

911 emergency system simple but expensive

Post staff report

Already in use in 40 major U.S. cities, the 911 emergency phone system is amazingly simple—and expensive.

A person needing emergency help dials “911” to reach a switchboard. In seconds, the nearest emergency crew is dispatched. Instantly, the switchboard operator knows the precise location.

The six-county Greater Cincinnati area will have a 911 system within two years. That’s how long Cincinnati Bell estimates it will take to install the equipment. Gov. Richard Celeste signed the bill paving the way for the system June 18.

In Hamilton County, with its 396,072 access lines, Cincinnati Bell says the 911 system will cost \$2.4 million to install the

phone lines. The state will pick up the tab.

Maintenance charges on the lines would be \$59,202 per month. Phone customers would foot the bill with a 15-cent per month charge.

The cost of establishing the public safety answering points where calls would be received varies depending on how many the county wants. There could

be just two answering points, one in the city of Cincinnati and one at the Hamilton County Communications Center, with the city, county and its customers equally sharing set-up costs of \$190,480. It will cost another \$8779 a month to maintain them.

Each individual suburb wanting its own answering point would bear the cost.