

WSEMA FALL CONFERENCE 2006
Vancouver, WA.
E911 Advisory Committee Report
September 19-21, 2006

* **211 Request for Information Calls:** As a follow-up to the 2006 Spring Conference E911 report regarding the new 211 service now in place in several counties in the state, it would be of interest to local EM directors/coordinators to hear a report from those counties that have an implemented 211 service. Counties identified in the April, 2006, report as having 211 service included: Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom, King, Clark, Greater Columbia, Benton, Franklin, Kittitas, Walla Walla & Yakima. The service was created, in part, “for public access to information after a *natural or non-natural disaster* to benefit the people of the state of Washington by providing easier access and by reducing inefficiencies in connecting people with the desired service providers and to reduce duplication of efforts.” It would be of *special interest* if 211 service was utilized in any of the counties that were impacted by wildfires and in what ways the service proved to be valuable and reduced calls for information to the emergency management office, to an activated EOC or to 911 Centers.

As this is a fairly new service, it would be beneficial to include a summary of any reports in the WSEMA Fall Conference minutes to enlighten counties that do not yet have this service.

* **E911 Pandemic Flu issues:** The 911 agencies have been concerned over the past several months about being *overloaded* with 911 calls in the event of a pandemic flu emergency or the threat of such an emergency. A primary additional concern has been the *health* of the 911 dispatchers/staff and, consequently, their availability to report to work. A Pandemic Flu Planning Committee to develop E911 Center plans was created and has been very active. The committee chair is Jim Ricks of San Juan County. Preliminary revisions to the 19 page plan were completed in early September, 2006.

The plan *objective* is, “To insure the health and stability of local 911 PSAPs and the 911 infrastructure prior to, during and after a pandemic.” The plan is based on *phases* of alert for pandemic flu established by the World Health Organization (WHO). Precautions currently put in place by many PSAPs include implementation of daily hygienic practices in the PSAP. For example, antiseptic wipe downs of keyboards and other communication equipment. These precautions can be equally beneficial during normal cold/flu season and may well reduce absenteeism. Precautionary activities are scheduled to expand based on the “phase” of the pandemic.

It is important that local emergency managers review the 911 Pandemic Flu Plan in a coordinated effort with their local 911 Director to determine its integration with the jurisdictions Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). Should it be a supplement to Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8, Health Medical and

Mortuary, included as a special subject Annex or referenced in the CEMP as a protocol function? The plan may be *modified* to fit local operational procedures. For example, in Phase V issuing the order to close all non essential county services. In this scenario this order may well come from the Public Health Officer or by resolution by the Board of County Commissioners. In many counties this issue was addressed during the Y2K planning. What is critical is that the 911 and emergency management agencies know what the expectations are! Comments, suggestions for changes or additions may be forwarded to me at Jean12322@msn.com over the next few months. I will carry any such comments back to the state E911 Advisory Committee.

* **National Media E911 Public Information Reports:** The July 2006 issue of the Reader's Digest contains the article, The Next Disaster Are We Prepared? This entire article would be of interest to emergency managers. Additionally, there is a section specific to E911, page 80. We have all experienced one of the primary difficulties that occurs repeatedly during any disaster response and recovery. That is the inability for agencies to maintain communications (usually radio) with each other just at the time it is most critical they have that capability. Following is the **E911** excerpt from that article:

Has the city/county adopted E911? Many cities have upgraded their 911 call centers in recent years, but they're even better prepared if they have incorporated E911 (or "enhanced E911"). This technology enables emergency operators to identify the precise location of cell-phone callers through GPS systems. If you wind up stranded in flood waters, E911 could save your life. The article continues with the question does the city provide 24-hour alerts or warnings? In reality, many such alerts and warnings are also initiated through your local 911 center.

I refer to this report in the Reader's Digest as it is a publication widely read across America. Consequently, many disaster victims will, in some instances *incorrectly*, have the expectation they can rely on their wireless telephone to "pin-point" their location whether they are suddenly caught in a flood, an earthquake or a wildfire. If that call is received in an E911 Center, it will be critical to the rescue effort that the E911 Center and the Emergency Operations Center be "connected" with a joint response. Before the disaster, it is important that Emergency Managers work closely with their 911 centers in developing emergency plans and operational procedures.

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