

Ashtabula County

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**Ashtabula County Commissioners Recognizes April as  
National 9-1-1 Education Month**

Ashtabula Commissioners continue to help citizens of all ages recognize the importance of 911 and the role they play in ensuring effective and efficient emergency response in times of crisis. Groups including the United States Congress and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), a leading public safety association, have also recognized April as National 911 Education Month, and are encouraging the media, the 911 community, the wireless industry, and public information providers to engage in 911 awareness and education activities this month.

Public education and awareness initiatives throughout the years have contributed in large measure to the incredible and ongoing success of the emergency communications system as a whole. It is our hope that all groups interested in promoting and enhancing the safety and welfare of the public will help deliver critical 911 messages this month.

As consumers utilize new communications technologies and devices, 911 education takes on an increased importance for everyone, but especially for children, teens, and parents. In spite of its demonstrable use as a law enforcement tool, the 911 system's primary use is to help dispatchers get first responders to emergency situations quickly. "Car accidents and other incidents that happen outdoors are most often reported via cell phones. Sixty percent of 911 calls answered at the county's six Public Safety Answering Point sites come from cell phones, Boland said".

"Parents often give charged, old cell phones to children to play with which will still dial 911. Alternatively, they give cell phones to children too young to understand how to use them properly. What parents are not aware of is when their child calls 911, it ties up the dispatchers and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) response teams", Boland said. This not only costs the county money, but also ultimately could cost someone their life when emergency teams are busy responding to fraudulent 911 calls. "Our goal is to educate the parents, children, media, 9-1-1 professionals, teachers, government officials, and industry leaders about the tools that are becoming necessary for a smooth transition into NG911 where 911 will be IP based. Our telecommunications landscape is ever-changing", Boland said.

EMA and 911 will be visiting schools and businesses to educate and train adults and children on the importance of proper usage of 911 and the changes in the technology throughout the county.

By honoring National 911 Education Month and National Public Safety Telecommunications Week, NENA has also made a number of public safety educational resources for the media, 911 professionals, public educators, and citizens available via its National 911 Education Month webpage, [www.nena.org/education/911-education-month](http://www.nena.org/education/911-education-month), including an E-Brochure entitled *Making 911 Work for YOU!*. The brochure is designed to provide essential information to the public, children, teens, and parents about the 911 system and emergency response.