

AUDRAIN COUNTY JOINT COMMUNICATIONS

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<http://www.audrain911.org>

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 10, 2009

Audrain County Joint Communications Celebrates National Public Safety Telecommunications Week and National 9-1-1 Education Month

Joins with national public safety leaders to thank telecommunicators and promote 9-1-1 awareness and proper usage

Mexico, MO – Audrain County Joint Communications is celebrating the second full week of April (April 12-18) as National Public Safety Telecommunications Week. This week, sponsored by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International and celebrated annually, honors the thousands of men and women who dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, respond to emergency calls, and render life-saving assistance to the world's citizens.

“I would like to thank all of our telecommunicators for their continued hard work and dedication to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the residents and property in Audrain County,” said 9-1-1 Director Chris Hardin.

Joint Communications also joins in a month-long campaign to help Americans of all ages recognize the importance of 9-1-1 and the role they play in ensuring effective and efficient emergency response in times of crisis. Groups including the United States Congress, APCO, and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) have recognized April as National 9-1-1 Education Month, and are encouraging the media, the 9-1-1 community, schools, the wireless industry, and public information providers to engage in 9-1-1 awareness and education activities this month.

As consumers utilize new communications technologies and devices, like cellular phones, 9-1-1 education takes on an increased importance for everyone, but especially for children, teens and parents.

“It is important for everyone to remember that 9-1-1 is for emergencies only. You should only call 9-1-1 when someone is hurt or in danger, or if you are in immediate need of police, fire, or medical assistance,” said Assistant 9-1-1 Director Dan Barnett. “You should also know how 9-1-1 works for your phone. Traditional landline phones are reliable and provide accurate information, including the customer’s name, phone number and address, to telecommunicators when you dial 9-1-1. However, these phones may not work if you use a cordless phone and the power is out, so you should always keep a corded phone connected in your home or business. Wireless 9-1-1 calls made from cell phones work differently than landline phones. When you dial 9-1-1 from a cell phone in Audrain County it will be answered by a telecommunicator at Joint Communications, but the information the telecommunicators receive will vary depending on the service provider. Audrain County is lucky to be one of the few counties in Missouri that can receive Phase II wireless 9-1-1 calls which provides a callback number and estimated location of the wireless caller. Joint Communications is currently only able to receive the callback number and an approximate location of the 9-1-1 caller if the call was made from a phone on the AT&T Mobility (formerly Cingular Wireless) or US Cellular networks, but staff is working with Sprint/Nextel, T-Mobile USA and Verizon Wireless to add their networks to Audrain County’s 9-1-1 system.”

Joint Communications has additional information about how 9-1-1 works and when to dial 9-1-1 on its website, <http://www.audrain911.org>.

NENA has also made a number of public safety educational resources for the media, public educators and citizens available on its National 9-1-1 Education Month webpage, <http://www.nena.org/education/911-education-month>, including an E-brochure entitled *Making 9-1-1 Work for YOU!*. The brochure is designed to provide essential information to the general public, children, teens and parents about the 9-1-1 system and emergency response.

About Audrain County Joint Communications

Audrain County Joint Communications is the public safety answering point (PSAP) for Audrain County which means that all of the 9-1-1 calls made in Audrain County are routed by the telephone company to the Joint Communications Center where they are answered by trained telecommunicators. Joint Communications is responsible for answering emergency (9-1-1) calls and non-emergency calls from the public requesting assistance from law enforcement, fire, and medical personnel throughout Audrain County. Telecommunicators obtain the necessary information from the callers then take the appropriate action which may include providing the requested information, connecting the caller to the correct agency, or dispatching the required assistance.

Audrain County Joint Communications is responsible for dispatching all of the law enforcement agencies, fire districts, and ambulance services in Audrain County. This involves using Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD) software to track the status and location of personnel and equipment. Joint Communications also provides a support role to the law enforcement agencies in Audrain County by running inquiries in the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) databases to check for wanted or missing people and stolen property. These systems also allow law enforcement officials to determine whether or not a person has a valid driver's license and current vehicle registration.

Joint Communications is currently located at the Audrain County Sheriff's Office at 1100 Littleby Road in Mexico, Missouri, with a new facility under construction in Vandiver Village at the intersection of East Liberty Street and Oross Street, across from the Mexico Country Club. Joint Communications serves all of Audrain County for a coverage area of 697 square miles with a population of nearly 26,000 people. Staff includes 9 full-time dispatchers, 2 part-time dispatchers, 3 full-time shift supervisors, the Assistant 9-1-1 Director, and the 9-1-1 Director. There are a minimum of two dispatchers on duty at all times to handle incoming and outgoing communications.

Joint Communications is overseen by the Audrain County Emergency Services (9-1-1) Board which is comprised of representatives elected from throughout Audrain County and is responsible for administering the revenue generated from the 3/8 cent sales tax that was passed by voters in April 2005, approving expenses and the annual budget, and addressing other issues relating to Joint Communications. The 9-1-1 Board has contracted out human resources services to the City of Mexico. The 9-1-1 Board meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Vandiver Village Office located on East Liberty by Meek's Lumber.

About APCO International

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International, Inc. is the world's oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications. APCO serves the professional needs of its 16,000 members worldwide by creating a platform for setting professional standards, addressing professional issues and providing education, products and services for people who manage, operate, maintain and supply the communications systems used by police, fire and emergency medical dispatch agencies throughout the world. For more information, visit www.apcointl.org.

For more information about National Public Safety Telecommunications Week, visit www.apcotelecomweek.org.

About NENA

The National Emergency Number Association's mission is to foster the technological advancement, availability and implementation of a universal emergency telephone number system (9-1-1). In carrying out its mission, NENA promotes research, planning, training and education. The protection of human life, the preservation of property, and the maintenance of general community security are among NENA's objectives. For more information, visit <http://www.nena.org>.

For more information about National 9-1-1 Education Month, visit <http://www.nena.org/education/911-education-month>.



Pictured from left to right

Front row: Assistant 911 Director Dan Barnett, 911 Director Chris Hardin

Second row: Dispatcher Amy Clark, Shift Supervisor Amanda Thompson, Dispatcher Jessica Perkins, Dispatcher Elisha Flowers, Dispatcher Julie Weston

Back row: Dispatcher Andrew Hull, Shift Supervisor Shelly Rahmouni, Dispatcher Tiffany Shrader, Dispatcher Jason Crawford, Dispatcher Tony Barnett, Shift Supervisor Adam Dubbert

Not pictured: Dispatcher Lacy Koncor