

Colorado 9-1-1 Resource Center

(866) 332-3082 ♦ fax: 970-744-2254 ♦ director@co9-1-1resourcecenter.org



March 5, 2009

Jim Little, Editor
Wet Mountain Tribune

- BOARD -

Randy Leshner
Chairman

Brian Shepherd
Vice Chairman

P. B. Schechter
Treasurer

Linda McKelvey
Member

Vicki Pickett
Member

- STAFF -

Daryl Branson, MPA
Executive Director



Dear Editor:

I was contacted by Linda Swift with your local 9-1-1 call center today, who stated that there had recently been some debate in the opinion section of your paper as to what the proper use of 9-1-1 is. I would like to offer the following for publication:

The use of 9-1-1 as a universal emergency number is intended to assist people in reporting emergencies. It does this by allowing people to dial a single number, regardless of where in the country they are, to receive a public safety response to an emergency.

In order for 9-1-1 to continue to be useful for this purpose, its use must be limited to true emergencies. What consists of an "emergency" is somewhat left for each community to decide for itself, but there are some national standards. The National Emergency Number Association states that an emergency is "any serious situation where a law enforcement officer, fire fighter, or emergency medical help is needed **right away**." NENA also states, for example, that you **should not** call 9-1-1:

- for information
- for directory assistance
- when you're bored and just want to talk
- for paying tickets
- for your pet
- as a prank

Whenever someone dials 9-1-1 for something that is not a true emergency, it ties up that 9-1-1 line and may prevent someone with true emergency from getting through. Therefore, 9-1-1 should **only** be used to report an emergency that is appropriate for police, fire, or emergency medical response.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Daryl Branson, MPA ENP
Executive Director