

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

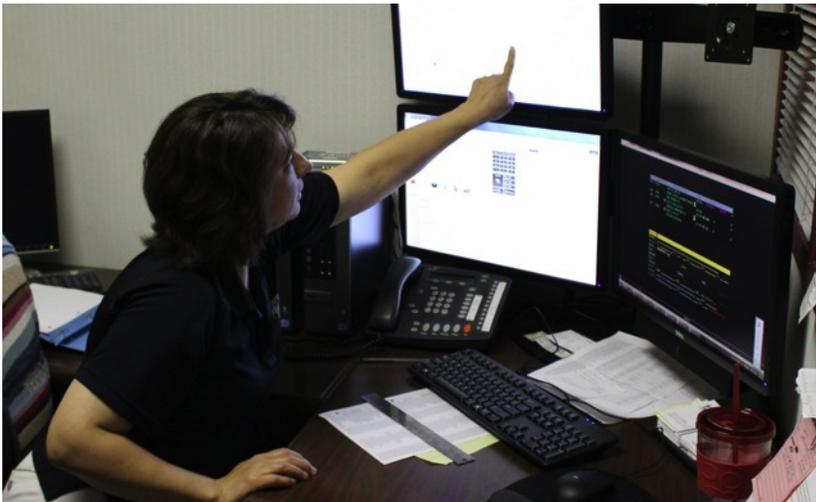
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August 21, 2013

## “New 911 System”

It's one of the most reassuring institutions in our society. If a person has a medical, fire or other type of emergency, they know they can call 911 and there's help on the other end of the line. The dispatchers answering that line in Norfolk have recently become more efficient than ever with an upgrade of the city's 911 system.

“Our previous 911 system was installed eight years ago and we haven't had any sort of support for it in the last few years. It was outdated in many ways as it was an analog system. With the new digital system, we are able to better identify the source of the calls and get that information to the appropriate emergency personnel sooner,” said Mike Bauer, Norfolk City Police Captain.



Dispatcher Supervisor Tammy Mancini points out features of the City's new 911 system which goes into full use August 21st.

There are currently four 911 lines that come into the Norfolk City Police headquarters. The operators and supervisor on duty take calls from an area in and within a few miles of Norfolk and from all of Stanton County as Norfolk has contracted with Stanton to take their emergency calls. The county sheriff offices in other nearby counties pick up the calls that originate closer to them.

When a person calls in to 911, the operator answers and looks at two screens that give out information about the call. One screen will show on a map where the call is originating. It will be accurate to a few feet if the person is calling from a smart phone

enabled with GPS and will be within 100 feet or so if the person is calling from a landline or other phone. The new 911 system is able to show the coordinates of the tower where a call is coming from depending on what type of phone is used and who the cell phone carrier is.

The second screen in front of the dispatcher gives the phone number of the person who is calling. It also gives them the option of sending that call to another county or agency that is closer to the person in need.

“Occasionally we will get a call that was sent from a cell phone tower in Colfax county or other area. We can click a button on the screen that immediately transfers that call to the closer agency while we stay on the line to make sure the connections are made. It's all about getting help to the person as fast as possible,” Bauer said.

Operators at the 911 center are trained to get the information, keep the caller on the line and determine what agencies are needed to assist the individual including fire, rescue or police.

Since the new system comes with ongoing support, the maps on the screens will stay continually updated and technical support will be able to identify any problems with the system by dialing in remotely to the Norfolk location which greatly reduces or eliminates any downtime on the system.

The cost for the new system was \$198,000 with dispatchers training on the system in anticipation of it going into fulltime use this week.

The Norfolk 911 center is designated as a Public Safety Answering Point and also receives and distributes emergency weather related information from the National Weather Service.

Bauer said people need to be aware that even cell phones without any contract can still be used to call 911 as long as they have a charged battery.