

History of the Emergency Communications Center

Through the Years of the Raleigh-Wake County ECC

The Raleigh-Wake Emergency Communications Center has had a long history of serving the citizens of Raleigh and Wake County.

1960's

1969 - The idea is conceived of merging all of the police and fire call centers and radio dispatch offices in Wake County into one consolidated emergency communications center.



1970's

1971 - A three-phase plan is developed for the proposed communications center. Federal funding is obtained from the Office of Civil Defense to start Phase-I.

January 1972 - The Raleigh-Wake County Emergency Communications Center begins operations next door to the Raleigh PD Front Desk at 110 S. McDowell St, with 20 Telecommunicators, five dispatch workstations, four radio channels, 15 emergency telephone lines and five administrative lines.

In anticipation of eventually going to 9-1-1, the Center's county-wide emergency telephone number was designated at 919-829-1911, a number still in use by the Center today. The center dispatches for four police departments, and all of the fire departments in Raleigh and Wake County.



1980's

January 26, 1980 - RWECC goes live with Basic 9-1-1 (Automatic Number Identification) for most areas of Wake County.

1982 - RWECC moves from Police Headquarters, 110 S. McDowell St to Raleigh Municipal Building, 222 W Hargett St.

November 1986 - RWECC goes live with Enhanced 9-1-1 (Automatic Number Identification & Automatic Location Identification) for all of Wake County.

November 28, 1988 - An F4 tornado touches down near Umstead Park just after 1am and continues on the ground for 84 miles until it dissipates near the I-95/Virginia boarder. The K-Mart at Townridge is totally destroyed; over 75 businesses and 2,500 homes are destroyed. More than one hundred people were injured and two children were killed.



1990's

1991 - RWECC goes operational with its first Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system; used to recommend and dispatch fire and EMS calls, and later police calls.

September 5-6, 1996 - Hurricane Fran, a Category 3 storm, hits Wake County. RWECC experiences its busiest 24 hours in its history with 6,386 9-1-1 calls received. Twenty-four people in North Carolina died, including four in Wake County.

Fall 1997 - RWECC implements the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) program which gives callers medical instructions via telephone and dispatches fire and EMS based on response priorities.

September 16, 1999 - Wake County experiences heavy flooding from Hurricane Floyd, just ten days after Tropical Storm Dennis.



2000 - 2001

January 23, 2000 - A Nor'easter dumps a record 18.2 inches of snow in Raleigh, knocking out power for most of Wake County.

December 2001 - RWECC goes live with "enhanced" wireless 9-1-1 mobile telephone service from most cellular carriers which allow call takers to see callers' GPS coordinates.

September 2001 - In the aftermath of 9/11, a mutual aid response plan is developed to assist centers during times of disaster. RWECC Director Philip Penny was instrumental in the formation of the NC Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT).



2002 - 2003

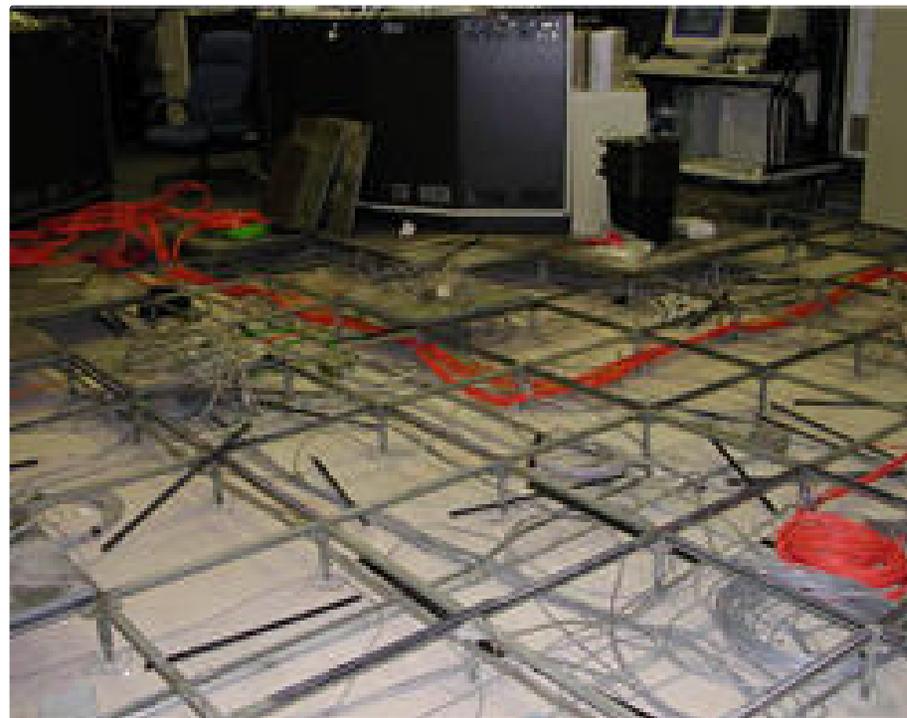
October 2002 - RWECC undergoes its first major renovations and updates equipment including new workstations.

January 29, 2003 - After the West Pharmaceuticals Plant in Kinston explodes, NC TERT is deployed for the first time, including two members from RWECC.

June 2003 - Construction is completed on RWECC's new Back-Up 9-1-1 Center.

September 19, 2003 - NC TERT is activated after Hurricane Isabel hits the NC coast. Sixteen Telecommunicators are deployed to Chowan, Pasquotank, and Tyrell Counties; three from RWECC are deployed to Pasquotank County.

September 24, 2003 - RWECC switches to the new Motorola Printrak Premier Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, adding new capabilities and functionalities for call taking and dispatching.



2004 - 2006

March 2004 - A U.S. Navy FA-18 Hornet fighter jet crashes at RDU International Airport upon takeoff. RWECC is inundated with 9-1-1 calls of thick black smoke on I-40.

May 2004 - RWECC becomes the 9-1-1 center in North Carolina with the most nationally certified Emergency Number Professionals (ENPs).

September 16, 2004 - NC TERT is deployed for the third time after the remnants of Hurricane Ivan and Tropical Storm Frances causes severe flooding and mudslides in the mountains of western NC. Two from RWECC are deployed to Haywood County.

September 14-24, 2005 - NC TERT is deployed out-of-state for the first time after Hurricane Katrina hits the Gulf coast. Four

RWECC employees are deployed to St. Tammany Parrish, Louisiana for ten days.

October 5, 2006 - A chemical leak and subsequent fire at the EQ Plant in Apex prompted an evacuation of over 17,000 residents including the Apex Police Department dispatch office. RWECC took over dispatching operations for Apex until the Apex Police Department could resume operations the next day.



2007 - 2010

October 1, 2007 - RWECC is recognized as an accredited "Center of Excellence" by the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED).

November 17, 2007 - RWECC is awarded its Certificate of Accreditation becoming the first 9-1-1 center in NC to become accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

June 2008 - NC TERT deploys to eastern NC because of a multi-county wildland fire. Three from RWECC are deployed to Hyde County.

June 9, 2009 - The Con-Agra plant in Garner explodes causing a fire and ammonia leak leading to a building collapse. Four people

died, thirty-eight were transported to local area hospitals, including three firefighters.

2010 - RWECC receives the prestigious "Horizon Award" from APCO International for its initiative use of social media to inform the public of motor vehicle wrecks and other traffic hazards.

May 30, 2010 - RWECC fielded numerous 9-1-1 calls relating to an active shooter at the Super Target in Apex. One employee was killed. At least four others were injured while exiting the building. RWECC and Apex Police Communications were presented the "Communications Team of the Year" Award by the North Carolina chapter of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA).



June 15, 2010 - RWECC's 9-1-1 Training Academy is awarded "Project-33" certification by the Association of Public-Safety Officials (APCO) for exceeding national training standards for its public safety Telecommunicators training program.

2011 - 2012

April 16, 2011 - Tornadoes strike Wake County, including one that destroyed a Holly Springs fire station. Another tornado touched down within one mile of RWECC and hit Shaw University. RWECC dispatches calls at a rate of 1 every 5 seconds. Twenty-four people died in North Carolina, including four children in Raleigh. Employees of the center are honored by the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce as "Heroes of the Year" for their efforts.

August 24, 2011 - A 5.8 magnitude earthquake centered in Virginia floods the RWECC with 9-1-1 calls, receiving over 200 calls in

the first 20 minutes, even though there were no injuries and only minor damage reported.

January 2012 - RWECC celebrates its 40 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Raleigh and Wake County.

March 31, 2012 - The need for 10-digit dialing to accommodate the demand for new phone numbers begins. Misdials to the 9-1-1 Center skyrocket with over 3,500 calls in the first month. Prompting the Center to launch a "Keep an Eye on the Finger" public education campaign.

April - June 2012 - RWECC undergoes a major renovation. Operations are transferred to the back-up 9-1-1 Center for approximately three months.

