



MONTGOMERY, OTHER LOCALITIES EXPLORE CREATION OF CENTRALIZED 911

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Dec. 15, 2008

Montgomery County, Virginia – The Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, City of Radford, Montgomery County, Radford University and Virginia Tech will receive funding from the Wireless E-911 Fund to evaluate forming a regional authority to collectively seek and fund 911 emergency communication improvements.

The Virginia E911 Wireless Fund will fund the approximately \$85,000 feasibility study. The Virginia E-911 Wireless Fund is managed by the Wireless E-911 Services Board and supported by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA). VITA staff will assist the contractor selected to conduct the feasibility study to realize the goal for improved community services.

A regional authority would centralize 911 dispatch centers to route calls to local emergency medical, fire and law enforcement for improved emergency communications services. It would also potentially allow fire and rescue workers to communicate directly on the same radio frequency with their counterparts from other localities or universities. Currently, the four localities and the two universities operate their own dispatch centers and radio frequencies for emergency calls.

An exploratory work group, which has been meeting since last summer, will begin the feasibility study in coming weeks. The study will determine whether it is technically feasible to form the proposed six-member authority. The study will also identify technical and operational issues which must be addressed to create a regional authority that will meet the present and future 911 emergency communication needs for the New River Valley.

In coming months, work group members will be working with their respective local governing bodies or management boards for approval of an agreement to work towards the creation of the proposed authority.

The feasibility study will be completed in 2009, with the goal of forming an authority by 2010. For more information, contact Montgomery County Administrator Clay Goodman at 382-6954.

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