

## **TCOG continues its push for region-wide next generation 9-1-1 system**

### **Sherman/Denison 9-1-1 Municipal Emergency Districts Join Effort**

SHERMAN, JUNE 9, 2017 – Dr. Susan Thomas, Executive Director of Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) has announced that TCOG's 9-1-1 Program will implement upgrades this summer to the current 9-1-1 Host/Remote System as part of another transitional step to Next Generation 9-1-1. The current equipment was installed in the spring of 2014 and supports all six of the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in TCOG's Program. These PSAPs include: Bonham Police Department, Gainesville Police Department, Whitesboro Police Department, Cooke County Sheriff's Office, Fannin County Sheriff's Office and Grayson County Sheriff's Office. Due to a recent collaborative project with the two local 9-1-1 municipal emergency districts, Sherman Police Department and Denison Police Department will now be included in the upgrades as well.

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) provides new, state-of-the-art technology to facilitate a variety of options for service collaboration between local public safety agencies which is essential to fully transition to NG 9-1-1. Benefits of this collaboration include: better caller location information when calls are transferred between agencies, ability to deploy regional text-to-911, and enhanced fiscal responsibility to citizens.

"The first and foremost job of government is to provide for the safety and security of its citizens, which is a goal this TCOG program addresses head-on," stated Sherman City Council Member Kevin Couch. "I'd like to commend the excellent work of TCOG staff to bring this cutting-edge technology to the citizens of Grayson County. There's no doubt that lives will be saved through this program."

In the spring of 2015, TCOG's 9-1-1 Program began working with the region's two local municipal emergency districts, the cities of Sherman and Denison, to add both public safety agencies to TCOG's 9-1-1 Host/Remote System. The Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) approved the TCOG Strategic Plan Amendment allowing TCOG to extend 9-1-1 service arrangements to both Sherman and Denison in August 2015. Since then, both agencies have joined the TCOG 9-1-1 Host/Remote System, saving the jurisdictions approximately \$100,000 in costs each.

"The Sherman Police Department is pleased to be a part of the TCOG Host/Remote System," stated Tracy Stenger, Sherman Police Department Dispatch Supervisor. "This effort has provided remarkable benefits for the City of Sherman and the community in which we serve. Moving forward together to provide Next Generation 9-1-1 will ensure our citizens continue to receive an elevated level of service."

While the Texoma region has not yet implemented "Text-to-911", the upgrade is necessary to deploy a new class of service to the region. Implementing text-to-911 across all jurisdictions in the region at the same time will eliminate inconsistencies in service delivery and prevent confusion for end users. "This is the smartest way to implement the new technology," noted TCOG's Executive Director Susan Thomas. "We want to prevent having a system where you can text from one city in the region, but not the other. In an emergency, citizens don't always know their exact locations, so the service level needs to be consistent."

TCOG's 9-1-1 Program has been working with all of the 9-1-1 PSAP agencies in our region with the goal of collaborating to develop a regional solution. Without the mutual efforts and support from area PSAPs

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and the Sherman and Denison 9-1-1 municipal districts, the project wouldn't be where it is today. TCOG anticipates implementing text-to-911 by the end of 2017.

"Technological advancement requirements and new means of communication create an ever-changing moving target for emergency services. Public safety providers must meet these challenges to ensure we are delivering those services expected by the community we serve," Denison Police Department Lieutenant F.C. Tillman stated. "Text-to-911 is one of those new venues societal expectations warrant. Denison is proud to join our area partners for delivery of those services."

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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