is comprised of nine members with representatives from El Paso and Teller counties, cities and towns and multiple public safety agencies throughout the two-county area.

During the PUC application process the Authority's original request for an increase to \$1.90 per month was reduced to \$1.35 per month, based on community feedback and PUC staff analysis. Even at the reduced rate recommended by PUC staff, the El Paso Teller 9-1-1 Authority will be able to maintain and improve its current level of service and assist local public safety agencies with their costs of providing 9-1-1 service, although at somewhat reduced levels and for a shorter period of time than envisioned in the original rate increase application.

The next step in the process is review of the stipulated agreement by an Administrative Law Judge and final approval by Public Utilities Commission at one of its weekly meetings. If the increase receives final PUC approval, telephone service providers will be given sixty-day notice before the new charge goes into effect.