



Charleston County News Release

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See project fact sheet: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/pdfs/FactSheetForGroundbreaking.pdf>

Officials Break Ground on Consolidated 9-1-1 and Emergency Operations Center

On Tuesday, July 26, officials from multiple jurisdictions in Charleston County gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony for the future building planned to house the County's [Consolidated 9-1-1 Center](#) and Emergency Operations Center. The new structure, which is scheduled to open in the spring of 2013, will enable the full consolidation of 9-1-1 and emergency dispatch operations in Charleston County, and will also serve as the new location for the County's Emergency Operations Center.

An [Intergovernmental Agreement](#) signed in January 2008 joins all local jurisdictions within Charleston County in the plan toward consolidating 9-1-1 and dispatch services. Steps toward consolidation have already been taken, with some jurisdictions opting for early consolidation into the current center located in the County's Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building in North Charleston. The remaining jurisdictions plan to transition their dispatchers to the new Consolidated 9-1-1 Center once it is completed.

"Consolidation benefits the public by providing dispatchers the ability to talk directly to each other as they are handling emergency calls requiring multi-jurisdictional response, ultimately reducing response times and saving lives," said [Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch Board](#) Chairman Jon Zumalt, who is also the North Charleston Police Chief.

The early consolidation of some jurisdictions into the current 9-1-1 center was a move fully supported by the Consolidated Dispatch Board. Consolidation is already proving to offer many benefits, including:

- New efficiencies allow a call taker to remain on the line with the caller to gather more information and to provide additional scene safety or medical instructions while responders are being sent by a separate dispatcher.
- Faster response times are documented.
- Interoperability and cooperation among response agencies is enhanced.
- Delays and dropped calls due to the transferring of calls to other agencies are reduced.
- Meeting and exceeding national accreditation and best practice standards is well underway.
- Professional credentials for 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers are required involving nationally recognized certifications obtained through on and off site training.
- A nationally recognized quality assurance program that rates the center as exceeding the 90 percent or higher accreditation goal for fire, medical and police call processing.

Jim Lake, Consolidated 9-1-1 Center Director, is excited to see construction begin on the new center.

"The new Consolidated 9-1-1 Center will have many advantages, including the latest in 9-1-1 technology and a better working environment for the Call Takers and Dispatchers that will help them continue providing excellent service under increasing responsibilities," Lake said. "This building has also been designed for potential growth."

In addition to 9-1-1 and emergency dispatch operations in Charleston County, the new center will be the location of the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is also currently located at the County's Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building in North Charleston. During large, complex incidents, the EOC assumes a coordination role. As an incident expands in size or increases in complexity, central coordination is needed and is provided by the EOC.

“Information from incident commanders is relayed from the Consolidated 9-1-1 Center to the EOC following the occurrence of a disaster, so having both functions under one roof will result in increased efficiency,” said Jason Patno, [Charleston County’s Emergency Management Department](#) Director. “Also, staff mandated to work during an emergency incident, such as a hurricane, will benefit from the safety component that the new building will offer.”

FACTS ABOUT THE NEW 9-1-1 AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER:

- Location: 8500 Palmetto Commerce Parkway, North Charleston, S.C.
- Size: approximately 38,000 square feet.
- Estimated opening date: spring 2013.
- Facility: two-story structure with backup electrical, water and sewer to ensure continuous operation.
- “Green” features: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver certification goal, rainwater collection, water efficient landscaping and use of recycled materials.
- Approved budget: \$26,780,000.
- Safety: the building is designed to be occupied during disasters, with the ability to withstand winds of 191 mph and resist earthquake forces. The first floor will be at elevation 49 feet, which is outside of the 500 year flood plain.

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