

Parish's 911 upgrades help save local man's life

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BOGALUSA In Less than six weeks after it was installed, the new Washington Parish cell phone 911 Global Positioning System was able to help emergency responders find a Bogalusa man who needed help, but was so disoriented because of his condition that he couldn't say where he was located.

The medical emergency call was reportedly made from a cell phone in the Richardson Community shortly after midnight last Sunday. The Washington Parish Sheriff's Office responded.

"On December 5, 2004, we received a medical emergency call from a gentlemen who was on his cell phone and had no idea what his address was or the name of his road," said Jimmy Creel, communications supervisor for the Washington Parish Sheriff's Office. "His condition could have been a life-threatening situation. Due to the upgrades in our 911 system, the location of the cell phone was picked up by the mapping part of the system and we dispatched an ambulance and our deputies. From the time of the call until this man was on his way to the emergency room was a total of 22 minutes. This very well could have saved this man's life."

Jim Coleman, chairman of the Washington Parish Communications District, commended the emergency responders for their prompt action, and he praised the system.

"The combination of the latest 911 GPS enabled equipment, plus dedicated emergency response professionals pays dividends in a situation such as this," he said.

Coleman said that the system is so good that the victim's location was pinpointed precisely.

"The cell phone location was plotted on a map and because of the aerial photography, it was plotted right on top of his trailer," he said.

The recent upgrades to the Washington Parish 911 system were partially funded by a grant from the Public Safety Foundation of America. And the local emergency system was the only Louisiana 911 system to receive such funding at the time.

Additional information about 911 in Washington Parish can be obtained online at www.wpcde-911.com.