



## City of Roanoke E-911 Center Memorandum



**To:** Sonya Roman, Department Manager  
**CC:** E911 Staff  
**From:** Melissa Williams, Chair of 2015 Community Involvement Team  
(CIT)  
**Date:** 29 January 2016  
**Re:** 2015 Community Involvement Annual Report

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The Community Involvement Annual Report gives the 911 Center an opportunity to survey outside factors in our community that may impact our Department and Public Safety services delivery in general. This report also serves to highlight attended events and track interaction with the citizens of Roanoke.

### Summary of Events:

Program or event type	Number conducted	Number of people contacted	Feedback received	Action taken based on feedback
Citizens Police Academy	1	12		
City Leadership College	1	28		
Williamson Road Business Association	1	58	Very positive feedback and impressed that we are leading the way in the state related to "NextGen" solutions for citizens	

911 Center Tours	23 (21 tours not in conjunction with a presentation)	198 (166 that were not after a presentation)	Citizens very appreciative of available technology and equipment. Impressed about the overall number of calls processed.	
Community Walks	1	35		
Recruitment events	6	234		
Parks and Rec Summer Program Presentations	3	52		
Heart Alert Conferences	1	19	Appreciative of the department sharing information related to calls for service for cardiac patients	
Presentations for Business Groups	1	58		
Presentations for Hospitals	1	47		
Festivals & Outdoor City Events	4	362		

Our CIT members do a great job thoroughly educating our citizens about our department and the technology we utilize. Due to this fact most of the questions we receive are follow up questions about call volume, location accuracy related to cell phones and staffing/scheduling. Any questions are immediately addressed during the event and we ensure our citizens understanding of the topic. The only exception to this is if a citizen voices a complaint related to our department. There were no complaints voiced during 2015 CIT events.

### **Community Education**

We are committed to educating the citizens of Roanoke to ensure understanding of our public safety system and how to best access and use this service. Like most communities we continue to see an increase in cellular phone calls for our services and we have found that many people still have misconceptions of how this technology works. We have adjusted our presentations to help citizens understand the challenges related to processing wireless calls.

The City of Roanoke 911 center was the first PSAP in the region to implement TEXT2911 with several other jurisdictions now also offering this service. It is important for the department to continue contact with citizens to ensure their understanding of the benefits and challenges of this technology and other equipment and technologies we utilize.

The members of the 911center and/or Community Involvement Team participated in a total of 43 events in 2015. Total people contacted in reference to attended events were over 1,071. Our goal for 2015 was to attend 35 or more events. In 2014 we participated in a total of 46 events. Total people contacted in reference to attended events were over 1,476. These numbers reflect we did meet the goal of additional events although we did see a decrease on contacted citizen numbers from events from the year prior. For 2016 our goal will be to attend 40 or more events.

### **Social Media**

The 911 center launched a department Facebook page in March of 2015 and by years end had over 1,000 likes/followers. We have utilized the page to push out general information to our citizens and have used it most highly during severe weather events. This has assisted in keeping citizens updated on conditions and warnings and to “share” messages from various other city departments.

We include a statement on our Facebook page to advise citizens not to use Facebook as a means of reporting an emergency to the department. We will continue to work closely with the City of Roanoke Office of Communications to enhance and improve our social media exposure.

### **Media Requests**

Members of the E911 Center along with other City departments participated in “Media Training” in 2013 to assist them in interacting with local media resources and in how to perform a professional on camera interview. After initial training took place, practice taped interviews were completed and given immediate feedback by a media panel.

This training has assisted our department in working with various media outlets to request coverage for information we need to supply to the citizens of Roanoke. In 2015 we had numerous stories covered by televised media segments. We believe this has greatly benefited the citizens, our department and the city as a whole to ensure the public is aware of the functions of their 911 center and the people behind the processes. It gives us a wide reach to citizens although we do not know how many citizens are watching the segments, we believe hundreds, if not thousands of viewers are watching. We did start “posting” segments to our department Facebook page after it launched.

These positive interactions with the local media have assisted our Department in expanding the local community’s awareness of our responsibilities and important information citizens need to know prior to calling or texting 911.

## **Recruitment Events**

We will continue to work with our Human Resources Department to expand our departments' efforts to attend both local and regional recruitment opportunities. Our team members who attend these recruitment events will continue to receive specialized training in this area.

We saw a decrease in citizen attendance at recruitment events in 2015 which is most likely reflective of the lower unemployment rate in the region.

## **Translation Services**

The Hispanic population in the City of Roanoke increased to 5.5 percent as of the Decennial Census Count, April 1, 2010. The E-911 center utilizes the AT&T language Line to assist us with interpretation on a multitude of languages. In 2015 we had a total of 519 language line calls. 466 of those calls were for Spanish translation for a total of 90 percent of requests. In 2014 we had a total of 398 language line calls. 357 of those calls were for Spanish translation for a total of 90 percent of requests.

We had translation requests for a total of 19 different languages in 2015. The second highest demand of language line services was Arabic with 9 calls or .02 percent of total Language Line calls. These numbers reflect that our total number of calls has increased for the second year in a row after having a four year period where language line calls had decreased. This is also the second year in a row that requests for Spanish translators have also increased. These increases may reflect an increase in the Hispanic population in Roanoke City, however, at the time of this report there is not a verifiable source to corroborate an increase.

It should also be noted that the use of translation services is useful to track multi-cultural requests for service but does not accurately reflect the true composition or percentage of callers. Some of the requests for service may be from other cultures however the caller or a relative of the caller may communicate well enough in English to not require translation services through Language Line. It should also be noted that foreign language speaking families living in the City of Roanoke may have school aged children who are bi-lingual and can translate for family members.

We will continue to work with the City's Neighborhood Services and Human Resources department to increase our exposure to the Hispanic and other diverse communities.

## **Summation**

Our department continues to expand the Community Involvement Team and its efforts. These team members are highly committed to reaching out to our diverse community and assisting them with hiring opportunities and awareness of our department and its responsibilities, challenges, accomplishments and technologies used. The Community Involvement Team continues to be successful at its core function of raising community awareness as it relates to our department, public safety and the City as a whole.