
Denise A. Bode, Commissioner



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A LIFE-SAVING DECISION

Commissioner Bode praises FCC vote on VOIP-911

(Washington, D.C.) Calling it “a quick, decisive move to save lives while still encouraging innovation,” Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode today praised the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) vote this week that will mean those who use a VoIP telephone service (commonly referred to as “Internet phone service”) will have access to 911.

Bode is a member of the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) to the FCC, and is in Washington for an IAC meeting. She says the FCC Commissioners’ vote this week is in response to concerns brought by the IAC and others.

“There have been recent tragedies caused in part by the fact that the person needing help was using a VoIP phone service, unaware it did not offer either 911 service or enhanced (E911) service which allows the 911 operator to pinpoint the location of the call,” said Bode. “While I and my fellow IAC members are committed to the idea of allowing innovation to flourish without undue government interference, this is a safety and security issue.

“The Oklahoma Corporation Commission is responsible for overseeing the fund that pays for E911 upgrades for Oklahoma communities. As we approve these disbursements in the future, we will do it with the confidence that the service will be available to users of VoIP telephone service, as well as traditional phone service,” Bode added.

Specifically, the FCC Order approved Thursday requires VoIP telephone service providers to deliver all 911 calls to the customer’s local emergency operator as a standard feature of the service. The providers must also provide emergency operators with the call back number and location information of the caller if the 911 center has the necessary (E911) equipment. The requirements take effect in 4 months.