

From the Office of the Sheriff:

This is the second in a series of articles educating you of our initiatives set for the next several years. The first article discussed the MDC Program; this one will focus on centralized dispatch.

Centralized dispatch is nothing more than bringing all emergency dispatch operations into one location. More easily said than done, but we have made very positive steps in this area. Over the past few years we have integrated the entire City of Horicon a significant amount of dispatch responsibility from the City of Mayville. That has freed up resources that those communities can use elsewhere or has prevented the hiring of additional personnel. Dodge County has taken on those additional responsibilities without increasing staffing. There have been no direct costs to the two municipalities for providing this service for them.

Centralized dispatch is a means of bringing all similar services under one roof, into one center, capitalizing on the consolidation of resources. Dispatch centers, the equipment and staffing are not cheap and the upgrades necessary to remain current are constant. Technology now allows us to do more, be more responsive, and reach out to a much broader base.

The first step was required by our state legislature when they required each county to identify one Public Service Answering Point (PSAP). This was a requirement in order to apply for funding to offset the costs of cellular 911 equipment recently installed. This will allow us to identify the caller's location, a feature not available for cell callers previously. The Dodge County Board, by resolution, identified that PSAP as the Dodge County Sheriff's Department. Currently, 70% of all 911 calls are made via cellular telephone. The Dodge County Sheriff's Department is the only center in the county that can field those calls. Many residents rely solely on cellular phones.

Currently, the Dodge County Sheriff's Department dispatches all Police, Fire, EMS and First Responders with the exception of the City of Beaver Dam. We also test all the counties weather warning systems. With over 20 law enforcement agencies in the county and an equal number of fire and EMS organizations, this generates a significant work load, a work load we have successfully managed. We have built a new state-of-the-art E911 Center that hosts six work stations of which we routinely use two of them. We planned for the future, knowing that consolidated dispatch would eventually be required if for no other reason, for financial reasons.

If the Dodge County Sheriff's Dept. is tasked with generating the emergency response to a call for help, we should be the center that fields that initial call. Currently when many of our rural citizen's dial 911, the calls are answered by the City of Columbus or the City of Beaver Dam. That information must then be transferred to us, which delays the response, and at times dropped calls.

Recently, Dodge County Board Chairman Russ Kottke agreed to offer full dispatch services to the City of Beaver Dam at no cost to Beaver Dam taxpayer's. Depending upon how it is handled it would have no impact on the current professional services Beaver Dam currently enjoy's today. It would provide more prompt and efficient 911 services and build upon the great foundation of teamwork enjoyed between Beaver Dam emergency services and the Sheriff's department.

It would bring 100% of emergency dispatch services in to one center, something that will be eventually required due to current and future fiscal restraints on local government. Thanks for listening tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.