



News from the County of Cumberland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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9-1-1 ISSUES RESOLVED

Cumberland County, ME:

Over the past few weeks the Cumberland County Regional Communications Center (CCRCC) in Windham has experienced several outages to the 9-1-1 system requiring the center transfer 9-1-1 service to their back up facility, the Maine State Police Barracks in Gray.

These 9-1-1 outages have caused serious safety concerns to public safety officials both due to the initial cause of the outages and lengthy delays in transferring the calls to the back up facility.

Officials from Cumberland County have been working diligently with the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Maine Emergency Service Communications Bureau, representatives of Fairpoint and their vendors to provide a solution to these critical issues.

As a result, effective at 1 PM this afternoon, complete 9-1-1 service has been fully restored at the CCRCC in Windham.

Officials have addressed both issues involving the cause of the outages and the delays in transferring the calls and have safeguards in place that will ensure a more prompt transfer should the system lose service.

- Fairpoint Communications has revised procedures that provide their call center staff members with additional training and specific instructions to follow in the event of a loss of service.
- Fairpoint has installed a "By-Pass" switch at the CCRCC that will allow staff members of the CCRCC to automatically transfer the calls to the back up facility in the event of an outage.
- Fairpoint has also installed a telephone system at the CCRCC that will alert CCRCC staff when there is an actual 9-1-1 outage.

Each of these systems have been tested and performed satisfactorily.

Fairpoint officials and their vendor representatives have determined that the original cause of the 9-1-1 outages at the CCRCC is due to a computer software configuration. The software configuration has been changed and officials are confident that the system is working properly.

On May 21, 2008, while the 9-1-1 service was transferred to the back up facility, the Town of Gorham Fire Department responded to a tragic fire at the Friendly Village which resulted in a fatality. While at the scene, fire officials were told that several people tried dialing 9-1-1 to report the fire but were unable to get through on the 9-1-1 system.

Gorham Fire Chief Bob Lefebvre, assisted by members of the Gorham Police Department, conducted a review of these reports and has concluded that the 9-1-1 outage did not cause an adverse delay in reporting of the fire or in the response to the fire.

The review has revealed that each person attempting to call 9-1-1 was successful and did get through to 9-1-1 communications officer immediately. Each call was transferred to the CCRCC and the call was dispatched immediately.

Officials have interviewed another person reported to have unsuccessfully attempted to reach 9-1-1 and have determined the individual did not attempt to call 9-1-1.

Telephone records of the event indicate that three 9-1-1 calls were made to report the fire and that all three calls were immediately successful. The telephone records also reveal that there were no unsuccessful 9-1-1 calls attempted during the time frame.

Officials from Fairpoint and their vendor representatives will continue to monitor the changes to the system at the CCRCC over the next several days.

Officials from Cumberland County respectfully thank members of the Commissioner of Public Safety office, the Maine State Police Communications Center, the Maine State Emergency Services Communications Bureau and members of Fairpoint for their commitment to working together to resolve this important public safety issue.

For more information on the 9-1-1 service and loss of service, please contact Cumberland County Emergency Communications Director Bill Holmes at 893-2810 / 400-4766 or holmes@cumberlandcounty.org

For more information on the Gorham Fire and subsequent review, please contact Gorham Fire Chief Bob Lefebvre at 839-6762 or at rlefebvre@gorham.me.us

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