



EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT

ANDERSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRMAN MARK LUCAS

April 4, 2016

PRESS RELEASE

Fifteen Year Anniversary of the Carl E. McMillan Emergency Communications and Operations Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Anderson County Emergency Communications District Board of Directors is proud to announce the *Carl E. McMillan Emergency Communications and Operations Center* is celebrating it's fifteen year anniversary during *National Public Safety Telecommunications Week*. The center opened on March 27, 2001, and was the result of years of research, planning, and implementation. The communications center was named in honor of the late Lieutenant Carl E. "Jargo" McMillan who served as a sheriff's deputy and dispatcher for more than thirty years and is located in the Robert L. Jolley Building in Clinton.

The Anderson County Emergency Communications District was established by referendum in 1990 to provide Emergency 911 telephone service for Anderson County. The Anderson County 911 District currently provides 911 service to all areas of Anderson County except Oak Ridge and Clinton. The 911 District is an independent government agency and receives no funds from property or sales taxes. The sole source of revenue is a small surcharge on subscribers' landline and cellular telephone bills as well as funding from the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board.

After going on-line in 1992, 911 calls were routed to the local police departments and the Sheriff's Department. Medical emergencies were transferred to the Anderson County Emergency Medical Service from each of the five primary answering points. 911 calls continued to be received in this manner despite large increases in call volume for medical emergencies.

The 911 Board saw a need for a consolidated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in the mid 1990's. Emergency calls had increased substantially. Some 80% of all 911 calls were for medical emergencies, therefore, the majority of emergency calls had to be transferred to Anderson County EMS. A change was needed to continue to provide 911 services in the most efficient, effective manner possible. A consolidated PSAP was needed to keep up with increased demands.

The 911 Board, along with members of Anderson County Government, also sought to improve the communications and emergency operations needs of Anderson County. The sheriff's dispatch office served as the "center" of operations during emergencies, yet, did not have adequate radio equipment for day-to-day use. The equipment was old, dating back as far as 1982, and required frequent repair. The EMS radio equipment was also old and inadequate. Both dispatch offices were hot and cramped. A comprehensive overhaul of 911 services, radio communications, and emergency operations was the goal of both the 911 Board and Anderson County Government.

Space in the county owned Robert L. Jolley Building was secured. This houses the communications center and offices for 911 addressing and mapping. The 911 Board researched the needs of the Emergency Communications District and made numerous visits to other 911 centers. Information gained from these visits was a tremendous help in planning of the new center and in selecting new telephone and radio equipment.

The 911 Board proceeded carefully and conservatively in the planning and implementation of the new communications center. Equipment was chosen to best meet the needs of the district. Costs were reduced by using county personnel to perform a large portion of the equipment installation. Sheriffs' deputies with expertise in computer software, hardware, and radio equipment were used with outstanding results.

The 911 District has recently completed major upgrades for both 911 telephone and radio equipment. Both emergency 911 lines and seven-digit non-emergency lines are consolidated into a computerized telephone console. 911 calls can be transferred to surrounding counties and the Tennessee Highway Patrol. All telephone calls are digitally recorded for later playback. Cellular 911 calls can be received with our GIS mapping software and their location displayed. The center also has the ability to communicate with hearing impaired callers via a TTY device for each dispatcher. The communications center is now ready for *Next Generation 911* which will allow text messages and images to be sent from the caller via 911. This soon will be available from all cellular carriers in Tennessee. *NextGen 911* will be the latest in technology to aid callers when they need emergency services.

The communications center now has the latest in computer controlled radio equipment. This not only allows radio communications with sheriff's deputies, fire, and EMS units but local law enforcement and fire agencies including Oak Ridge and Clinton, surrounding counties, state organizations such as the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and the Tennessee Highway Patrol as well as the Department of Energy Operations Center in Oak Ridge. Sheriff's deputies are now able to use the statewide radio system and the Tennessee Valley Regional Communications System allowing access with local, state, and federal agencies throughout Tennessee. With communications "interoperability" a key element in a disaster or emergency, the center is equipped to maintain radio contact with all area public safety agencies.

Computer equipment has been upgraded to integrate Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software, National Crime Information Center (NCIC) software for law enforcement inquiries, and digital mapping to pinpoint 911 calls. Weather information including radar maps and severe weather broadcasts are available to provide immediate notification to emergency personnel.

Upgraded mobile CAD software allows Sheriff's patrol units to have instant access to arrest warrants and local criminal histories including mugshots from a laptop in their car. Deputies use computers and tablets in patrol cars to receive calls-for-service and "hotsheets" with information on wanted persons or other law enforcement information. Deputies can complete reports in the car without the need to drive to the office. This allows patrol deputies to remain out in county and protect the citizens.

Computerized, digital mapping is available after completion of another joint project with Anderson County Government and the State of Tennessee. This GIS mapping allows 911 calls both from landline and cellular telephones to be pinpointed. Dispatchers have access to the county road map, addresses, and aerial photographs. This mapping software aids in sorting through the maze of streets and roads in Anderson County.

Perhaps the most useful result of the center is that both the sheriff's dispatcher and the EMS and fire dispatcher are located together. This allows immediate contact in the event assistance is needed or in handling of multi-agency emergency response. All 911 calls from Anderson County, except for Oak Ridge and Clinton, are routed to the center where dispatchers handle the emergency. Police and fire calls for Norris, Oliver Springs, and Rocky Top are transferred to their respective dispatchers for response. Medical emergencies from Oak Ridge and Clinton are forwarded to the center for dispatch of EMS. With the tremendous increase in calls, dispatch efficiency is most important as it is becoming more and more difficult to keep up with the demand. A total of four dispatch positions and a supervisory position allows personnel to handle the daily workload.

The *Carl E. McMillan Emergency Communications and Operations Center* serves to provide the day-to-day public safety dispatch functions in Anderson County. This includes the receiving of 911 calls as the primary PSAP for Anderson County and dispatching of the Sheriff's Department, Emergency Medical Service, the five county volunteer fire departments, and the rescue squad. The center provides local law enforcement agencies with criminal warrants information and NCIC services. The center is staffed by sixteen Communications Deputies from the Anderson County Sheriff's Department. These dispatchers handle all emergency 911 and non-emergency telephone calls and dispatch the county sheriff's deputies, fire and rescue units, and ambulances. Some 55,000 incidents were dispatched to these public safety agencies last year. With more and more persons using cellular telephones, 911 calls for incidents have skyrocketed over the last few years. New technologies are being implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the communications center.

The Carl E. McMillan Emergency Communications & Operations Center is truly a cooperative effort between the Anderson County Emergency Communications District and Anderson County Government. Funding for the 911 telephone, radio, and other equipment is supplied by the 911 Board. Personnel costs for dispatchers are funded by the Anderson County Board of County Commissioners. Without this cooperation, the communications center would not be possible.

The Anderson County Emergency Communications District Board of Directors wishes to thank the Anderson County Board of County Commissioners, County Mayor Terry Frank, Sheriff Paul White, Emergency Services Director Nathan Sweet, Emergency Management Coordinator Steve Payne, and Road Superintendent Gary Long for their efforts in supporting the communications center.

The 911 Board also wishes to thank the dedicated dispatchers of the Anderson County Sheriff's Department and the local public safety agencies, who spend many long, hard hours providing services to Anderson County. The results of this effort are displayed in the quality of their work. The citizens of Anderson County are well served by this "state of the art" 911 communications center.

For information about 911 service in Anderson County, the communications center, or the upcoming events, please contact **Director Regina Copeland** at **865-463-8160**.

For the Board,

Mark Lucas, Chairman