

e-COMMUNIQUE

Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

E-Comm Newsletter, No.44

Summer 2014

New 2014 partnerships



E-Comm's current 9-1-1 PSAP service areas (approximately 862,000 9-1-1 calls annually)



Regional Districts scheduled to transition October/November 2014 (approximately 364,000 9-1-1 calls annually)

19 new regional districts to partner with E-Comm on 9-1-1 services

This fall 19 regional districts across British Columbia will transfer their 9-1-1 Public-Safety Answer Point (PSAP) services to E-Comm, resulting in the organization becoming the first point of contact for 80% of the province's 9-1-1 call volume. Agreements to relocate PSAP service were recently signed by the North Island 9-1-1 Corporation (NI9-1-1) and the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), which represent 15 of the regional districts. This follows the March announcement by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George

(RDFFG) and its partners that they too would move their PSAP service to E-Comm.

In June, NI9-1-1 announced its decision to move 9-1-1 PSAP operations to E-Comm on October 21, 2014. The transition includes six regional districts with a combined call volume of 63,000: Alberni-Clayoquot, Comox Valley, Mt. Waddington, Nanaimo (School District #69), Powell River and Strathcona. In a news release, NI9-1-1 President Jon Ambler indicated that the new PSAP model would result in a \$1.7 million cost savings over a five-year period.

"We are committed to ensuring residents of our new regional district partners continue to receive high-quality, responsive 9-1-1 public-safety answer point service 24-hours a day."

David Guscott,
E-Comm President and CEO

Continued inside >>>



Mount Robson Provincial Park

Photo: Renee McCloskey



Comox, Vancouver Island



Okanagan Lake, Kelowna

Photo: Bruce Smith

In the days following the NI9-1-1 announcement, RDCO and its eight partner districts announced it would also be partnering with E-Comm. Beginning November 18, 9-1-1 calls placed from the North Okanagan, Central Okanagan, Okanagan-Similkameen, Thompson-Nicola, Columbia-Shuswap, Squamish-Lillooet (North), Central Kootenay, East Kootenay and Kootenay-Boundary Regional Districts will be answered by E-Comm and transferred to the current police, ambulance and fire dispatch centres (approximately 230,000 calls per year) used by these regional districts.

"E-Comm's outstanding track record of high quality and reliable 9-1-1 answering services means all residents in the affected regional districts can be assured there will be professionally handled, quick response to their initial emergency calls," said RDCO Chair Robert Hobson.

As reported earlier in the year, RDFFG is also scheduled to transition its 9-1-1 call-answer services (October 7). This area includes the regional districts of Fraser-Fort George, Kitimat-Stikine, Bulkley-Nechako and Cariboo (approximately 71,000 calls per year).

With the forging of these new partnerships, E-Comm will now cover an additional 570,000 square kilometres of service area within B.C. with a combined

population base of more than one-million. Total additional emergency calls for all 19 regional districts is approximately 364,000 based on the districts' call volume for 2013. This is in addition to the more than 860,000 emergency calls E-Comm currently handles for Metro Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast and Squamish/Whistler areas.

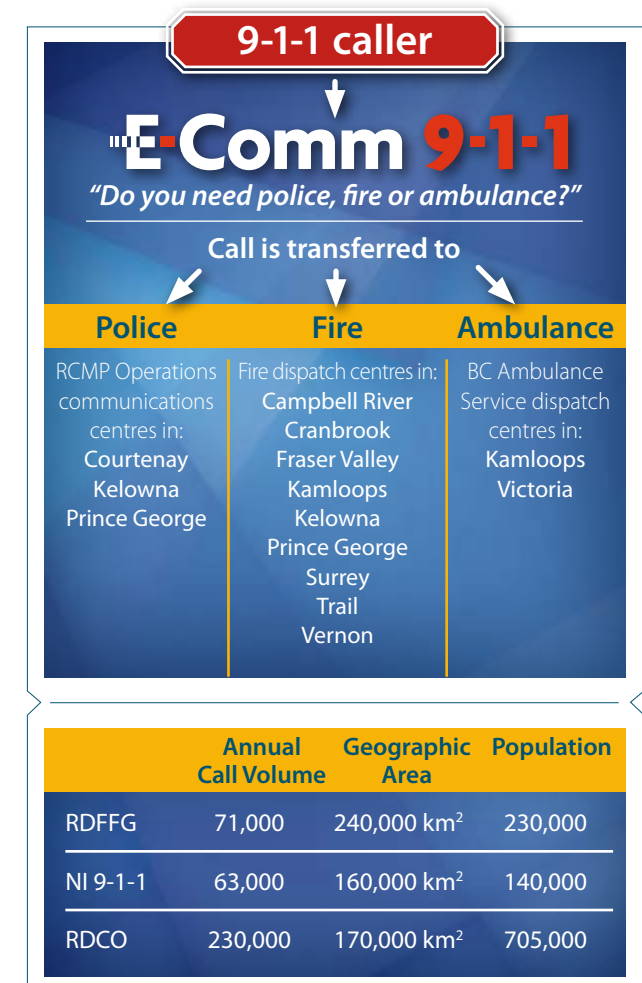
"We are very pleased with our new partnerships and are committed to ensuring residents of these regional districts continue to receive high-quality, responsive 9-1-1 public-safety answer point service 24-hours a day," said E-Comm President and CEO David Guscott. "Our vision is safer communities in British Columbia through excellence in public-safety communication and expansion of our services factors prominently in our strategic plan, *Vision2020*."

While the PSAP portion of 9-1-1 calls will now be answered by E-Comm, police calls will continue to be managed by the RCMP Operations Communications Centres in Prince George, Courtenay and Kelowna. Fire calls will be directed to the Fire dispatch centres located in Prince George, Campbell River, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Kelowna, Trail, Vernon, Surrey and the Fraser Valley. Ambulance calls for all areas will be transferred to their dispatch centres in either Kamloops or Victoria.

Preparations for all transitions are in full swing. Familiarizing E-Comm staff with the geography and special attributes of the 19 regional districts is a priority and a comprehensive training program has been developed to help staff learn about the new regional districts and other information relevant to managing incoming 9-1-1 calls for our new partners.

The RDFFG, NI9-1-1 and RDCO indicated they each made the decision to move services to E-Comm following independent, extensive analyses of their current PSAP operations. It was determined the benefits of E-Comm's consolidated approach to emergency communications included access to more staffing resources to manage any sudden influxes of 9-1-1 calls, access to top-tier technology and expertise and significant cost savings.

Partners also benefit from having a secure, purpose-built facility designed to resist a major earthquake and be self-sufficient for 72 hours. E-Comm also has a number of back-up provisions, including a fully equipped evacuation site that is capable of supporting the continuity of 9-1-1 call-answer services in a variety of scenarios.





CEO Update

David Guscott, President and CEO

On June 8, 2014 we celebrated E-Comm's 15th anniversary. And it is with great pride that I look back on the public-safety accomplishments that, together with our partners, E-Comm has realized over the years.

9-1-1 is a lifeline and there have been many significant changes and enhancements to the system since those early days, including additional technical redundancies and system enhancements, the introduction of location information from cellphones and Text with 9-1-1 for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. These enhancements are just the tipping point as we consider future initiatives under *Next Generation 9-1-1*, the name given to the modernization of 9-1-1 infrastructure across North America.

In 1999, E-Comm was responsible for 9-1-1 call-answer services in Metro Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast and Whistler. We later expanded to Pemberton and the southern portion of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District. With further expansion planned this fall, E-Comm will soon be responsible for 80% of the province's incoming 9-1-1 call volume. As a not-for-profit company, expanding our public-safety partnerships supports what we consider to be the true benefits of integration: economies-of-scale and the ability to increase operational effectiveness for all through shared staffing and technology costs.

Last year 861,694 9-1-1 calls were placed to our centre, 98% of which were answered in five seconds or less. Our goal has always been, and always will be, to ensure that we provide highly-reliable and effective 9-1-1 services 24-hours a day. This is in direct alignment with our vision of safer communities in British Columbia through excellence in public-safety communication.

9-1-1 is not the only area to have achieved significant growth. Our radio network has since become a cornerstone of emergency response and is the largest multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional public-safety radio system in the province managing more than ten-million radio transmissions every month. Police and fire dispatch services have also grown substantially over the years with E-Comm currently dispatching 74% of police emergency calls and 68% of fire emergency calls in Metro Vancouver.

Whether transitioning new dispatch partners, expanding our 9-1-1 call-answer service, evolving our radio network or providing mission-critical technology services, our employees are the driving force behind our ability to support E-Comm's public-safety partners. I would also like to thank our partners and Board of Directors for their commitment, the positive impact they have had on our efforts over the past 15 years, and the pivotal role they continue to play in helping to advance emergency communications.

E-Comm 2014-2015 Board of Directors

Jocelyn Kelley
Independent Director, Board Chair

Penny Ballem
City of Vancouver

Gary Bass
RCMP

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City of White Rock, City of Surrey and Township of Langley

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Independent Director



Disaster exercise tests multi-agency response

Burnaby Fire Department Deputy Chief Chris Bowcock (left) and Coquitlam Fire/Rescue Assistant Fire Chief Rod Gill at the May 30 tabletop exercise.

On May 30, representatives from various fire, police, ambulance and regional agencies including E-Comm, gathered at Coquitlam Fire/Rescue to participate in a tabletop crisis scenario modeled after last year's tragic train derailment in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. Multi-agency collaboration was the main topic of discussion during the exercise as participants reviewed the emergency planning and preparedness activities necessary during a large-scale disaster.

Highlights from the exercise included a review of a Transportation Safety Board report on the 2013 rail disaster along with video commentary by Lac-Mégantic Fire Chief Denis Lauzon, who outlined the communication and interoperability challenges experienced during Canada's deadliest rail accident. Following the review, the group took part in a facilitated discussion on notification and response processes throughout different stages of the exercise scenario: a daytime derailment involving the transportation of crude oil along the border of New Westminster and Coquitlam.

A number of E-Comm's operational managers were on hand to offer their perspectives on call volume management for 9-1-1, fire and police call-taking as well as dispatch. This included discussion of issues relating to location information, technology requirements and multi-agency coordination. The type of hazardous materials and amount being transported, transportation routes, weather conditions, environmental impact, possible evacuations and rescue efforts were also taken into consideration with the objective of making the scenario as realistic as possible.

"Successfully mitigating large-scale emergencies depends mainly on our ability to work collectively as a diverse group of emergency responders and agencies."

Wade Pierlot,
Fire Chief, Coquitlam Fire/Rescue

"The format of the scenario allowed participants to share their knowledge and analyze the assumptions and challenges in a disaster situation by testing emergency response plans within a realistic context," explained Fire Chief Wade Pierlot, Coquitlam Fire/Rescue. "Ultimately, it emphasized that successfully mitigating large-scale emergencies depends mainly on our ability to work collectively as a diverse group of emergency responders and agencies."

Fourteen agencies participated in the table-top scenario including representatives from Coquitlam, Burnaby, New Westminster, Port Moody, Delta, Surrey, Translink, BC Ambulance Service, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Transportation, City of Vancouver 311 and IPREM (Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management in Metro Vancouver). The Delta fire and police departments have already declared their intention to host a similar exercise in 2015, with E-Comm continuing to take a leadership role in developing an exercise scenario.

Fire experts stay current on hot topics

More than 900 representatives from fire departments and public-safety organizations participated in this year's Fire Chiefs Association of BC Conference and Expo in June. The five-day conference was held in Victoria and provided industry experts with the opportunity to gain valuable information on key issues facing fire services today. The event featured numerous presentations on the topics of recruitment, training, technology and leadership.

"A large component of the conference is the Fire Expo which is the largest fire service tradeshow in the

Pacific Northwest," said Vancouver Fire Chief John McKearney. "The tradeshow offered delegates the latest information on technologies and industry advancements, while several new fire engines, ladders and special operations vehicles were proudly displayed in front of the Legislature."

Alongside hundreds of vendors and service providers, E-Comm participated in the Expo by demonstrating its fire dispatch and management technologies and also joined in the conversation about the evolution of technologies and standards in fire dispatch.

E-Comm Business Analyst Adam Konkle (left) discusses E-Comm's technology with Calgary's Redwood Meadows Emergency Services' Fire Chief Rob Evans.

"The real value in this conference lies in the opportunity we have to come together as industry professionals and discuss new technologies and opportunities," added E-Comm's Director of Fire Services Dave Mitchell.

Highlights of the event included discussions on recruitment and an "i-session" which expanded on the use of iPads in emergency response.

For more information about the Fire Chiefs Association of BC visit: fcabc.ca



E-Comm welcomes new Director of Police Services

Former RCMP Assistant Commissioner Fraser MacRae joined E-Comm on June 15, as the organization's new Director of Police Services. After 36 years of service with the RCMP, MacRae retired in 2012 and was promptly nominated as the RCMP's representative on E-Comm's Board of Directors in June 2013 until recently stepping down in order to join E-Comm's executive leadership team.

"As a previous member of E-Comm's Board of Directors I had the opportunity to gain insight and a new appreciation for the service and contribution E-Comm makes to public safety," said MacRae. "My previous career provided me with the opportunity to invest in public safety and by joining E-Comm I am able to continue with that commitment and contribution. I feel privileged to take on this new role and look forward to the opportunities that my new position brings."

During his distinguished career with the RCMP, Fraser was Assistant Commissioner and Officer-in-Charge of the Surrey Detachment, the largest RCMP



E-Comm's Director of Police Services Fraser MacRae.

detachment in Canada. He also held leadership roles in the Burnaby, North Vancouver and Ridge-Meadows detachments.

"E-Comm is pleased to have Fraser assume this important role as his extensive policing and leadership background will be an asset to our organization as we continue to focus on strong relationships and service excellence for our partners," added E-Comm CEO David Guscott.

Evacuation exercises fine-tune disaster recovery plans

A critical component of E-Comm's strategic plan, *Vision2020*, is a commitment to operational effectiveness including robust emergency plans to support continued operations. Pre-planned evacuation exercises allow for emergency back-up systems to be regularly tested and provide staff with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with equipment at the back-up site. The ability to have a dedicated evacuation site capable of handling all incoming 9-1-1 calls, police and fire call-taking and dispatch operations is an important component of the E-Comm model, and helps to ensure smooth operations in the event of a full-scale evacuation.

A minimum of two full evacuations are planned each year with smaller scale evacuations conducted

throughout the year, which involve staff relocating to the back-up site while regular operations continue at the E-Comm location. Each planned evacuation offers the opportunity to test emergency systems and procedures, while allowing technical and facility related maintenance to occur back at E-Comm.

"The combination of regular evacuation exercises and a fully equipped back-up site is critical to ensuring the continuity of service to our partners," stated E-Comm's Vice-President of Operations Doug Watson. "These components allow our staff and systems to be highly responsive to the challenges emerging from a potential major disaster, network or equipment malfunction."

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**Doug Watson,
E-Comm Vice-President
of Operations**

Approximately 60 staff reported for duty at E-Comm's back-up site for its latest full-scale planned evacuation in the spring. During the event, all 9-1-1 calls, police and fire emergency and non-emergency call-taking and dispatch services continued without interruption from 0720-1910 hours from the back-up site. Essential software and firmware updates to technical equipment in the communication centre and facilities maintenance took place back at E-Comm. The next planned evacuation is scheduled to take place this fall.

E-Comm

IN THE COMMUNITY



Burnaby RCMP Chief Superintendent Dave Critchley and Cpl. Brenda Gresiu with E-Comm's 9-1-1 ambassador ALI at the Burnaby RCMP Safety forum on April 24.



E-Comm celebrated West Vancouver's Community Day on June 7 with first responder partners.

E-Comm service by the numbers

April – June 2014

9-1-1 service levels

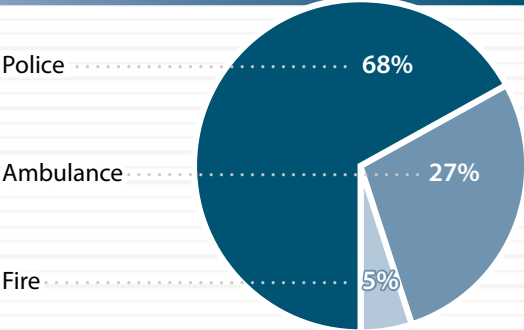
9-1-1 calls placed to E-Comm	Service level achieved*
216,039	96%

* Service Level Target: 95% of all 9-1-1 calls answered in five seconds or less.

Number of 9-1-1 calls from landlines and cellphones

Landline	Cellular
70,517	145,522
33%	67%

9-1-1 calls directed to police, fire and ambulance



Technology

9-1-1 availability	100%
Radio network availability average	99.9930%
Radio transmissions (#)	33,807,944
Radio system air time (seconds)	130,176,306

E-COMM MISSION

To deliver exceptional emergency communication services that help save lives and protect property, and to advance public-safety partnerships.

E-COMM VISION

Safer communities in British Columbia through excellence in public-safety communication.

E-COMM VALUES

Respect • Accountability • Integrity • Service • Collaboration

For more information on E-Comm or to comment on a story, contact corpcomm@ecomm911.ca

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