

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Recently, we have made great strides in redirecting all of your 911 calls to the Sheriff's Department from the local police departments. We have always been the recipient of all cellular 911 calls but several areas of the county the landline 911's went elsewhere. This summer we redirected the Beaver Dam area townships of Calamus and Beaver Dam to the Sheriff's Department. These had been going to the City of Beaver Dam Police Department. We have also been working closely with the City of Columbus to redirect hundreds of residences in the Townships of Elba, Portland and Calamus to be directed to the Sheriff's Department vs. the City of Columbus Police Department.

This will ensure that every 911 call within the borders of Dodge County will go to our E911 Center. This provides a more rapid identification and response of the first responders you need, so they get to you in the shortest amount of time. This also formalizes how we do business and establishes one protocol, one way of doing business during an emergency, a benefit to everyone. The cities of Beaver Dam and Columbus have done a great job handling these calls for many years. Relieving them of this responsibility will allow their staff to focus on other matters.

There will be a few that may argue that this new way of doing business will delay services. I totally disagree. We know that most 911 calls, cellular or hard line, require a law enforcement response. Whether it is a heart attack, car crash, or domestic disturbance, law enforcement is the first responder to these crises. Currently, the Sheriff's Department is the primary responder for over 1/2 of the county's population. The balance have their own police department (Horicon, Beaver Dam, Mayville etc.) that serve as their primary at which time we would be considered secondary or the primaries back-up. For this reason it makes sense to redirect all calls to us.

The Sheriff's Department also pages for over 90% of all fire, first responder units, and EMS within the county. The only exception is Columbus Fire and Heartline EMS which services Columbus. Should a 911 call come in for their services, we take all the pertinent information. The dispatcher then determines, based upon the seriousness of the event, whether or not to call the City of Columbus direct or transfer the call to them for paging the needed resources. We do not like to transfer calls as they can be dropped. We are more likely to have one 911 Dispatcher collect the necessary information as the other makes contact with Columbus by either radio or telephone. This allows for many things to be accomplished at once.

We have also assumed the dispatching for the City of Beaver Dam Fire and EMS. Originally thought to be a more complex procedure, we have learned that it was quite simple and is going very good. For approx. two months we have also taken the dispatch responsibility for the City of Beaver Dam PD's third shift. This has gone well when you figure it occurred six months ahead of schedule. The management team and employees of Beaver Dam are working hard, teaming up with the Sheriff's Department for a successful transition of the balance on January 1st.

Drastic changes such as these do not go without roadblocks and challenges. We knew we would have to work hard. I gauge the success of our changes not on how many roadblocks we experience, but how we react to them and remove them from our path. Change can be hard to explain and even harder to convince

