

**For immediate release – May 17, 2017**

### **Peace River's 9-1-1 call-answer service successfully transferred to E-Comm**

Vancouver, B.C.—Today at 7:21 a.m. E-Comm officially became the first point of contact for 9-1-1 callers in the Peace River Regional District. Canada's largest 9-1-1 centre is now responsible for answering the frontend portion of 9-1-1 calls for Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Hudson's Hope, Pouce Coupe, Taylor and Tumbler Ridge along with many of the region's First Nations communities. E-Comm call-takers will then immediately transfer 9-1-1 calls to the appropriate police, fire or ambulance agency.

"The regional district is continually looking for ways to enhance the high level of emergency services our communities receive," explained Brad Sperling, Chair of the Peace River Regional District. "We believe our new partnership with E-Comm will allow us to provide residents with the same high-quality 9-1-1 service they are accustomed to receiving, but in a more cost effective manner with added operational benefits. This includes having access to a larger workforce to deal with sudden influxes of high 9-1-1 call-volume."

Approximately 20,000 emergency calls placed each year from the Peace River are now being routed to E-Comm. Highly-trained call-takers will quickly confirm which agency the caller requires and for which location before transferring calls to the requested emergency service agency—police, fire or ambulance.

"9-1-1 is a lifeline, which is why thorough preparation was our top priority for today's transition," said E-Comm President and CEO David Guscott. "We're proud to be able to answer the frontend portion of 9-1-1 calls for citizens in the Peace River. The speed and accuracy of this critical role allows people to connect with local police, fire and ambulance agencies to get the help they need."

As part of the transition to E-Comm, a specialized service for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community is now available that allows registered users to communicate via text message with 9-1-1 call-takers. The service is called Text with 9-1-1 and was developed by Canada's telecommunications services providers. In an emergency, registered users must first dial 9-1-1 like any other caller to establish a voice connection – this is the only way a text session can start. When E-Comm receives the call an alert will trigger at the 9-1-1 centre to indicate there is a deaf or hard-of-hearing caller on the line. The 9-1-1 call-taker will then launch the special messaging system, allowing them to communicate with the caller through a special text session. To register and learn more about Text with 9-1-1 visit [www.textwith911.ca](http://www.textwith911.ca).

"We're excited to be able to provide our deaf and hard-of-hearing community with an improved way of communicating with 9-1-1 call-takers during an emergency," added Sperling. "I hope residents with hearing or speech impairments take time to register for this important service and learn how it works and what to expect if they ever need to use it."

*police agencies and fire departments in southwest B.C. and operates the largest multi-jurisdictional, tri-service emergency radio system in the province. For more information visit [www.ecomm911.ca](http://www.ecomm911.ca).*

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