

PRESS RELEASE

Lea County Communications Authority

Lea County Courthouse, Lovington, NM

Page 1

LCCA earns 2015 NACo National Achievement Award

The Lea County Communication Authority (LCCA) has been recognized by multiple state and national awards for their achievements with innovative improvements for public safety with the recent consolidation of communications for all first responders.

On June 5, 2015, the National Association of Counties (NACo) granted Lea County a 2015 NACo Achievement Award for its program titled "Lea County Communication Authority" in the category of Criminal Justice and Public Safety. NACo sent congratulations to everyone involved who developed this innovative program. NACo will honor and recognize the most outstanding winners at the NACo Awards Luncheon on July 12, 2015 at NACo's Annual Conference and Exposition in Mecklenburg, North Carolina.

The LCCA will be recognized by the New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC) 2015 Annual Conference on June 18 at the Albuquerque Convention Center. The New Mexico Municipal League (NMML) at their August 2015 meeting at The Lodge in Cloudcroft.

HISTORY of LCCA

Lea County, also named the "EnergyPlex", has experienced great growth with the energy business and supporting industry during the past ten years. "With this industry and population growth, the Emergency Communications program needed to expand to better meet the needs of the citizens. At the end of the day it is all about the safety of our families," said Lea County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Gregg Fulfer.

Recognizing this need, Lea County and the City of Hobbs worked together to improve Communications for all first responders by updating existing equipment on sites throughout Lea County, including the Lea County Communication Authority (LCCA) which is the 911 center. The first phase completed at the LCCA included a 350 foot self-supporting tower and radio equipment building.

The Lea County Sheriff's Department and the Hobbs Police Department consolidated their Dispatch Centers and formed the Lea County Communication Authority on June 26, 2011. A state of the art building was constructed for operations. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Lea County Sheriff's Department Substation are housed in the same building at 3720 W. College Lane, Hobbs, New Mexico 88240. The building was completed in March 2012 and employees moved in June 26, 2012.

“Our emergency service personnel and those dedicated employees working at LCCA deserve the best equipment and communication systems possible. This is a public-public partnership that other governments can look to as a model of collaboration, delivering enhanced capabilities for the community. The City of Hobbs is proud of our partnership and commends Lea County for their award,” said J.J. Murphy, Hobbs City Manager.

Additional phases that are needed to complete the project include improving existing structures within the City of Lovington. These improvements will allow for better coverage, longer range and better in building penetration in fortified structures like schools, banks and oil refineries.

Angela Martinez, LCCA Director, created the LCCA Mission Statement “The employees of the Lea County Communication Authority are committed to providing quality service to all public safety agencies, enabling these agencies to perform their duties effectively and efficiently and to provide requested services to citizens and other departments in a courteous, helpful and timely manner, while maintaining a high standard of professionalism. Without the hard work and dedication of each employee and the amazing teamwork, being recognized by NACo, NMAC and NMML would not have been possible.”

The LCCA 27 dispatchers are loyal and courteous to all of the citizens of Lea County with a commitment to customer service. They provide assurance that all of the community’s emergency service communication needs are met. The LCCA supports the following agencies: Lea County Sheriff’s office, Hobbs Police Department, Hobbs Fire Department, Knowles Fire Department, Maljamar Fire Department and the Monument Fire Department.

The Lea County Communications Authority (LCCA) answers all 911 calls for the entire Lea County which includes Hobbs, Lovington, Eunice, Jal and Tatum. The LCCA also dispatches for all of Lea County. The LCCA services about 9,000 calls per month for the entire county. Ashley Neumann, E.C.S., said, “It has been an honor and a privilege working for LCCA and it is exciting watching the forward progression we have made. I started almost two years ago and have only watched us grow and become stronger not only as an agency, but our bonds with the officers and community. I thoroughly enjoy my job and being an accredited center only makes me more proud to work here. I look forward to continuing my career with LCCA and helping the residents of Lea County.”

One of the programs that LCCA has implemented is “Code Red” a reverse 911 program which sends out emergency dispatches to people signed up for the program either by email or to their mobile phones. The number of subscribers signed up for the “Code Red” program is over 18,000.

The Lea County Communication Authority 911 Dispatch Center Contact Information: 3720 W. College Lane, Hobbs, New Mexico 88242; 575-397-9265 or 575-396-3611; dispatch@leacounty.net; www.leacounty.net

DESCRIPTION of the ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Lea County Communication Authority has developed an accreditation program implemented for 911 centers throughout New Mexico. In April of 2014, the process was started with a meeting of the LCCA Director, the Program Manager for Law Enforcement, Detention and Misdemeanor Compliance to formulate a plan for all dispatch centers to be involved. With the assistance of the LCCA's Accreditation Manager and the Municipal League's Program Manager, a steering committee and then Emergency Professional Standards Council was developed.

In September 2014, the New Mexico Emergency Communications Accreditation Program with 108 standards was approved by the New Mexico Municipal League and the New Mexico Association of Counties. Lea County Communication Authority is setting the standard for all dispatch center throughout the state of New Mexico. According to Bill Fulginiti, Executive Director of NM Municipal League, "It only makes sense to include Dispatch Centers in the Accreditation Program. They are an essential part of the public safety system."

"The New Mexico Association of Counties and the New Mexico Municipal League are proud of the men and women of the LCCA in their achievement of attaining accreditation. These standards not only demonstrate a high level of professionalism but also individual dedication to public safety and the citizens of Lea County," said Taylor Horst, Risk Management Director for the New Mexico Association of Counties.

This program will increase effectiveness and efficiency, promote public confidence in emergency communications, promote best practice procedures and provide consistency within the dispatch center by enhancing delivery of services to citizens. Angela Martinez, LCCA Director, was named the first Chairperson of the first Emergency Professional Standards Council (EPSC).

Lea County Manager Mike Gallagher, Chairman of the LCCA Board of Directors and an EPSC council member, comments, "Lea County congratulates LCCA Director Angela Martinez for her leadership role in creating a model agency. Lea County recognizes our dispatchers and our first responders are highly trained and dedicated to their profession. These employees and the public deserve the most comprehensive and up to date emergency communications system. The Lea County Commission has made investments in public safety and continuously improving citizen services top priorities. The success of the LCCA is an example of how the City of Hobbs and Lea County can collaborate and cooperate for the benefit of all of our citizens. This public partnership has created a model agency."

An accredited agency will remain accredited for a period of three years. The agency will be required to periodically submit verification of continued compliance with approved standards. Re-accreditation on-site assessment procedures are similar to the initial assessment procedures. Director Martinez states "We have come a long way since the two dispatch centers became one back on June 26, 2011. I couldn't be more proud of all the employees here at LCCA. They have worked so hard and together as a team to

be where we are today. We will continue to get better each day and to set the standards for all 911 centers in New Mexico.”

The COST of the PROGRAM

The 2014 Operating Expenditures of the LCCA were approximately \$2.9 million.

2014 Capital Outlay Expenditures were \$3,915,206 which included Tower equipment for Eunice/Jal, the Emergency Operations Center, Fencing for the Hobbs Tower and Equipment Building, Radio Equipment and Upgrades, Computer Equipment, Security Improvements, Hobbs Tower, Catalyst Switch and Network Module.

The RESULTS/SUCCESS of the PROGRAM

The LCCA has monthly records of the number of calls answered from each community. The call volume averages about 9,000 calls per month. 346,715 calls have been answered at the LCCA from 2011-2014.

The Lea County Communications Authority has taken a vision of merging the emergency communications needs from a single program to an integrated program for the entire county. They have combined resources with local law enforcement and emergency responders, completed an entire network of towers and services to better serve the needs of the citizens.

In addition to completing the merger, the LCCA has raised the bar for other dispatch centers throughout the State of New Mexico by creating and implementing the Accredited Emergency Communications Agency program. The LCCA was the first county dispatch center to pass the New Mexico Emergency Communications Accreditation Program on March 23, 2015. The LCCA accomplished this by reaching out to partner with the New Mexico Association of Counties, the New Mexico Municipal League, the New Mexico Emergency Communication Centers and local communities. “By becoming part of the Accreditation System they will help shape the delivery of public safety professionalism in New Mexico.” Bill Fulginiti, Executive Director NM Municipal League.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS See attached photos.

