

Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network PSAP Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- GHC 911 has been working with our PSAP Operations committee to develop an interim solution that is compatible with all major wireless carriers *Pg. 2*
- GHC 9-1-1 is in the initial phase of ramping up 9-1-1 wireless compliance and accuracy testing program *Pg. 2*
- PSAP Training *Pg. 3*

Vendor Communication

Many of you have received communications from various vendors offering services related to 9-1-1 over the last few months. Some of these services may be related to Next Generation or just inquiries for data. While we continue to tell vendors to contact GHC 9-1-1 on these issues there is no way to guarantee they will not contact your PSAP directly. Please help support us in this effort and continue to ask them to contact GHC 9-1-1 at info@911.org. Most of the communications you are receiving are topics we cover at our PSAP Operations Committee meetings. We would like to encourage you to attend the next meeting that will be our Annual update to the PSAP community **January 9th & 10th 2013**.

Stan Heffernan, Chief Operations Officer

9-1-1 Day with the Astros

Tuesday, September 11, 2012, was the 7th Annual 9-1-1 Day with the Astros event at Minute Maid Park. This annual event is hosted by GHC 9-1-1 especially for 9-1-1 Telecommunicators, dispatchers and supervisors in the GHC 9-1-1 territory. It is one way that GHC 9-1-1 tries to show appreciation for the contributions to emergency communications made by PSAP personnel. Nearly 1,000 guests attended the event—this included representatives of 32 (out of 40) PSAPs and their family members.



Telecommunicators carrying U.S. flag during pregame ceremony

The Astros called this night “Heroes Night,” and had a pregame ceremony with public safety representatives that included local police chiefs and PSAP personnel from throughout the GHC 9-1-1 territory. The public safety representatives along with 9-1-1 mascot Cell Phone Sally carried the United States flag onto the field of Minute Maid Park.

GHC 9-1-1 Staff is very appreciative of the work that 9-1-1 Telecommunicators perform each day for our community. This occasion, was just one way to show our thanks.

Sonya Clauson, Public Information Officer

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Texting to 9-1-1	2
Supplemental ALI	2
Wireless Testing	2
Microwave Update	3
Training	3
2nd Qtr Call Stats & GHC 9-1-1 NOC Report	3
PSAP Operations Committee Update	4
TERT Activation Story	Insert
Meet a GHC 9-1-1 Staff	Insert
Meet a PSAP Coordinator	Insert

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Emergency Notification System –Self Registration Portal

We are pleased to announce a new feature to the Emergency Notification System (formerly known as Neighborhood Early Warning System—NEWS). This feature called Self Registration Portal (SRP) will provide wireless phone users the ability to register on a specially designed webpage, up to 4 cell phone numbers associated with their physical home address. Once registered, based on their physical home address, users can receive emergency notifications via voice and text messages sent from PSAPs to their wireless phones. A public information/education campaign and training will commence prior to the launch of the website. All training will be conducted at the Tom Bass Building. Training schedules will be posted on the GHC 9-1-1 website.

Roger Hauck, Operations Manager

Texting to 9-1-1 Update

We would like to provide some information on Texting to 9-1-1, what it will involve and where we stand at this time. We also want to update the PSAPs on what the carriers are doing and what GHC has ready for implementation.

The FCC has issued a mandate for carriers to provide a solution for texting to 9-1-1. At this point, Verizon and AT&T have developed and are in the process of testing their respective solutions. The testing is being conducted in Tennessee and North Carolina. Both carriers have developed programs that text to the actual 9-1-1 digits. The carriers will offer this for its customers, only if the PSAPs in that area participate. Verizon is expected to roll out in this area in the first half of 2013. AT&T anticipates a roll out in the second half of 2013. Each carrier has 2 delivery options to the PSAPs. One delivery method will be through the IP network to a web browser application installed on the 9-1-1 work stations. The second option for delivery is converting the SMS text message to Baudot tones and delivered to the 9-1-1 workstation through the TTY module. These are the only 2 carriers that we are aware of that are testing any solutions at this time.

GHC 911 has been working with our PSAP Operations committee to develop an interim solution that is compatible with all major wireless carriers, until the wireless carriers offer their own permanent Texting 9-1-1 solution. This will be an opt-in solution, where the members of the hearing-impaired community will register via website.

This registration will allow the user to text to the PSAPs via a short code, which will be GHC911 (442911). The texts will be delivered to the PSAP through the IP network to a web browser application installed on the 911 work stations.

The testing has been completed with the help of the PSAP committee, and the roll out will be a Phased Roll Out with the Hearing Impaired Community being the first phase. PR and training are necessary, but once completed, the roll out date is planned for mid-January. All training will be conducted at the Tom Bass Building. Training schedules will be posted on the 911 website.

Roger Hauck, Operations Manager

Supplemental ALI

Our first development project for 2013 is underway now in the planning stages. For now it is being referred to as "Supplemental ALI" and the target implementation date is February 2013. As discussed and supported at our PSAP Committee meeting this will be an opt-In self-registration service offered to your citizens. It will enable your citizens to register their phone numbers so that when an incoming 9-1-1 call is received at your PSAP, supplemental information is displayed for the call taker. Our goal is to have a demo at the January PSAP Committee meeting in January 2013.

Stan Heffernan, Chief Operations Officer

Wireless Testing

GHC 9-1-1 Emergency Network first implemented Phase II wireless location technology in 2000 with all carriers compliant by 2004. During this time frame, the Network conducted initial deployment tests to ensure all carriers were meeting the FCC standards for location accuracy and reliability.

Bringing each of the five wireless carriers online in Phase II compliance involved testing each cell phone provider, cell towers, and the directional facing of the towers. Since this initial deployment, all carriers conducted maintenance testing on a regular basis as their network and wireless technology evolved and new towers were added.

In 2007, GHC 9-1-1 started a Maintenance Testing program to test and ensure local wireless carriers continue to be in compliance with the FCC's standards to meet the 100 and 300 meter accuracy and reliability requirements for E911 Phase II operations.

To this day, GHC continues to perform 9-1-1 wireless testing to ensure accuracy in providing location information to our PSAPs. We've conducted over 5,000 test calls to our PSAPs since the inception of this program. GHC 9-1-1 is in the initial phase of ramping up our 9-1-1 wireless compliance and accuracy testing program within Harris County and Fort Bend County.

We've recently hired a contractor (Karyn Henry) to conduct extensive wireless phase II testing for indoor / outdoor accuracy, mid-call location updates, and as well as cell site performances. She may possibly call into your PSAP soon to conduct these 9-1-1 wireless test calls on a regular scheduled basis. Your cooperation and participation will greatly ensure the success of this program by assisting her with answering some key questions when the call is being answered by your PSAP.

Vi Ly, Database/GIS Manager



Microwave/Facilities Update

GHC Sites with Microwave

- Tom Bass Building
- Houston Emergency Center
- Pasadena PD
- League City PD
- Friendswood PD
- Missouri City PD
- Ft. Bend Sheriff
- Cy-Creek EMS

GHC 9-1-1 has been working on a joint effort with the City Of Houston Radio Communications Division and Harris County Radio Division to build a state of the art Microwave Network throughout our District. This Microwave Network will provide a diversified path to the PSAPS of critical data (ALI), alarming/monitoring, and hopefully one day voice. This means we do not have to depend only on wired connectivity. Wired connectivity can become damaged and cause major outages for the respective area.

GHC has microwave radio equipment, including antennas and transmission lines at these 8 PSAPs plus 16 non-PSAP sites. There are 28 PSAPs that do not have current infrastructure to support the microwave antennas. FCC requires these antennas to be at least 6' diameter for our 6GHz radio frequency band. These 28 PSAPs currently have ATT 3G wireless networks but we are looking into other solutions like Wi-MAX, LTE and 4.9Ghz Public Safety Wi-Fi. These alternative solutions can provide wireless connectivity to these 28 sites that will match the reliability and dependability we expect from the FCC licensed 6GHz microwave network.

The sites with microwave equipment will require modification by GHC 9-1-1 contractors in order to establish connectivity with the 9-1-1 equipment. The sites without microwave equipment will also require some work for connectivity once a wireless solution is determined.

Roger Hauck, Operations Manager

Training

The Training Schedule for the remainder of 2012, as usual, is posted on the GHC 9-1-1 website. However, listed below is the schedule for the 1st quarter of 2013.

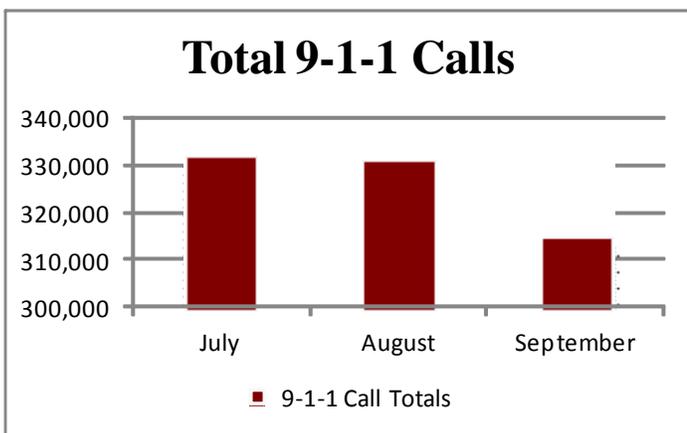
January		February		March	
Jan 9-10	9-1-1 Equipment PSAP (evening)	Feb 7-8	9-1-1 Equipment PSAP (day)	Mar 6-7	9-1-1 Equipment PSAP (evening)
Jan 15	Motivation	Feb 12	What do you Want (Customer Service)	Mar 14	TTY and Fire
Jan 22	Advanced VESTA	Feb 19	Advanced VESTA	Mar 19	Advanced VESTA
Jan 29-30	9-1-1 Equipment SSAP (day)	Feb 26-27	9-1-1 Equipment SSAP (evening)	Mar 26-27	9-1-1 Equipment SSAP (day)

The PSAP Operations Committee discussed the need for the 9-1-1 Equipment to coincide under the same guidelines as EMD, TCIC/NCIC. And Recertification at every 2 years effective January 2013. More details to come.

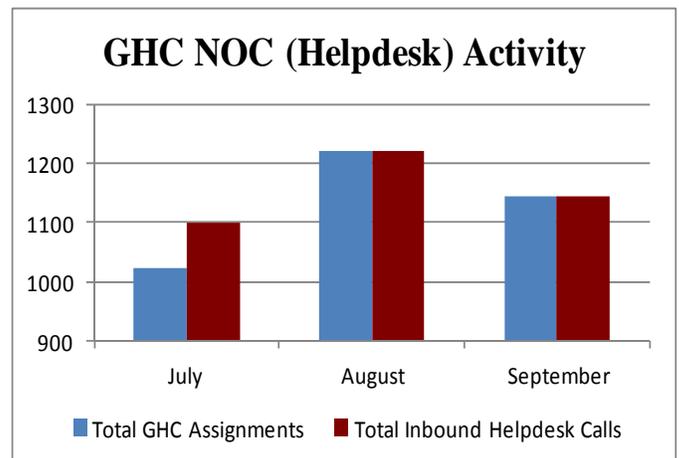
Roxie Dodd, Training Administrator

3rd Quarter Call Stats & GHC 9-1-1 Network Operations Center (NOC) Activity

The chart below tracks the total number of inbound calls for all PSAP's for the 3rd quarter of 2012: (Historically, call volumes during summer months are higher, coinciding with the end of the school year. The call volumes drop back down again, when schools are back in session).



The chart below tracks the total number of inbound support calls to the GHC 9-1-1 NOC and assignments for the 3rd quarter of 2012:



Remember you can always open a ticket or get an update on current service issues by emailing NOC@911.org or by calling (832) 237-1911.

Meet a GHC 9-1-1 Staff Member—Database/GIS Analyst

Dawn Rhodes has worked for GHC 9-1-1 for the past 6 years. She has been married to her husband Richard for 11 years and they currently reside in Pearland. Her hobby is travelling and in her free time she enjoys reading, watching movies and spending time with family. She is the Children's Youth leader at her church, where she also sings and plays the drums for their Praise Team.

What are the tasks and duties you are responsible for?

I work with the various phone companies to maintain the database of phone numbers and addresses for the residents of Harris and Fort Bend counties so as they call 9-1-1 the correct information will be displayed for the 9-1-1 agencies. I also assist wireless companies in the routing of new towers built in the area. In addition, I assist in updating the GIS ArcMap with the new streets and subdivisions that are being built throughout the area. As the cities grow, so does my job.

Did you work in a similar position/field prior to your job now?

Yes and No – I previously worked for the Pasadena Police Department where I was a PSO (Police Service Officer). I worked in the dispatch, where I answered 9-1-1 calls and worked the radio dispatching the officers to those incoming calls; and then I worked in the jail, where I processed the prisoners that the officers arrested. So working with 9-1-1 previously helped with understanding my current job.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

The most challenging part of my job is the constant change in technology. Every time technology begins to change, (i.e. wireless, texting) my job requires me to learn how we are going to adjust for these changes and maneuver with them to make sure that your information is getting through to the call-taker.



Dawn Rhodes, GHC 9-1-1 Database/GIS Analyst



Meet a PSAP Coordinator

Kimberly "KC" Rogers has been the PSAP Coordinator at Friendswood PD for six of the fourteen years she has worked with them. She supervises the Records and Communications Division and her responsibilities include managing the radio system, 9-1-1 system, and the administrative phones within the department. She is also the Custodian of Police Records, Records Management Coordinator, Terminal Agency Coordinator, and the System Administrator for the law enforcement communications system which they share with seven other agencies in the Galveston and Harris County area.

Although she has varying job duties and wears many hats, it *is* exactly what she likes most about her job. Another favorite part of her job is the people she works with. "Not just my coworkers at the PD; I'm talking the entire city and more. In my position I work with just about every department in the city and it doesn't matter if you've been here one week or 30 years, you're treated like you've been here forever."

However, Kimberly does find that having to stay on top of all the changes in technology is challenging. She does a lot of extensive research and tries to read all material she can find on communications technology, equipment, and systems. She shares her knowledge and expertise in her field as she is a member of the GHC 9-1-1 Operations Committee and will serve on the 2013 Joint APCO/NENA Conference Committee.

When she is not at work, she likes to spend her free time boating, and reading. She also enjoys playing video games with her husband and playing games with their three daughters. Kimberly also volunteers her time to three Girl Scout troops.

"I've led with the idea that I'm not the top of the pyramid but part of the circle. It may be a lumpy circle at times but we (staff) seem to always stick together through thick and thin."

Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce



In the aftermaths of hurricanes Katrina and Rita and natural disasters that devastated many areas of our country, public safety communications centers have faced tremendous challenges. One of the greatest challenges was maintaining the staffing levels of the communications centers. To address this problem and expand on some individual state initiatives in place in a number of states, NENA and APCO International are joining hands to develop more widely the Telecommuni-

cator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT). TERT involves a comprehensive program that includes assistance to individual states in developing programs that would lead to the establishment of predetermined and selected teams of individuals who can be mobilized quickly and deployed to assist communications centers during disasters. States that either have a TERT program in place or are in the planning process include Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina and Texas.

As the public safety communications community prepares for future disasters, TERT recommends that communications centers be prepared for inoperable systems, loss of power and security, personnel and supply needs. In addition, communications centers should focus on training and planning for system restoration, multi-agency response and evacuation.

Excerpt taken from TERT Brochure found online at <http://www.njti-tert.org>



“In the aftermath of man-made and natural disasters that devastated many areas of our country, public safety communication centers have faced tremendous challenges.”



Steven Jones (right) pictured here with New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu

TERT Activation Story— Steven Jones

On August 30, Louisiana Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT) State Coordinator Violet Anderson notified National Joint TERT Initiative (NJTI) Co-Chairs Sherry Decker and Natalie Duran of a TERT request for assistance by the St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office PSAP. The center had been overloaded with requests for service in response to Hurricane Isaac, and all the Telecommunicators, who were also victims of the storm, had been working non-stop.

The eight-member Texas TERT Team, consisting of six members and two Team Leaders, was called on to provide support for the PSAP staff who were pushing 40 hours on-duty without relief. Baytown Communications Supervisor Steve Jones was called on to be a member of this team, and was the only representative on the team from the Houston area. Once given authorization to deploy in conjunction with EMAC, Steve traveled to Laplace, LA the evening of August 30th to provide relief to the Telecommunicators.

As expected, the conditions were not ideal. There was no water and only sporadic cell phone service when they arrived, and they were sleeping on cots or air mattresses. Eventually they were stationed in a hospital with electricity and water. Steve and the other TERT members worked closely with the Telecommunicators in Laplace to help restore order, maintain public safety, and provide information and assistance to those affected by the hurricane. After a week of deployment, Steve returned home on September 6th.

When asked about his experience, Steve had this to say, “Deploying to another agency to help dispatch is not easy, but I met so many wonderful people and I can't tell you how many times after finding out I was from Texas people would say “God bless you for coming to help us out.” It truly was an eye-opening experience. “

Ray Pheris, (Title) - City of Baytown

- ◆ *Steven Jones is the Public Safety Communications Supervisor for the City of Baytown.*
- ◆ *Took the CERT Class on June 20, 2012*
- ◆ *“It always seemed to me that in the time of a major event, everyone always thinks about the officers, firemen, medics, etc. But the dispatchers seem to be left out. So I joined TERT to help out dispatch centers in their time of need.” - Steven Jones*

PSAP Operation Committee Update

Meeting Summary September 12, 2012

The following PSAP's were in attendance at the September 12th Operations Meeting:

- ◆ City of Baytown
- ◆ Houston Emergency Center
- ◆ Pearland PD
- ◆ Cy-Fair Fire and EMS
- ◆ Jersey Village PD
- ◆ Richmond PD
- ◆ Cypress Creek EMS
- ◆ Katy PD
- ◆ Rosenberg PD
- ◆ Friendswood PD
- ◆ Northwest Rural EMS
- ◆ Hedwig Village PD
- ◆ Pasadena IDS PD

I would like to thank everyone who was able to attend the third meeting of 2012. I know everyone is very busy which makes it difficult to attend. This was a very informative and interactive meeting with lots of discussion in regards to Texting to 9-1-1, Emergency Notification System (ENS) SRP (Self Registration Portal) for cell phones, and ECaTs the new 9-1-1 call reporting tool that will replace Magic.

If anyone would like the notes from the meeting please contact the Helpdesk and we will be happy to provide them.

Roger Hauck, Operations Manager

Future PSAP Operations Meetings:

The next meeting scheduled for December 12, 2012 has been cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. It is now scheduled for **January 9th and 10th**. This is the **Annual GHC Update Meeting** and we have offered 2 meeting dates for your convenience. Please send your RSVP to rsvp@911.org.

Message from the Director

Most of GHC's PSAPs know that we provide the infrastructure to receive 9-1-1 calls—no matter the device you use. What may not be so well known, are all the additional services we provide, based on that infrastructure commitment.

Obviously, first of all, we provide service, maintenance and support for that equipment. As the initial installation itself, the service, maintenance and support are the result of tested engineering to determine the best fit and support for the infrastructure. As you can well imagine, there are a lot of folks out there claiming to have the "best" 9-1-1 product for the current state-of-the-art needs. GHC spends considerable resources and time studying the claims and matching them to the needs of our PSAPs.

This engineering skill, however, is not limited only to *initial* installation, repair, support or replacement. GHC is capable and happy to lend its considerable 9-1-1 engineering skills to changes at your PSAP which may be under consideration. This participation in the upgrade/move of your call center is not at additional cost to your PSAP. On the contrary, GHC considers this participation as part of its basic commitment to your call center. The next time you anticipate a move or a change at your PSAP, give us a call. You may be surprised at how much time and money you can save. It's what we do.

Lavergne Schwender, Executive Director

Next Edition January 2013:

- Meet a GHC 9-1-1 Staff Member
- Meet a PSAP Coordinator

