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***Guilford Metro 9-1-1 Announces Text to 9-1-1 Capabilities***

GREENSBORO, NC (December 4, 2014) – Guilford Metro 9-1-1 now has the ability to receive text to 9-1-1 messages through the four major wireless carriers, AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, and T-Mobile. A text or data plan is required in order to text 9-1-1 with these major carriers.

“If anyone has a question of whether to call or text 9-1-1, always remember to call if you can, text if you can’t,” says Melanie Neal, interim director of Guilford Metro 9-1-1. “A voice call will always have a quicker response. Emergency texts to 9-1-1 do not receive priority of any kind on the wireless network and are treated as any other text messages, therefore texts to 9-1-1 are subject to the same speeds or delays, depending on the network strength.”

Text messaging is one of the primary methods people communicate today, especially with younger generations and members of the hearing and speech disabilities community. Texts to 9-1-1 will be very useful to the approximately 34 million Americans who are hard of hearing, deaf, or speech-impaired. Texts to 9-1-1 could also aid in situations when a crime is in progress, the caller is facing domestic abuse, is injured and can’t speak, and other situations.

The FCC has mandated other wireless carriers to provide text to 9-1-1 capability by December 31, 2014. This means that Guilford Metro 9-1-1 may request the service from other wireless carriers beginning January 1, 2015.

“It is exciting that Guilford Metro 9-1-1 continues to move forward with a focus on service to our residents,” Assistant City Manager Wesley Reid said. “The transition of these technologies over the next few years will make it easier for public safety and the community to reach the 9-1-1 center which serves as the first, first responder.”

Residents are encouraged to not “test’ this service by texting 9-1-1 unnecessarily. Texts to 9-1-1 require the call taker to stay on that line, thus not allowing the call taker to answer other lines that could be life threatening emergencies. All texts to 9-1-1 are subject to North Carolina public records laws just as calls are.

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The City works with the community to improve the quality of life for residents through inclusion, diversity, and trust. As the seventh largest employer in Greensboro, the City has a professional staff of 2,800 employees who maintain the values of honesty, integrity, stewardship, and respect. The City is governed by a council-manager form of government with a mayor and eight council members. For more information on the City, visit [www.greensboro-nc.gov](http://www.greensboro-nc.gov) or call 336-373-CITY (2489).