

Wireless 9-1-1 Needs Emergency Assistance

“Can you hear me, now?” is an oft-repeated catch phrase from a popular wireless company television commercial. While 9-1-1 operators in Central Oklahoma may be able to hear the wireless caller needing emergency services, they may be answering from a different city and, unlike a call from landline phone, they will have no clue where the call is coming from, or how to call them back.

For a person seriously hurt in a car wreck, a kidnapped victim in the trunk of a car or a heart-attack patient driving through the city, that lack of location information can literally mean the difference between life and death. While over 40 percent of the calls to local 9-1-1 centers now come in on wireless phones, those calls do not provide the safety net of the enhanced 9-1-1 system. They take about three times longer for the 9-1-1 operators to handle and can end up as tragedies in those cases when the caller cannot accurately describe the location of his or her emergency.

Technology is available to make wireless phones work better in the world of enhanced 9-1-1, but it costs money. While there is a state law that allows county-wide elections to place a 9-1-1 service fee on wireless customers phone bills to

help pay for necessary system improvements, the current law restricts the fee to 50 cents per month, per customer. State 9-1-1 planners have determined that will not be enough to cover expenses.

Two bills have been introduced this session to increase what may be collected to up to \$1.50. It would still require a local vote of the people to enact such a fee. Senator Angela Monson (SB 786) and Representative Bill Case (HB1751) have introduced the bills, supported by 9-1-1 ACOG and the Oklahoma chapter of the National Emergency Number Association.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has mandated that wireless companies work with communities throughout the country to improve processing of 9-1-1 calls. Improvements are to be made in two steps, referred to as Phase I and Phase II. Phase I improvements will cause calls to route to the more appropriate answering point and give a call-back number, and Phase II will provide latitude and longitude coordinates of the caller’s location.

Until such improvements can be made, however, a regional 9-1-1 communications manager Lance Terry, with the city of Norman, gives the following advice to people using wireless phones:

- Pay attention to where you are, particularly if you are in a different city. Tell the 9-1-1 operator what city you are in and then the details. (Notice cross streets and landmarks.)
- Tell the operator the nature of the emergency without going into the whole story chronologically.



Technology can help pinpoint the location of wireless callers in emergencies but it's going to cost money.

- Make sure your phone keypad is “locked” when not in use to avoid accidental calls to 9-1-1.

9-1-1 ACOG staff has prepared a 20-minute presentation for civic groups and others who would like to know more about wireless 9-1-1. If you are interested, please call Stephen Willoughby, ACOG.

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Stormwater Phase II Permit Issued

On Feb. 8, 2005, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) issued the general permit for the discharge of stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Sewer Systems (MS4). The permit authorizes discharges of stormwater and certain non-stormwater discharges for systems located in urbanized areas, such as Central Oklahoma, and systems with a population of at least

10,000, but not exceeding 100,000.

ACOG has been working with staff from all of the Central Oklahoma communities that will be affected by the policy. Central Oklahoma communities affected by the permit, and needing to submit a Phase II Small MS4 application include: Bethany, Choctaw, Del City, Edmond, Midwest City, Moore, Mustang, Nichols ...See “Stormwater” on page two.

Regional Fixed Guideway Study Underway

The Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority is currently conducting a fixed guideway study that will examine future transportation needs in the region.

According to COTPA Administrator Rick Cain, "The main purpose of this study is to identify future travel corridors which meet the transportation needs of the region's employment, housing and activity centers; then evaluate technology options such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes, Modern Streetcar Transit, and other potential transportation solutions."

As Cain points out, a fixed guideway is not solely relegated to light rail, although 27 major American metro areas now

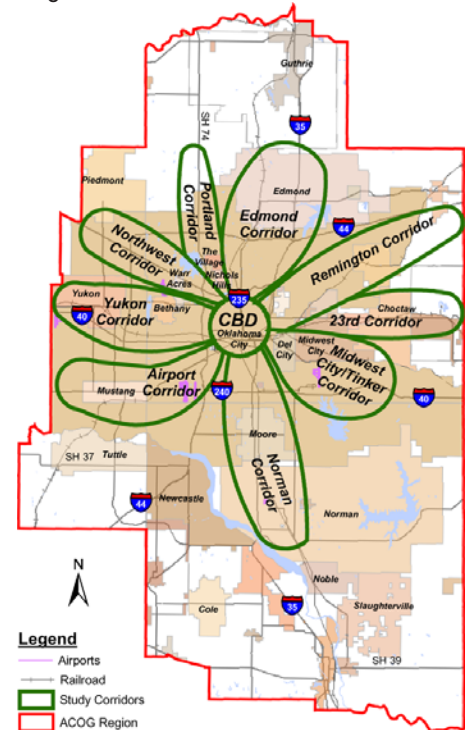
utilize light rail. Aside from LRT, BRT, HOV, and streetcar trolleys, other fixed guideway technologies include monorail and heavy rail. The study team reports that there are currently 140 light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit projects being planned and constructed in the United States.

Other components that will be identified in the study are potential transportation corridors, estimated ridership, costs of system programming, and a determination of potential funding strategies. Added emphasis will be placed on station development and intermodal transportation tie-ins. The team has already noted 10 concept corridors and may identify more.

Last month, public involvement meetings were held throughout the Central Oklahoma area to showcase the purpose and intent of the transportation study. The objectives and goals of the forums were to gain community feedback and invite comments on the future of transportation in the area. Comments were recorded and will be incorporated into the study.

Carter & Burgess, Inc., a nationally renowned transportation firm with an office in Oklahoma City, is the lead consultant conducting the study. Joining the Carter & Burgess team is a steering committee made up of more than 30 community leaders who have volunteered to help lead the effort. The entire study process is being done in accordance with Federal Transit Administration guidelines

and will take approximately 12 months. A federal grant is paying 80 percent of the cost of the study, with the remaining 20 percent funded by the city of Oklahoma City.



Ten Central Oklahoma travel corridors have been identified in the fixed guideway study.

COTPA is planning on sponsoring more public meetings in the future as the study progresses.

For more information on the Fixed Guideway Study or the schedule of public meetings, please contact Sara at (405) 608-0445 or visit www.okfgs.org.

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Association of Central Oklahoma Governments

"Providing Regional Leadership in Central Oklahoma Since 1966"

Established in 1966, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is a voluntary association of cities, towns and counties. ACOG helps member governments plan for common needs, cooperate for mutual benefit and coordinate for sound regional development.

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"Stormwater"

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Hills, Nicoma Park, Noble, Norman, Oklahoma County, Spencer, The Village, Tinker Air Force Base, Warr Acres and Yukon.

DEQ granted waivers for the permit to Cleveland County, Forest Park, Guthrie, Logan County, Smith Village, Valley Brook and Woodlawn Park.

The permit was originally set for release in March 2003. For a time, it went through several revisions until being issued in draft form in November 2004. In December and January, the comments

were reviewed, and the permit was issued last month. Affected communities should prepare to file a Notice of Intent by May 8, 2005. DEQ can provide an example schedule of stormwater management elements for a five-year program.

Among the requirements that communities will have to fulfill with a stormwater management program are to list and define best management practices, define measurable goals for those practices and identify staff resources ...See "Permit" on page four.



ACOG MEMBER IN PERSPECTIVE:

Warr Acres

By Jerry Church

Leslie Owens, Warr Acres city council member, owns a public relations and project management firm named For the Good of It. She specializes in helping small businesses with short-term marketing projects, and is also the mother of three teen-agers. As if that weren't enough, as councilmember for the city's Ward 3, she has essentially added a third fulltime job to her resume.

"My husband says this is my newest unpaid fulltime job," said Owens. "And, I'm finding that it's probably closer to the truth than I ever would have anticipated it to be."

Owens became interested in running for city council by friendly coercion. "I blame it all on Chris Wood, [former Warr Acres mayor]," she says in a kidding manner. "He and I were in the neighborhood association together, before I moved to Warr Acres a few years ago, and when I ran into him at an economic development meeting, he asked if I would sit on the [Warr Acres] board of adjustment. It wasn't too long after that he talked me into running for city council."



Leslie Owens

Warr Acres Pride

Even before Owens made a commitment to run for city council, she began to develop her goals and objectives that she would focus on as a public official.

"When I sat on the board of adjustment, I saw where property owners were running into obstacles to making improvements, and I thought that maybe I could help with policies that could make it less complicated," she said. When she applied to run for office, her campaign data from the state election board came back with precinct data that did not include a Warr Acres reference.

"I thought that there was an issue here, and that I should check into that," she said.

Defining a community is important, not just for personal and civic pride. Municipal

boundaries are important in assigning sales tax revenues that individual communities rely on to support local government services. The irregularities of zip code perimeters with local government boundaries has caused a major problem in Central Oklahoma and can mean that many cities and towns such as Warr Acres do not receive the sales tax revenue owed them.

"We don't know if the zip code issue is affecting our tax collections, but we occasionally have residents or businesses that apply for business licenses, and may list Oklahoma City on them and we don't know how long that goes on before it is caught," Owens said.

"It's important to track every little bit of revenue that we can generate, because Warr Acres has some serious issues. We have streets that need to be repaired, we have a staff hiring freeze in place, and we can't offer as much service and benefit to the citizens as we used to when we had more money coming in."

The city of Warr Acres does have a plan in place to remedy the situation. A special election for May 10 has been called and residents will be asked to vote on two proposals that could help the city's dwindling revenue stream.

One measure would increase the city's general fund by one half-cent sales tax. The other measure would direct one half-cent sales tax to capital improvements. Combined, the proposals would increase the city's sales tax to three percent, which would still leave the city's retail sales tax the lowest in Central Oklahoma.

Feedback and Interaction

Owens places a high priority on communication and getting feedback from Warr Acres residents. She has helped the city by producing a monthly newsletter, and recently spearheaded a quality of life survey to help identify citizen issues.

"I worked with our city's planning consultant, Wiley Rice, to do a quality of life survey that would identify resident priorities and gauge their perceptions on how city services work for them," she said. "I thought our city leaders would want to have a tool to measure resident priorities and I wanted to develop an avenue that would also help us identify which grant sources to pursue."

Survey responses will be anonymous, though they are color coded by ward, and are being directed to Rice, who will compile the results and unveil them in early March. Owens is optimistic that the response rate will provide for an accurate and proportional survey. "We've had questionnaires in the past on sanitation services, and out of 3,500, we've had about 700 come back, so I would guess that we can expect the same response rate."

"I really would like to improve communications between the city and its various audience members, including the residents and the business community."

Coming Regional Events

Grant Writing Workshop

• March 30-31

Mid-Del Technology Center
1621 Maple Drive, Midwest City

The Mid-Del Technology Center, in partnership with Grant Writing USA, will present a two-day grant-writing workshop. Tuition is \$349 and includes a workbook and CD. Visit www.GrantWritingUSA.com to enroll online..

“Permit”

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assigned to the program.

Among the six minimum control measures include public education and outreach, public participation and involvement, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site stormwater runoff control, post-construction management in new development and redevelopment, pollution prevention and good housekeeping in system operations.

ACOG Water Resources staff have been monitoring the permit process, and are available for technical assistance to Central Oklahoma communities.

ACOG will also soon have authorization from EPA to implement a multi-media regional stormwater public education program. The regional approach of the program will assist communities that may not have the time or resources to implement an effective program of their own. The program is being offered free to affected ACOG communities.

For more information on the stormwater permit process, contact John Harrington, ACOG.

ACOG Calendar

March

- 8th 9-1-1 Technical Committee
- 10th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 11th Garber Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 15th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.
- 21st Citizen's Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 24th Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1:30 p.m.
- 31st 9-1-1 Board of Directors, 1 p.m.
Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee, 1:20 p.m.
ACOG Board of Directors, 1:45 p.m.
Garber-Wellington Policy Committee, 2:30 p.m.

April

- 14th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 18th Citizen's Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 28th 9-1-1 Board of Directors, 1 p.m.
Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee, 1:20 p.m.
ACOG Board of Directors, 1:45 p.m.
Garber-Wellington Policy Committee, 2:30 p.m.

Central Oklahoma

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