



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **EMERGENCY TEXT TO 911 SERVICE LAUNCHED IN ROUTT COUNTY**

#### **Call If You Can, Text if You Can't**

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colorado, October 30, 2017** — A new emergency service is available in Routt County for those who cannot safely call 911 in an emergency, or who are unable to dial 911 for any reason. The Routt County Emergency Communications Center has completed testing and is now prepared to receive 911 text messages. Testing was completed with AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon, Comcast, and Union Wireless. If the service is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you may receive a message indicating such and to contact 911 by other means. Dialing 911 in an emergency is still the preferred way to request help, and the public is being reminded to call if you can, text if you can't. Time is critical in a life-threatening emergency, and customers should be aware of the differences between calling and texting 911.

For most people, sending a text to 911 will not replace making a call. A 911 text will likely take longer than a voice call because someone must enter the text, send it through the system, and then the 911 call taker has to enter a text response and send it back. Just like regular text messages, 911 texts can take longer to receive, get out of order, or may not be received. Location information with text to 911 is not as accurate as calling 911 at this time. Customers should only text or call 911 for emergency situations that require an immediate response from police, fire, or emergency medical services. Please do not text and drive.

#### **Tips on texting 911 in an emergency:**

- Silence your phone if you are in danger, or don't want to be heard.
- Provide clear information about your location and the type of help needed in the first text message sent to 911. Emergency personnel cannot always determine your location.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 911 call taker. Keep the text dialogue open until the dispatcher ends the dialog, if it is safe to do so.
- Text in simple words – do not use abbreviations, emoticons, or emojis.
- Keep text messages brief and concise.

#### **When to text 911:**

- A disability prevents or inhibits a person from effectively making a 911 phone call.
- The caller is unable to speak due to a medical issue or other condition.
- When speaking out loud would put the caller in danger, such as a home invasion, an abduction, a domestic violence incident, or otherwise threatened.

#### **How to text 911:**

- Be prepared to answer the 911 call taker's questions
- Enter the numbers 911 in the 'To' field.
- In the message field, type your exact location and a BRIEF description of the help you need. Use simple words. Do not use abbreviations or shorthand.
- Push the 'Send' button.
- Group texts, photos, and video cannot be sent to 911 at this time.

For more information about Text to 911 service or the 911 technology in Routt County, contact Routt County Communications Manager – Jason Nettles at 970-870-5531