



Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security News Release

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April 11-17 is Public Safety Telecommunicator Week

Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter has proclaimed the week of April 11-17 as Public Safety Telecommunicator Week in honor of the dedicated Idahoans who work in 9-1-1 dispatch centers across the state. The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS) and the Idaho Emergency Communications Commission (ECC) would like to recognize those public servants who answer the calls for help.

Most people do not think about the people behind the voices of 9-1-1 until they need to call for help. Some people equate 9-1-1 with police cars and fire trucks, with lights and sirens blaring, or an ambulance speeding off to a hospital emergency room. While police, fire, and ambulances are obviously linked to 9-1-1, it may be difficult to visualize the people who perform the functions behind the scenes. 9-1-1 dispatchers are the "first" first responders in emergencies. In addition to the long hours, holidays, and weekends worked that these professionals endure, the 9-1-1 dispatchers often volunteer their time in other ways to support the community, such as helping to educate children about 9-1-1, participating in school events, and lending a helping hand for various community causes.

The ECC is made up of commissioners who work together to enhance Idaho's public safety by assisting emergency communications and response

professionals in establishing and operating emergency communications systems. BHS serves as the state support agency for the ECC shares its appreciation for Idaho's dispatchers.

"Many people do not stop to think about 9-1-1 dispatchers until they experience an actual emergency themselves," said Brigadier General Bill Shawver, BHS Director. "These professionals make the difference between life and death in many instances. This week is dedicated to recognizing Idaho's emergency dispatchers and taking time to show appreciation for all that they do on a daily basis."

This week is a good time to make sure everyone in your home knows what to do if there is an emergency. For a fact sheet on using 9-1-1, visit http://www.nena.org/sites/default/files/Making_911_Everyone.pdf. For more information about the ECC, visit www.e911.idaho.gov and for BHS visit www.bhs.idaho.gov.

Note to reporters: The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security is the State of Idaho's emergency management agency. Please note that Idaho BHS is an Idaho-specific agency, and it is not the same thing as the federal Department of Homeland Security. Within the State of Idaho organizational chart, Idaho BHS is aligned under the State of Idaho Military Division.

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