

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Murray Provides \$400,000 for East King County Regional Public Safety Communications (NORCOM) 911 Center

Project will improve interoperability for emergency responders, improve response times and incident command in East King County

(Washington, D.C.) – Today, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) included \$400,000 to provide technology systems and other start up costs associated with creating the Norcom 911 Center. The funding was included in the 2008 Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) Appropriations bill. Senator Murray is a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue currently is served by Eastside Dispatch, however, last year, it joined several other agencies with this start-up effort.

"The NORCOM 911 Center will provide for dedicated fire based dispatching," stated Chris Caviezel, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for the Fire District. "Presently, our dispatch is police based. Fire Calls and Police call have two completely different needs and NORCOM will address those needs."

"I am pleased to have included this funding the Norcom 911 Center," Murray stated. "Across the state and nation interoperability has become a top priority for emergency responders. The Norcom 911 center represents a local partnership that can be looked upon as a model for taking on a problem and creating an innovative solution. The residents of East King county will be better served in the case of an emergency thanks to this forward thinking initiative."

Bellevue Mayor Grant Degginger applauded Murray's effort, "These funds will help create a new regional dispatch partnership in East King County that will enhance the ability for police and fire agencies to communicate with each other and therefore better respond to public safety emergencies."

In 2004 the cities and fire agencies in East King County formed a steering committee to evaluate consolidation of the five separate communications centers into one regional center. Through this process, the different jurisdictions developed the plan to create Norcom, which will house all of the region's emergency medical 911 call and dispatch service. Norcom 911 Center will serve a population of 650,000 and cover over 1,200 square miles. The facility will be housed at the City of Bellevue Communications Center, which already dispatches for two police departments and all 13 fire departments in northern King county.

Total project costs for the center are estimated at \$5 Million. With this investment, the partnering agencies have determined that the Norcom 911 Center would be able to provide a regional structure for data and information sharing that does not currently exist. In addition, it presents an opportunity to better coordinate emergency operations planning and response across all of the partnering agencies.

The partnering agencies include: The City's of Bellevue, Bothell, Clyde Hill, Issaquah, Kirkland, Medina, Mercer Island, Redmond, Duvall Fire District 45, Eastside Fire & Rescue, King and Kittitas Counties Fire District 51, King County Fire District 27 (Fall City), Northshore Fire, Shoreline Fire and Woodinville Fire & Live Safety.

The CJS Appropriations bill was passed out of committee today. It will now move to the Senate Floor for deliberation by the full Senate.