



# Delaware County Commissioners

Jeff Benton  
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Jennifer Walraven

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Jane Hawes, Communications Manager, 740/833-2109 (office)

## **Delaware County Launches Text to 9-1-1 Service**

DELAWARE, Ohio — Call if you can, text if you can't.

That's the message shared with the Delaware County Board of Commissioners today as they learned about the official launch of the county's "Text to 9-1-1" service. This capability will allow the public to contact a Delaware County 9-1-1 dispatcher by texting a message to the phone number 911. The dispatcher will be able to respond and continue communicating with the sender via text. It is anticipated this service will save lives when a sender is in an emergency situation where remaining silent is necessary or where speaking is not possible. It will also aid senders who are hearing- or speech-impaired.

Gary Merrell, this year's president for the Delaware County Board of Commissioners, said, "This additional 9-1-1 service will mean a lot to our hearing-impaired residents and those visiting our county who may be hearing-impaired as well. It is important to Delaware County to protect all of our residents and visitors."

Patrick Brandt, director of the Delaware County Emergency Communications Department, told the Commissioners the service had been certified by all major cellular phone carriers in the County's area of coverage: Verizon Wireless, AT&T, T-Mobile and Sprint. He added that his staff has been trained in the service's usage and they are ready to move ahead with announcing its availability. Brandt also reported that Sprint is currently the only carrier with the ability to send text and a short video or picture into the 9-1-1 Center.

As with all cellular calls and texts, the accuracy of the sender's location will depend on building structure, weather and available cellular services, Brandt explained. Therefore, it will be essential for a Text to 9-1-1 sender to provide as much location information to the dispatcher as possible. Brandt also urged that, even if an emergency situation requires a person to remain silent—as with a burglary in progress or a kidnapping situation—it would then be best if the person who had initially sent a text then called back and left the line open while remaining silent.

"If we can hear what's happening," Brandt said, "that will help a lot."

While the vast majority of users in Delaware County will have access to the service, Brandt said there is the possibility that a text sent from a location close to any of Delaware County's borders will be transmitted to a cellular-communications tower in the next county. The sender in that case would receive a text reply informing them the text could not be sent.

"The 9-1-1 Center still prefers everyone to call 9-1-1," Brandt said. "However, Text to 9-1-1 will definitely give us more options."

For more information about Delaware County, please go to [www.co.delaware.oh.us](http://www.co.delaware.oh.us).

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Delaware County Commissioners, 101 North Sandusky Street, Delaware, Ohio 43015  
PHONE: (740) 833-2100 FAX: (740) 833-2099 WEB: [www.co.delaware.oh.us](http://www.co.delaware.oh.us)  
FACEBOOK: @DelawareCountyOhio TWITTER: @DelawareCoOhio