

Texas 9-1-1 Newsletter

Commission on State Emergency Communications

Volume 2, Issue 1, Fall 2004



Mission Statement

To preserve and enhance public safety and health through reliable access to emergency telecommunication services.

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TELECOMMUNICATORS HONORED

On September 1, 2004, the men and women who daily answer the 9-1-1 calls for help were honored at the 16th annual Public Safety Telecommunicator Awards celebration, held in Austin, in conjunction with the annual conference of the Texas chapter of the National Emergency Number Association.

Each year the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) invites all Texas 9-1-1 public safety answering points (PSAPs) to submit nominations for the awards, granted for exemplary handling of a 9-1-1 call. For the 16th anniversary of the awards, the following eight persons were presented with the highest honor, Telecommunicator of the Year:



- ★ Marcus Bauler, Lubbock, handled a cellular call from a woman losing consciousness due to a medication overdose.
- ★ Melinda Chambers, Palestine, handled a call from a woman being threatened by an armed family member.
- ★ Michael Hayes, Webster, handled a cellular call from an injured boat accident victim who did not know her location.
- ★ Wanda Lawson, Beaumont, handled a call reporting a suicide attempt in progress in California.
- ★ Jessica Martin, Victoria, handled a cellular call from a male hit by a train who did not know his location.
- ★ Elena Olivera, El Paso, initiated a cellular call to locate a young man reported to be contemplating suicide.
- ★ Cindy Shannon, Richland Hills, handled a call from a young girl reporting a one year old falling into a pool.
- ★ Kathy Yost, Houston, handled a call with a woman and her two children being threatened in their home.

The Team Award of Merit was awarded to 19 telecommunicators as a result of their coordinated efforts in handling 9-1-1 communications during the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster, including:

- ★ *Hemphill* - Mary Brandli, Nancy Clark, Amy Marcantel, and Teena Wayman
- ★ *Nacogdoches* - Crystal Ball, Angie Capel, Linda Fancher, Jerry Heilman, Elizabeth Malm, Gary McCormack, Brenda Schull, Jack Stripling, Tara Thomas, Jake Wilkins, Drew Wilson, and Sheila Yates
- ★ *San Augustine* - Yvonne Doen, Linda Lout, and Kenneth Taylor

Silent Hero Awards were presented to over 80 telecommunicators for performance above and beyond the call of duty. "Your focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of Texans highlights the best of our great state," stated Governor Rick Perry in a letter to the honorees. For more information, and to view photos of all the telecommunicators recognized, visit the CSEC website at www.911.state.tx.us/browse.php/appreciation_day.

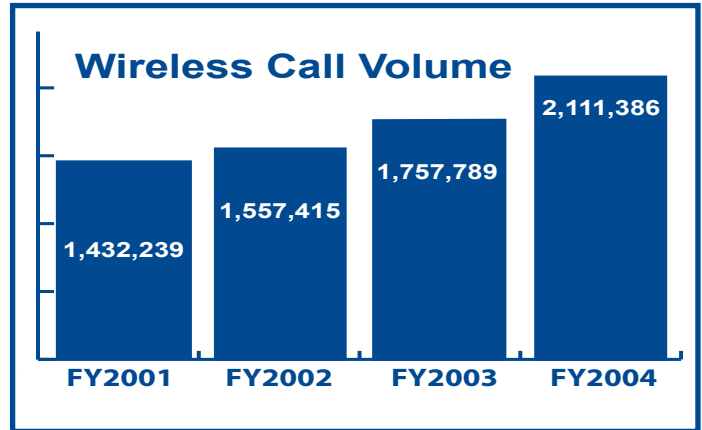
CSEC Wireless Phase II 9-1-1 Deployment Update

The mobile nature of wireless telecommunications presents 9-1-1 with great opportunities and challenges. Wireless 9-1-1 service provides the opportunity to enhance emergency response by providing location information about the caller.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has established two phases of implementation of wireless 9-1-1. Phase I provides the caller's callback number and cell tower location information to the public safety answering point (PSAP). Phase I is currently available in all counties in the CSEC program areas. Phase II provides Phase I information, with the addition of the caller's location, displayed as X and Y coordinates on a map viewed onscreen at the telecommunicator's workstation.

Sending and receiving Phase II location data presents a challenge to public safety to ensure that the necessary equipment and mapping capabilities have been implemented at the 9-1-1 answering center. Where the necessary equipment and mapping have been put into place, regional planning commissions (RPCs) in the CSEC program are moving forward. Requests for Phase II service have been made to the nation's largest wireless carriers by three RPCs: Capital Area Council of Governments (Austin area), North Central

Texas Council of Governments (DFW area), and South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (Beaumont/Port Arthur area). Twelve additional RPCs may be able to submit Phase II requests in this fiscal year.



With Phase II deployment under way with the largest wireless carriers, CSEC is beginning discussions with smaller wireless carriers. Deployment of Phase II by smaller carriers is critical for rural areas, which are the majority of the CSEC program area, where larger providers may not have presence. CSEC and the regions are united in the goal to make Phase II the standard level of 9-1-1 service throughout Texas.

Regional 9-1-1 Primer

Texas Health & Safety Code Chapter 771 establishes the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) statewide 9-1-1 program, which by statute is implemented through contracts with Texas' 24 regional planning commissions (RPCs).

Wireless 9-1-1 Lingo

WIRELESS PHASE I

The first phase of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) two-phase plan for wireless 9-1-1. An emergency call delivered with Phase I provides the callback number plus the location of the tower from which the call originated.

WIRELESS PHASE II

A call delivered with Phase I information plus the location of the caller within feet, displayed as X and Y coordinates on a map.

MAPPED ALI

Mapped ALI is the software that must be implemented at the 9-1-1 public safety answering point (PSAP) in order for wireless Phase II location data to be viewed.

Each RPC develops a biennial strategic plan for the operation of 9-1-1 services throughout its jurisdiction. Through the planning process, the regions establish the goals for implementation and maintenance of the 9-1-1 system and establish budgets according to those goals.

The planning process occurs in two stages. Stage one is a high-level outline of costs, upon which the CSEC bases its Legislative Appropriations Request. Stage two is submitted after the legislature appropriates funding and the regional grant amounts are known, and includes detailed cost and technical specifications.

During the biennium, the regions carry out their strategic plans by contracting and working with telecommunications, database, and equipment vendors, whose combined services comprise the Texas 9-1-1 system. The CSEC supports the regions' efforts by providing guidance through rule and policy; by offering training; and by coordinating economies of scale wherever possible through contract negotiations, cooperative purchasing, and regulatory activity. Regional strategic plan performance is measured through quarterly performance reporting and annual compliance audits.

Poison Control Program Primer

As established by Texas Health & Safety Code Chapter 777, The Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) share administrative responsibility for the Texas Poison Control Program. The CSEC manages the contracts and makes payments for the equipment and network infrastructure requirements of the poison control system. DSHS distributes grants to and oversees the operation of the call centers, and collects and processes epidemiological information from the centers to support the public health responsibilities of the agency. The Poison Control Program is funded by appropriations to the CSEC from the collection of the Equalization Surcharge (.006 of intrastate long distance charges).

The Texas Poison Control Network serves the entire State of Texas and is composed of six poison call centers linked by an advanced telecommunications network. The center locations are established by statute in: Amarillo, Dallas, El Paso, Galveston, San Antonio, and Temple. Trained Specialists in Poison Information (SPIs) answer calls. Poison Control SPIs include highly educated health professionals such as pharmacists and registered nurses.

In 2003, the American Association of Poison Control Centers announced a new nationwide number shared by all poison centers. When you call 1-800-222-1222, you are automatically connected to the poison center serving your area. (Calls to the previous number, 1-800-POISON-1, continue to be answered, allowing for a safe transition period until public awareness of the new number is firmly established.) Calls to a poison center are confidential. Resources are available to accommodate special needs such as for hearing-impaired or non-English speaking callers. Poison centers are capable of transferring emergency calls to a 9-1-1 public safety answering point.

FY 2004 Key Performance Measures

The CSEC met or exceeded all of its key performance measure targets in Fiscal Year 2004.

- ✧ Total Number of Poison Control Calls Processed by the Texas Poison Control Network: Target exceeded by 33.5% with 340,690 calls processed.
- ✧ Number of 9-1-1 Calls Received by State Program Public Safety Answering Points: Target met within a 1% variance at 4,947,935 9-1-1 calls.
- ✧ Number of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) with Wireless Automatic Number Identification: Target met with all program PSAPs capable of receiving Wireless Phase I.
- ✧ Two measures, Percentage of Time the Wireline ALI System was Operational and Percentage of Time the Texas Poison Control Network was Operational, were met with both networks operational 100% of the time.

9-1-1 Wins Project Grant

A \$570,000 federal grant to design and prototype the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) of the future has been awarded to Texas A&M Research Foundation in partnership with state and local government, higher education, and industry.

The "next-generation" PSAP prototype will integrate an internet-based network architecture into the emergency call process, allowing critical information to be delivered to the PSAP using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). Currently, calls to 9-1-1 using pure VoIP -- if they arrive at the PSAP at all -- arrive without critical callback and location information. The purpose of the grant project is to bridge the technical divide between the new and existing telecommunications systems to provide enhanced 9-1-1 service to all callers.

The CSEC, which is one of two state government partners participating in this effort, is coordinating the requirements portion of the "next-generation" PSAP workstation, is helping to develop the project evaluation criteria, is assisting in the workshop agendas, and is also contributing some matching funds in support of the project.

The grant is being made through the Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunities Program (TOP). As part of the Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), TOP gives grants for model projects demonstrating innovative uses of network technologies. TOP evaluates and actively shares the lessons learned from these projects to ensure the benefits are broadly distributed across the country.

This grant is important to emergency communications. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is poised to become the predominant technology for telecommunications services. As the telecommunications world rapidly moves to VoIP, Texas 9-1-1 will be prepared.

Poison Emergency?
1-800-222-1222



Texas 9-1-1 Newsletter is an external publication of the Commission on State Emergency Communications. We want to hear from you. E-mail your questions and comments to the newsletter editor at: info@csec.state.tx.us.

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

79th Legislative Session Convenes	January 11
Commission Meeting	January 20
Spring Public Education Catalog Orders	March 1-25
National Poison Prevention Week	March 20-26
Public Safety Telecommunications Week	April 10-16
79th Legislative Session Ends	May 30

CSEC

EMPLOYEE

LONGEVITY

RECOGNITION

At the September 16, 2004 meeting, the Commission on State Emergency Communications began a tradition of awarding employees for 15, 10 and 5 years of service to the agency. The following were recognized for their loyal service to the Commission, which became fully operational on September 1, 1988.

15 years: Brian Millington and Velia Saenz Williams

10 years: Rhonda Leschber, Donna McCain, and Julie Warton

5 years: Maggie Baxter, Patsy Greiner, Celeste Martinez, Kelli Merriweather, Sherri Powell, and Norma Valle



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