



911 centers struggle to find cell callers

A late December report from Jonathan Serrie at FoxNews.com illustrates why cell phones are a poor—even deadly—alternative compared to land lines when notifying 911 in an emergency situation.

While commercial applications such as Facebook and Uber can pinpoint a caller's exact location using the caller's built-in GPS in

their smartphone, that's not necessarily the case when a call is placed to 911.

That's because most 911 centers determine a mobile caller's location based on technology adopted two decades ago before cell phones were equipped with GPS. So, instead of obtaining location information directly from the phone, the 911 center estimates the caller's location

based on which cell tower is in use.

MIS-LOCATED The problem is, the tower your phone pings may be miles away, or even in another jurisdiction.

Such was the case back in 2014, when newspaper delivery woman Shanell Anderson called 911 after accidentally driving her SUV into a pond. (See **STRUGGLE, Page 2**)

Video package rate will increase

Rate increases have become virtually an every year event for cable TV providers like WT Services and the past year has been no exception. Rate increases come from TV programmers increasing their rates to WT Services annually. Although cable TV customers and providers alike would like to be able to choose only their favorite channels, these programmers often require cable TV providers to carry numerous "companion" channels in order to receive the one or two channels that cable TV customers most desire.

WT Services has been negotiating major programming channel con-

tracts for the last several months. Although local broadcast stations make their signal available free "off air," they have elected to charge cable TV providers, on a per customer basis, to make the very same signal available to their viewers. This is in addition to the programming fees that must be paid for all common "cable" channels such as ESPN, Disney, Lifetime, FOX Sports, The Outdoor Channel, Speed, etc.)

To ensure that WT Services viewers have continued access to the programming offered by the local broadcast channels and all other programmers it will be necessary to implement a service

rate increase early in 2017. The rate increase applies to all WT Services video packages.

WT Services takes its responsibility to provide quality programming at the lowest possible rates very seriously. Every effort was made to negotiate the most favorable terms with the major programmers. We appreciate your video business and will continue to explore options, as they become available, to minimize the rate increase impact on our customers.

If you have any questions in regard to your video entertainment services, please call our office in Hereford at 360-9000, or in Bushland at 349-1000.

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CELL TOWERS
NOT SO GOOD
ON 911 CALLS

VIDEO PACKAGE
RATE INCREASE

PAGE 2

SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATION
PERIOD OPEN
THROUGH APRIL 7

Get a 1% discount

WT Services Hereford customers get a one percent discount by paying their bill by bank draft. Customers who authorize draft payment agree to have their bank account drafted for the amount of their outstanding balance on their account with WT Services. Drafts will occur between the 20th and 23rd of each month.

To arrange for draft payment contact the WT Services office in Hereford at 119 East 4th.



WTS scholarship program marking fourth year

Application period open now through April 7

WT Services is marking its fourth year in 2017 of awarding scholarships to graduating seniors from Hereford, Friona, Bovina, and Bushland high schools. Recipients will be announced in May.

Applications are available from counselors at Hereford, Friona, Bovina, and Bushland high schools. In Hereford, applications may be picked up at the WT Services office at 119 East 4th and in Friona at the WT Services office at 1010 Columbia. Scholarship application forms may also be downloaded from the site wtservices.net.

Scholarships are open only to students whose parents or guardians are WT Services customers, or, to students who are WT Services customers themselves. Applicants must be high school seniors who are candidates for graduation this spring.

Scholarship monies will be disbursed in increments per semester.

An official application form, accompanied by two letters of recommendation, and a wallet-size photo must be submitted. One of the letters of recommendation must be from a teacher, principal, or counselor from the high school that the

applicant is currently attending.

To be considered, applications must be fully completed, legibly typed or written, have no attachments other than the photo and two required letters of recommendation, and must be received at the offices of WT Services, Inc. P.O. Box 1776, Hereford, Texas 79045, **no later than April 7, 2017.**

Applicants may be asked

to attend an interview at the discretion of the board of parent company West Texas Rural Telephone Cooperative.

Mechanics of the scholarships include the following:

* WT SERVICES scholarships may be used at any state or church-sponsored college or university, or at any accredited vocational or technical school.

* Recipients must maintain

a minimum of twelve credited hours throughout each semester, or have full-time student status at vocational or trade schools.

* Upon enrollment or pre-enrollment for the fall semester, recipients must send WT SERVICES a confirmation from the registrar's office. Should a recipient drop out of school for any reason, the unused portion of the scholarship will be rescinded.

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The sinking vehicle was in Cherokee County--north of Atlanta. The call was routed to a 911 center in the City of Alpharetta, two counties away. When rescuers found Anderson's location, the 31-year old had already suffered critical injuries and died in the hospital several days later.

Alpharetta 911 receives 44,000 emergency calls per year. Each day, the center transfers 10-12 calls misrouted from different jurisdictions.

"Time spent in that 911 center getting to the right location is time wasted getting responders to the scene," says Alpharetta's Public Safety Administrator Carl Hall.

Alpharetta and other municipalities have been helping tech startup LaaSer test technology to give 911 centers accurate information on the location of mobile callers. No upgrades of equipment or

software at the 911 centers are involved. The technology helps cell phones communicate their GPS locations during emergency calls. LaaSer CEO Fred White says the approach is to let each piece of the puzzle do what it's good at.

"The cell tower is great at communicating voice and data, but not at figuring out where your phone is.

"Your phone is very good at telling where it is. So we let the phone tell our system where it is. Our system uses the cellular network to transmit the voice and data necessary to complete the call."

During a supervised test a Fox News reporter dialed 911 from his cell phone. Although he placed the call while standing next to a 911 operator in the Alpharetta center, her computer screen showed the address of a cell

phone tower over a mile away.

When CEO White called from the same location using a LAASer 911 equipped mobile phone, the operator's computer immediately showed the correct address of the 911 center.

LaaSer is working with a major Android manufacturer to make the improved technology standard on their new phones.

Currently, 70 to 80 percent of emergency calls are made on cell phones. The FCC estimates that a one minute improvement in 911 response times for mobile callers could save 10,000 lives yearly.

The FCC has mandated that by 2021, 911 centers must be able to receive accurate locations from 80 percent of wireless calls. But, that still means that one in five mobile carriers may fall through the cracks in an emergency.