

## **Crawford County Compliance Review May 2008**

At the March 2003 meeting of the State 9-1-1 Committee (SNC), the SNC voted to conduct random compliance reviews of 9-1-1 expenditures of Michigan counties. These reviews would be for expenditures of funds generated through the provisions of the amended 9-1-1 Act, PA 32 of 1986 (PA 32). County 9-1-1 revenues include: wireless revenues distributed to counties through the State, revenues collected through county 9-1-1 surcharges on landline phones, and dispatcher training funds distributed to primary public safety answering points (PSAPs).

On May 4, 2007, the SNC Certification Subcommittee randomly selected Crawford County for a compliance review. Subcommittee members Mr. John Bawol, Mr. Leonard Norman, Ms. Suzan Hensel Clark\*, and Ms. Harriet Miller-Brown were named to the Crawford County Compliance Review Team. The years 2005, 2006, and 2007 (to-date) were chosen as the time period for the focus of the review.

On May 7, 2007, a letter advising Crawford County of its review was sent to the 9-1-1 Director, Mr. Larry Akers of the Crawford Emergency Central Dispatch (CECD). The letter requested the following information from Crawford County:

- The Crawford County 9-1-1 plan
- Copy of the most current policy and procedures for CECD
- A copy of the 2005, 2006, and 2007 (to-date) 9-1-1 budgets
- Copies of budgetary reports or journals, including all line items for 9-1-1 funds receipts and expenditures
- Copy of indirect costs, if they are being charged to 9-1-1
- Copy of wireless training funds, revenue journal entries and expenditures, and completed DTS-510 forms from 2005 to-date
- Name of a contact person to serve as a coordinator for the review
- Written description of fund distribution (wireless and wireline)

The requested information was received by the State 9-1-1 Administrator's Office in a timely and organized manner.

### **Background**

The Crawford Emergency Central Dispatch (CECD) represents all police, fire, and emergency medical agencies in Crawford County and receives the entire 9-1-1 call volume within the geographic boundaries of Crawford County. Operating policy and procedures are established through the CECD. There are written policies in place for operations including a policy on dispatching the closest car to calls for service. There are no written policies in place regarding the handling of ANI/ALI corrections, verifying wireless call locations, call retention, or procedures to follow in cases of equipment failure or for making tapes in regards to Freedom of Information (FOI) call requests. The CECD's voice logging system is two years old.

Crawford County implemented Enhanced 9-1-1 in 1990. The county became Phase I wireless 9-1-1 compliant in 2000. Phase II wireless 9-1-1 was deployed in 2004. CECD dispatches for five police departments including the Crawford County Sheriff Department, Grayling City Police Department, Camp Grayling, MSP-Houghton Lake Post, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; four emergency medical services (EMS); and seven fire departments.

The county has an addressing ordinance, the Crawford County Uniform House Numbering Ordinance. The Ordinance is to uniformly assign and maintain house numbers to provide for easy identification to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the county. The Ordinance was adopted on December 19, 2007.

In 2007, CECD received an estimated 4,386 landline 9-1-1 calls and an estimated 1,732 wireless 9-1-1 calls. CECD logged 8,156 dispatched incidents in 2007. The yearly totals reflect only those calls in which an incident was dispatched. Calls for information, repeat calls, and calls not assigned an incident number are not included in these numbers.

CECD utilizes the Zetron radio and pager system with VHF patching to the state 800 system (20P911). CECD was previously with New World on the I Series AS400 until 1999 when they were interested in Y2K protection for the CAD. Because CECD could not afford the cost (New World quoted approximately \$46,000), a decision was made to convert CAD to the FSG Records Management System.

The voice logging system is two years old. CECD utilizes PLANT/CML for phone, and does not count VOIP.

CECD does not have an integrated local map system. Microsoft "Streets and Trips" is used to locate Phase II calls. Dispatchers are required to type in the Latitude and Longitude, as they cannot cut and paste into Streets and Trips.

CECD does not utilize Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD); calls go to Mobile Medical Response (MMR). Dispatchers do not provide any medical instruction prior to the arrival of an ambulance. The entire medical call is transferred to MMR.

LEIN is on a POP (Point of Presence) line. All entries, modifications, and cancellations are done by CECD with the exception of the Friend of the Court, as they enter their own warrants through their main office in Gaylord. Mr. Larry Akers, Director of CECD, noted that warrant recalls (cancellations) can be a problem, especially on Friday afternoons. CECD handles LEIN validations and received a good LEIN audit approximately one year ago.

A combination of landline and wireless 9-1-1 monies provide the revenue for CECD's operational costs. The landline and wireless 9-1-1 surcharge that were the subject of this review was collected on the basis of a vote to Crawford County citizens. In April of 1992, a 4.0 percent surcharge was approved by the Board of Commissioners. In August of 2000 voters approved an additional 16 percent surcharge. Through the next years the surcharge fluctuated to the 2007 9-1-1 landline collection rate of \$4.00 monthly. Since the wireless 9-1-1 distributions began, Crawford County has been certified by the SNC as eligible to receive its portion of state wireless 9-1-1 funds.

### **Review Process**

On April 15, 2008, the members of the Crawford County compliance review team met in Bay City for a pre-review meeting. Contact was made with CECD prior to the actual site visit to request clarification regarding the county's ledgers which show payments from townships referred to as "local unit contributions." Follow-up from the center director indicated that when Verizon equipment was updated to become Phase II and Y2K compliant, the cost of the new equipment was divided, with the county paying half and the townships and City of Grayling splitting the other half of the costs.

The CECD Communications Manual was reviewed. Recommended updates to the manual are located on page 6 of this document.

### **Site Visit – May 29-30, 2008**

The site visit and review of CECD was held May 29-30, 2008. The review team met with Mr. Akers. Mr. Akers noted there are seven full-time dispatchers (no part-time) and one director, who also serves as the county emergency manager. There are no supervisors. From midnight to noon one dispatcher is on duty. From noon to midnight there are two dispatchers. On Fridays the dispatchers work eight hour shifts; all other days are 12 hour shifts. At times, Mr. Akers fills in during the day as the second dispatcher. Emergency back-up and overflow calls go to Roscommon County.

Mr. Akers reports to Mr. Paul Compo, the Crawford County Administrator. Mr. Akers indicated that 60% of his time is 9-1-1 Central Dispatch and 40% is Emergency Management. Payroll and budget records do not reflect how much of his time or travel is being spent on either duty.

CECD is housed in a converted sheriff department vehicle garage, shared with the county Building and Zoning Department. The overall appearance of the central dispatch would benefit from some maintenance and organization. The facility is mainly unsecured, although it does have a camera for the entrance into the dispatch center which is monitored by the center (video is recorded and monitored at the jail). The outside door remains unlocked until 4 p.m. to allow access to the Building and Zoning Department. Some of the 9-1-1 equipment is housed in an unlocked janitor's closet, accessible from the outside only. The center director or a dispatcher would need to leave the dispatch area and go outside to check on equipment in the closet. The back-up battery system and 9-1-1 trunks are also in the closet. The only parking lot camera from the sheriff department does not view the janitor's closet. There are no sprinklers or smoke detectors in the center. There is a UPS and generator. There is no break room; employees eat at their work stations. The EOC (Emergency Operations Center) is a table in the room adjacent to the Communication Room offering limited seating. The center also lacks proper storage for files and other paper records.

There is a restroom for dispatchers' use, which is also partially used for storage. When working alone, the dispatchers use headsets for 9-1-1 calls and a portable for radio traffic. These items make it possible for the dispatchers to answer 9-1-1 calls and radio traffic when utilizing the restroom facilities.

Mr. Akers was asked what he would like to see changed if there were to be available funding. His number one priority would be a better facility for CECD (CAD or other equipment was not mentioned). He would also like to see the handling of warrants through the courts. He stated more staffing would be a plus, to include two dispatchers working at all times. Mr. Akers also felt it would be beneficial to have supervisors on staff that could help with issues such as complaints with dispatching. He felt medical dispatch training would be a good use of training funds.

#### Meeting with Local Fire Chiefs

The review team spoke with Chief Ed Holtcamp from the Beaver Creek Township Fire Department and Chief Doug Pratt from the Frederic Township Fire Department. They indicated that four or five meetings with fire chiefs are held annually and the Emergency Services Council meets quarterly and recommends policy and standard operating procedures. No meeting minutes are kept. There is also a Technical Control Board, which was created to satisfy LEIN requirements for law enforcement, and an Authority (Advisory) Board that serves in an advisory capacity and consists of all townships within the county as well as the City of Grayling and Camp Grayling. Funding is also covered through the Authority Board, which is the only board to keep meeting minutes. Both Chiefs felt the center could benefit from establishing protocol to assist dispatchers when they are in an uncertain position of making a judgment call in regard to setting priorities. Protocol for working with the Department of Natural Resources with their emergency needs would also be a benefit for dispatchers.

Chief Holtcamp stated he believed the 9-1-1 operation is in line with funding received. The county is made up of 75% state and federal land. There are approximately 15,000 residents in the county and the tax base is reflected accordingly.

Both Chief Holtcamp and Chief Pratt believe that adequate staffing, more education, and facility and equipment upgrades would be desirable if more funding were to be available. Both feel emergency responders support the dispatchers, and the dispatchers do a lot with what they have to work with. They also believe the community supports 9-1-1, as does the county Board of Commissioners, and a good working relationship with local industry exists. The surcharge ballot issue has been well received and supported by the community.

### **Crawford Emergency Central Dispatch Summary**

Annual Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2004/2005 = \$450,105 (through 9-30-05)  
Annual Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2005/2006 = \$461,739 (through 9-30-06)  
Annual Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2006/2007 = \$328,690 (through 6-30-07)

Wireless 9-1-1 Payments for 2005 = \$ 87,880  
Wireless 9-1-1 Payments for 2006 = \$ 97,525  
Wireless 9-1-1 Payments for 2007 = \$103,324

9-1-1 Landline Surcharge for 2005 = \$347,368 (through 9-30-05)  
9-1-1 Landline Surcharge for 2006 = \$325,673 (through 9-30-06)  
9-1-1 Landline Surcharge for 2007 = \$231,991 (through 6-30-07)

#### Landline 9-1-1 Surcharge Funds

The landline surcharge funds are remitted into account fund number 990 and used for the regular operating budget of CECD. The funds cover costs for the day-to-day operations of the 9-1-1 center. These costs include: building maintenance, radio system maintenance, dispatching staff wages and benefits, equipment repair, dispatch center LEIN, office supplies, memberships and subscriptions directly related to 9-1-1, telephone costs, postage, administrative expenses, contract services, and travel expenses.

Of the total budget, indirect costs amounting to \$7,500 per year are charged back by the county for administrative expenses (annual services such as payroll, invoice processing, liability insurance, etc). This represents approximately 1.6% of the annual budget.

#### Wireless 9-1-1 Funds

Wireless funds are remitted into account fund number 991 and used for the regular operating budget of CECD as outlined above for landline surcharge funds.

CECD receives GIS contributions (account 326). When the county created the GIS program, it was done in collaboration with a number of entities and was established as a department within central dispatch for the program. GIS expenses (training, maintenance, supplies, etc.) are charged to that department within the central dispatch fund and conversely, when the system produces revenue (primarily from the production of maps for various reasons), the revenue goes to the dispatch center.

#### Training Funds

*(Special Note: This portion of the review was performed by Ms. Gina Rosendall, Dispatcher Training coordinator, in the State 9-1-1 Office.)*

The required documentation was received in the State 9-1-1 Office from Mr. Akers within the timeframe requested. Receipts were separated by course and submitted in an organized manner. All invoices and receipts matched the amounts entered into the DTS-510.

Upon review of the invoices and receipts, seven courses were found from 2007 that were listed on the DTS-510 with only the tuition cost (the mileage, salary, and travel expenses were not originally included in the course cost). Mr. Akers updated the DTS-510 and resubmitted a signed copy. Electronic copies were requested via e-mail for the State 9-1-1 Office files and were received on April 24, 2008.

Three courses from 2004 were listed under 2005 course approval numbers. This was an error due to the way the courses were handled previously by MCOLES.

The courses listed for May 2 through May 5, 2006, are classes that were held consecutively at Oakland Community College and attended by Dispatcher Dennis Wallace. These are all approved courses. In February of 2007, another series of classes were attended by Dispatcher Jim Baker at Oakland Community College from February 5 through February 8.

Training Fund Distribution 2001	\$1,392.00
Training Fund Distribution 2002	\$2,977.00
Training Fund Distribution 2003	\$4,846.00
Training Fund Distribution 2004	\$2,695.00
Training Fund Distribution 2005	\$4,014.00
Training Fund Distribution 2006	\$ - 0 -
Training Fund Distribution 2007	\$ - 0 -

Training Fund Expenditures 2001	\$1,392.00
Training Fund Expenditures 2002	\$ - 0 -
Training Fund Expenditures 2003	\$ - 0 -
Training Fund Expenditures 2004	\$4,307.46
Training Fund Expenditures 2005	\$ 319.00
Training Fund Expenditures 2006	\$3,555.98
Training Fund Expenditures 2007	\$1,820.10

Funds in 2004 and 2005 had not been used within the two-year time limit established by the SNC, making CECD ineligible for 2006 and 2007 training money. (Note: Funds were also not received from the 2008 training fund distribution.)

A separate account needs to be established for the tracking of dispatcher training funds. In follow-up from Mr. Paul Compo, Crawford County administrator, on December 18, 2008, a separate budget report will be included showing line item 261-325-962-261 for Wireless Training Funds. This will include an expense line item showing training dollars expended.

CECD does not have a CTO program. Initial training for dispatchers consists of a basic CD-ROM and 40 hours of on-the-job training. There is no training checklist and progress is not documented.

### **Findings and Final Summary**

The Crawford County 9-1-1 Plan was enacted in August of 1990. The plan is current and in compliance with P.A. 32. The 9-1-1 plan creates the Crawford Emergency Central Dispatch Board (CECDB). The CECDB meets annually in October and at such other times as the membership determines. The CECDB facilitates communication and coordination of Crawford Emergency Central Dispatch in matters of county-wide 9-1-1 interests. The Authority Board oversees dispatching policy and procedures, but does not have direct fiscal oversight of CECD. The board consists of twelve members including the City of Grayling, County Board of Commissioners, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Camp Grayling, South Branch Township, Crawford County Road Commission, Beaver Creek Township, Frederic Township, Lovells Township, Grayling Township, Maple Forest Township, and the Department of State Police.

There is a very low turnover rate at CECD and staff retention is very good. CECD provides an effective 9-1-1 system given the budget constraints they are working with. CECD is prioritizing funds appropriately given the revenue available to them.

Space is scarce and is not adequate to providing lasting and secure support for electronic equipment.

*Necessary Corrective Action:*

1. The review team found that payroll and budget records do not reflect how much time the Dispatch Center Director spends working on CECD duties and Emergency Management duties. Records need to be changed to clearly distinguish time spent on each of these duties and that monies are utilized appropriately. Also, the Dispatch Director's travel costs need to be broken down according to CECD or Emergency Management travel/expenditures.
2. A separate accounting system needs to be established for tracking Dispatcher Training monies received and expenditures of the funds. A revenue line needs to be added which shows funds received. Also, the current training notation in the accounting ledgers needs to provide a breakdown of the types of training expenses (what the monies were spent on), or a separate transfer memo showing the transfer of funds from the training line.

*Recommended Action:*

1. Make available written policies regarding the handling of ANI/ALI corrections, verifying wireless call locations, call retention, or procedures to follow in cases of equipment failure or for making tapes in regards to Freedom of Information (FOI) call requests.
2. Implement office maintenance and organization to improve the overall appearance of the central dispatch. Move equipment and storage from the current outside janitor's closet to a more secure area inside the center and provide a storage area within the center for files and other paper records. Also, sprinklers and/or smoke detectors are needed to meet code requirements in the center's office space.
3. Update the CECD Communications Manual to include:
  - a. The F.C.C. warning in the front of the manual to contain the proper disclaimer
  - b. Provide tabs to section off the manual for ease of use by dispatchers
  - c. Add key information on standard operating procedures for call taking
  - d. Add procedures for emergency back-up systems, call rerouting, and what to do in cases of equipment failure
  - e. Update the telephone numbers referenced in the manual
  - f. Reference resources such as the center's liability/risk management carrier
4. The current training program is not structured nor is it well-documented; a more formal and documented program such as a Communications Training Officer (CTO) program should be put in place to facilitate consistency in the training of new dispatchers.
5. Establish a set schedule and more frequent meetings of the Crawford Emergency Central Dispatch Board. Follow standards for public meetings (i.e., Roberts Rules of Order) and the taking of meeting minutes.
6. In lieu of Microsoft Streets and Trips to locate Phase II calls, the use of a local system integrated with mapping is recommended to meet requirements.

In closing, based upon the documentation requested, made available to, and reviewed by the committee, Crawford County and its 9-1-1 operations are functionally in compliance with the requirements of PA 32 (as amended) at this time. Documentation will, however, need to be provided to the State 9-1-1 Office by June 1, 2009, which demonstrates that the items noted under Necessary Corrective Action on page 6 of this report have been met.

Submitted by: (December 2008)

Mr. John Bawol

Mr. Steve Leese

Ms. Harriet Miller-Brown

Mr. Leonard Norman

\* On March 12, 2008, Mr. Steve Leese was assigned to the review team to replace Ms. Hensel Clark who retired.