



**PRESS RELEASE
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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Franklin County is among the first to fully implement text to 9-1-1

March 12, 2015 - CHAMBERSBURG, PA – Franklin County Commissioners today announced that the county is the 11th of the 69 counties in PA to be fully integrated with Text to 911. Franklin County's 911 center dispatchers can now receive and respond to text messages from customers of the four big mobile phone carriers: AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon.

"Text to 9-1-1 is critical during certain situations where callers cannot speak," said Commissioner and Board Chairman Dave Keller. "It's incumbent upon us to make it easy for the public to communicate with us, especially in times of emergency, and Text to 9-1-1 helps us do exactly that," Keller added. Texting is also the primary means of communication for folks who are deaf or hearing impaired.

"Text to 9-1-1 was identified as a critical issue following the Virginia Tech shooting," said Commissioner Bob Thomas. Many students texted that there was an attack, but the center was unable to receive the messages. In addition, at that time, there was no bounce back message, so the students thought that their messages were received. "Incidents like Virginia Tech's make implementing Text to 9-1-1 a necessity," Thomas added.

Franklin County began bringing carriers online last year as the carriers made the necessary improvements to be Text to 9-1-1 compliant. Verizon was the first carrier to come online in April 2014; T-Mobile was next in October 2014. Sprint and AT&T came online in recent weeks.

"I'm proud that we're leading the way in bringing this new public safety improvement to Pennsylvania," said Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski. "If we had not made key decisions over the past several years to keep up to date with the latest technology in emergency dispatch, we would not be in position today to provide this important service to the community," Ziobrowski added.

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For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov.

The system in use in Franklin County utilizes current technology at the center known as Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, or TDD, which speeds up the processing of the message and allows the dispatchers to utilize their existing skill set, thereby reducing training, integration time and cost to the industry, the mobile phone user, and taxpayers.

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