In support of the initiatives of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), a program of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Texas Gulf Coast Regional Consortium has been formed. This consortium is led by the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC), and they are partnering with the following government agencies to benefit many stakeholders throughout their communities; Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), the Galveston County Emergency Communication District (GalCo911), the Montgomery County Emergency Communication District (MCECD), and the Brazos County Emergency Communications District (BC911). The problem that is being resolved is the issue of the limited use of broadband by these public safety entities. Each of these organizations has a responsibility for the provision of 9-1-1 service in their respective jurisdiction; that is, they're responsible for access to emergency services by the citizens and visitors of their locale. This access to emergency services is currently mostly limited to users of legacy telecommunications service ' those using devices and services of broadband are largely limited to voice service alone ' and thereby limiting the value of this service in its access to 9-1-1 and emergency services. The resolution to this problem is a concept called Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1). Specifically, the use of a regional Emergency Services IP-enabled Network (ESInet) is a key in the migration towards NG9-1-1. An ESInet is simply defined by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) as an 'IP-based inter-network (network of networks) shared by all agencies which may be involved in any emergency.' The intent of this particular initiative is the interconnection of these public safety entities that have come together to create this regional consortium. The innovation in this project is political as well as technical. The interconnection of IP-based networks is just now coming into the world of 9-1-1 and emergency services. While the focus has been on networks serving the incumbent jurisdiction(s), this initiative is taking this concept to the regional level. In terms of political innovation, these organizations that represent 14 counties and a large population base of mixed type (urban, suburban, rural) have come together with the realization that working together not only makes sense in the technical world, but also in the world of public policy and operations. While they honor their individual responsibilities to their respective jurisdictions, they understand that working together as a means to shared goals and objectives is really the only workable solution. Part of that political reality, though, is the understanding that such must work to improve the operations of the respective 9-1-1/emergency service organization ' it is believed that this regional consortium will demonstrate exactly that. With a total population of 5,927,019 (Census, mid-2008), the following counties make up the jurisdiction of this regional consortium: Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton. This consortium is a mix of urban (Harris),
suburban (Montgomery), and rural (Colorado). Each of the 9-1-1 entities of this regional consortium demonstrate their qualifications and ability to implement this project by their long history of providing state-of-the-art 9-1-1 service in their respective jurisdictions. All have provided automatic location identification (ALI) service from wireless devices, thereby serving a large percentage of their calls-for-service. This was a difficult process that lasted several years that required coordination with a myriad of wireless service providers and related third-party service providers, all with high-level direction and guidance from the FCC. All of the consortium participants have a long and successful history in the provision of 9-1-1 service. While the number of jobs to be created and/or saved is difficult to quantify in this type of project, it is obvious that an impact will be felt in the telecommunications industry, the broadband service industry, and the ancillary equipment industry. While creating such an impact, the goal is achieved of improving access to and the use of broadband service by public safety agencies. The overall cost of this project is approximately $5,054,000. This includes final engineering design and competitive procurement services, implementation labor (project management services), application software, server cluster-router-operating software, SS7 gateways, network connectivity (first year), and network management services (first year). Further explanation is provided in subsequent parts of this application. It is believed that an award of this grant application not only will further the goals and objectives of this grant program by improving access to and the use of broadband service by public safety agencies, but will also have life-safety implications as well. Any time one can improve the access to emergency services by use of broadband services, a significant objective has been met in that lives, health, and property are positively impacted.