CHICAGO, IL — October 19, 2012 — HigherGround, Inc. announced its participation in NG9-1-1 testing for National Emergency Number Associations 5th Industry Collaboration Event, or "ICE 5". Hosted by the Real-Time Communications Lab at the Illinois Institute of Technology School of Applied Technology from October 15-19, ICE 5 was the most complicated event in the series to-date, as it tested not only 9-1-1 system elements, but also the consumer-side technologies that will connect with future public safety systems.

People with speech and hearing disabilities will gain better access to emergency services as the result of the Industry Collaboration Event hosted by NENA: The 9-1-1 Association. The event brought together twenty-two leading public safety and technology companies with deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech disability advocates to test products designed to improve access to 9-1-1 for those communities, as well as enhance the ability of 9-1-1 centers to receive and share data-rich communications with the public and emergency responders.

ICE 5 resulted in heightened awareness of the requirements necessary for access to 9-1-1 by all persons in the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) environment. NG9-1-1, which will soon replace today's voice-centric 9-1-1 system, is designed to support text messaging and multimedia communications. These widely-used communications methods are especially critical for improving interactions between those with hearing- and speech-related disabilities and 9-1-1 call takers.

ICE 5 participants determined that end-to-end testing of the "call chain" is essential to ensuring that new and emerging technologies can provide the necessary reliability, stability, compatibility, and call quality over all media types, leading to significantly improved access to emergency services for all people, including individuals with disabilities.

"The real promise of NG9-1-1 is the system's capability to provide truly equal access to 9-1-1 for all people, irrespective of one's primary means of communication," said NENA President Barbara Jaeger, ENP. "It is therefore essential that all new technologies seamlessly and intuitively interface with each other, requiring a thorough and rigorous testing process. Through the ICE initiative, NENA is proud to provide a space for all relevant players to come together in an open, collaborative atmosphere to test the products and services that will ultimately enable Next Generation 9-1-1 and improve emergency responses for all citizens in need."

Testing at ICE 5 included an array of vendors and protocols including:
- Methods for receipt and display of text messages inside 9-1-1 centers;
- Locating and routing text and multimedia 9-1-1 messages;
- Multi-party conferencing to 9-1-1 utilizing video sign language interpreters and communication assistance services;
- Video compression algorithms designed to ensure video clarity for callers using American Sign Language;
- Text and voice transmission devices, including real-time text applications and teletypewriter (TTY) emulation;
- Connections for legacy devices to NG9-1-1, including TTY and captioned telephone;
- Network and system security; and
- Recording and retrieval of voice and non-voice data.

 "Testing in concert with other public safety vendors at the NENA Industry Collaboration Events allows manufacturers to gauge products prior to their mission-critical role of saving lives in the PSAP" said Terry Ryan, President of HigherGround, Inc. "We look forward to continuing our participation with NENA at future Industry Collaboration Events to ensure that we remain compatible with NG9-1-1 i3 standards."

Additional ICE 5 details are available at http://www.nena.org/ice/5. For information on past and future ICEs, visit www.nena.org/ice.

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About HigherGround

HigherGround, Inc., headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, is a developer of call recording software, monitoring solutions and reporting tools for call centers and public safety. HigherGround's proven solutions provide business intelligence for sound decision making and bottom-line control of compliance monitoring, risk management, and performance improvement. Capture911 and Quality911 applications have been installed in more than 1,000 PSAPs and government agencies around the country. For more information visit www.higherground.com and www.capture911.com.

About NENA: The 9-1-1 Association

NENA serves the public safety community as the only professional organization solely focused on 9-1-1 policy, technology, operations, and education issues. With more than 7,000 members in 48 chapters across North America and around the globe, NENA promotes the implementation and awareness of 9-1-1 and international three-digit emergency communications systems. NENA works with public policy leaders, emergency services and telecommunications industry partners, like-minded public safety associations, and other stakeholder groups to develop and carry out critical programs and initiatives; to facilitate the creation of an IP-based Next Generation 9-1-1 system; and to establish industry leading standards, training, and certifications. Find out more at www.nena.org.