



## Media Release

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### Regional Districts switch to E-Comm for 9-1-1 call answer

9-1-1 call answer services will have a new provider in the Fraser-Fort George, Cariboo, Bulkley-Nechako and Kitimat-Stikine Regional Districts. Beginning this fall, 9-1-1 calls from these areas will be answered through E-Comm, the emergency communication centre located in southwest British Columbia.

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George provides 9-1-1 services to all municipalities and electoral areas of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, Cariboo Regional District, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and most areas of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

At present, the Regional District contracts with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for call answer services. All 9-1-1 calls come into a Public Safety Answering Point, located within the RCMP North District Operational Communications Centre (OCC). A 9-1-1 call taker determines the nature of the emergency and quickly transfers the caller to the appropriate response agency (police, fire or ambulance).

"The Regional District's contract with the RCMP has expired this year and that has provided the opportunity to explore other options for call answer services," says Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Board Chair Art Kaehn. "As a result, the Regional District has entered into an agreement to have 9-1-1 calls answered through E-Comm in Vancouver." The change is expected to come into effect sometime later this year.

There are considerable cost savings by moving to E-Comm. With the number of communities already serviced through E-Comm, there are economies of scale which reduce annual costs by close to 50%. Under the new model, 9-1-1 call answer services will be significantly reduced from approximately \$730,000 per year to about \$365,000 per year.

"With E-Comm's proven track record of reliable and efficient service, we will be able to continue to provide the quality service our residents are accustomed to, but in a more cost-efficient manner," states Cariboo Regional District Chair Al Richmond.

"The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is pleased with the transfer of services to E-Comm with its proven track record and ability to reduce costs to our residents," says Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Chair Bill Miller.

"The integrity of the 9-1-1 system is paramount. E-Comm is a leader in 9-1-1 call answer services, and they have a proven track record to deliver reliable services without compromising on response times," says Bruce Bidgood, Chair of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

E-Comm is the emergency communications centre located in southwest British Columbia. E-Comm's integrated multi-jurisdictional call taking and dispatch centre provides economies-of-scale, the ability to deliver top-tier technology to both larger and smaller communities throughout the province, with increased operational efficiency. E-Comm received 861,694 emergency calls in 2013, answering 98% of them in five seconds or less. This exceeds the annual contracted target of 95% of calls answered in 5 seconds.

"We are very pleased with our new partnership and are committed to ensuring residents of the regional districts continue to receive high-quality, responsive 9-1-1 public-safety answer point service 24-hours a day," says E-Comm CEO David Guscott.

The E-Comm building is a secure, purpose-built facility designed to resist a major earthquake (7+) and be self-sufficient for 72 hours. E-Comm has a number of back-up provisions to ensure the continuity of 9-1-1 call answer services in a variety of scenarios.

"We are pleased to be able to provide more cost-effective 9-1-1 call answer services without compromising the reliability or safety of the 9-1-1 system that residents in our region have trusted," says Kaehn.

"Public safety remains to be the RCMP's top priority and this change in service provider will not at all compromise the safety of the residents in the Fraser Fort-George area," says Inspector Rick Greenwood, BC RCMP Operational Communications Centre Program Management. "The community can be assured that the level of service that our Operational Communications Centre employees in providing police dispatching, complaint taking and status keeping will be maintained at the highest level that the community expects" he adds.

With the change to E-Comm for 9-1-1 call answer services, calls will continue to be dispatched in the same manner. This means calls for police will be dispatched to the RCMP OCC in Prince George. Calls for fire departments will be dispatched through the Fire Operations Communications Centre (FOCC) in Prince George and calls for ambulance will be dispatched through the BC Ambulance Service dispatch centre in Kamloops.

In 2013, 71,000 9-1-1 calls were received within the boundaries of the Regional District's 9-1-1 service. 28,209 calls were received from the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, 18,364 calls from the Cariboo Regional District, 10,041 from the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, and 14,386 from the Kitimat/Stikine area.

-30-

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