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## Emergency Center Express

### **In The News**

#### **Advancing 911 Call Consolidation**

Posted by: *Post & Courier*, Charleston.net, 10/14/07

CHARLESTON, SC – Six minutes, in most situations, doesn't sound like a long time. But when you're waiting for emergency medical treatment, a six-minute wait can be fatal. That's why Charleston County Council last week approved a plan consolidating police, fire and emergency medical dispatch centers, a move that eventually would eliminate the long-standing necessity of transferring many 911 calls.

St. John's Fire Chief Karl Ristow told our reporter that he expects that change to reduce average response times by roughly six minutes on Johns Island. As he put it: "That's a big saving out there by us if you're having a heart attack."

At nearly \$17 million, the estimated startup costs are significant for the new center, at a site to be determined, probably in North Charleston. But the potential savings in lives are worth it. The county wants to have the center in operation by 2012, assuming most local municipalities, as expected, commit to it.

Under the county's plan, those local jurisdictions will help cover the \$10.5 million annual operating costs on a decreasing scale, with the county paying the entire tab by 2014.

The county also is aiming for national accreditation that will make it eligible for federal grants.

The creation and implementation of a new dispatch center still face serious challenges. But with more than a million emergency calls per year in Charleston County, and nearly a third of those now requiring transfers, the need for this overdue streamlining of the system is indisputable.

### **What Does This Mean For You?**

You're concerned your equipment is out-of-date or calls aren't being routed where they should. Are calls being transferred in keeping with the National Fire Incident Reporting System's Grade of Service? What do you use as a needs assessment to request public funding in order to upgrade equipment and consolidate answering points?



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## [Bell Services West Will Help](#)

If your PSAP is considering consolidation, Bell Services West's [E9-1-1 Performance Benchmark Service](#) can give you a baseline to measure your centers' current results and plan for future requirements. Our engineers also provide analysis and recommendations for your new communications infrastructure.

In less than a **week** and for as little as **\$500**, our [E9-1-1 Performance Benchmark Service](#) will provide you with a report card that will evaluate your PSAP needs and summarize trends.