

E-911 receives sparkling audit

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The Jessamine County E-911 Center recently scored 100 percent on a state audit designed to measure its mapping capabilities with incoming wireless calls.

Emergency Services Director Shelby Horn said she was very pleased with the agency's performance during the audit because Jessamine County was one of 104 counties which was audited, and of those only 59 percent passed.

"I am very much pleased with our audit. We got 100 percent on it, and very few other departments got 100 percent," Horn said. "The credit goes to our people - they do a fantastic job staying up with the new technology and they performed very well."

The agency was certified to receive wireless calls by the state wireless board in 2004, and Horn said the number of calls increases from year to year.

"We get a lot more wireless calls now than ever before. We've seen a major percentage of calls coming in wireless because so many more people are getting rid of their land lines," Horn said. "The last time I did a percentage, it was 55 percent land-line and 45 percent wireless, but it is a lot more now and it goes up drastically every year."

Chris Bowman, the center's GIS Addressing coordinator, said the audit was broken down into three components.

The first was just making sure the agency had mapping capabilities and that it worked.

The second tested the accuracy of the data coming in and was a little harder, but the center passed with flying colors, Bowman said.

"They took their GPS equipment out and collected GPS points and they came in here and said 'here are these X-Y coordinates, enter them into your map and tell me the address.' We had to be within 525 feet of the actual location and had to be within the same cross-streets and on the same side of the road," Bowman said. "We didn't know where they went. There were some rural and some in the city, which were harder because the numbers are a lot closer. That was just to judge us on how accurate our data was, and we got 100 percent, so we were very happy about that."

The final part required the equipment to automatically plot the incoming information on the map without the dispatcher having to do anything, and also show the cell phone number, the wireless carrier and the longitude and latitudinal coordinates.

Bowman said that every employee is trained to use the equipment, not just supervisors, unlike many agencies.

"One of the things we wanted to work on was we didn't want to be an agency where only a supervisor or the director knew how to use the map. So we took time before the audit to make sure all the dispatchers were trained and knew how to use the map," Bowman said. "We had a couple of training classes and worked with everybody so that when the guys came into do the audit they could go to any person, even the newest hire, and complete the audit. We were really glad all the dispatchers took the time to learn the extra parts."

Bowman said the Jessamine Fiscal Court has been very supportive in the center's efforts to keep the agency on the forefront of technology and provide the best service possible.

"The support we get from the fiscal court is great. Shelby is involved very much statewide, and we try to stay on top of the technology that is out there, but without their help it wouldn't be possible," Bowman said. "Some of the other CCEPS that passed the audit were major metropolitan areas like Lexington and Louisville, and we are really excited because we want the people here to feel like they get the same service that those areas do."

"You don't have to live in Lexington to get the same 911 service they do. We wanted our data to be as good as theirs, and it is," Bowman added.

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