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Regional District Officially Launches 9-1-1 Service Today

Accessing emergency response personnel has become a lot simpler for most residents of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine with the advent of 9-1-1 emergency telephone service. The easy-to-remember service was officially launched today.

“It’s been a substantial undertaking,” explains Board Chair, Harry Nyce. “The Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Response System was built with funding through contributions from the Canada/British Columbia Infrastructure Program.”

The federal/provincial share of funds came to \$729,368.00. With the contributions of the regional district and its local funding partners, the total cost of the project will be approximately \$1.5 million.

Once it had all the necessary funding in place, the RDKS began working with various stakeholders to make 9-1-1 service a reality including the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and Telus.

In order to reduce the operational cost of the service, the RDKS entered into an agreement with the Regional District of Fraser Fort George to provide 9-1-1 call answering and fire dispatch and communications services. As the Primary Public Safety Answering Point, all 9-1-1 calls generated within the RDKS are answered at the Prince George RCMP Operational Communications Centre. As part of the agreement with the RDFFG, 17 fire departments in the RDKS, will be dispatched and supported, through the Prince George Fire Operations Communications Centre. All ambulance calls will be forwarded to the BC Ambulance Service central dispatch centre located in Kamloops.

The RDKS and TELUS worked in partnership to ensure technology in the area was upgraded allowing access to emergency services. TELUS invested more than \$140,000 during the project to build the required telecommunications infrastructure and create a new addressing system allowing fast routing of emergency calls and information about where the calls are coming from.

"It is gratifying to see this important project finished, giving RDKS residents the same access to 911 as people living in Prince George or Vancouver," said Bobby Gessner, director of TELUS Network Operations in the region. "TELUS is committed to continually providing access to emergency services to our clients all across B.C., and it was a pleasure to work with the regional district to help make that happen."

The new 9-1-1 system serves RDKS residents living in the areas of Kitimat, Terrace, and the Hazeltons from Kitwanga to Moricetown and in Stewart.

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