

Facts About The 911 Surcharge Ballot Proposal



When a fire, traffic accident, crime, medical emergency, natural disaster, possible school shooter, and any other situation anyone in Jackson County considers an emergency occurs, a phone call to 911 provides immediate access to any and all first responder resources necessary to deal with the caller's emergency. The 911 call center dispatches and coordinates first responders county-wide, ensuring that all resources needed to handle an emergency arrive on scene quickly. The 911 call center is linked to all first responder resources through a network of powerful 800-Megahertz radios that function any place, any time, and under any conditions throughout Jackson County. These radios have to operate with 100% reliability when electricity is gone, cell towers are out, rain is pouring down, the temperature is below 0 or above 100 degrees. Rapid response and direct communication between individual first responders are critical. More than 90% of the 800-Megahertz radios currently in use by Jackson County first responders were bought in 2017 and are approaching 10 years old. At the 10-year mark, vendors normally stop selling a radio model but continue to sell repair parts for some period of years. As with any aging electronic device, these radios will enter a period of declining reliability and more frequent repair.

The Jackson County Supervisors Association, with mounting concern over the risk to public safety posed by aging radios, formed an 800-Megahertz radio work group of representatives from township and city government, fire, and police. The work group was tasked with collecting relevant data, evaluating needs, identifying possible courses of action, examining pros and cons of different courses of action, and making a recommendation. The work group recommended to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners that a proposal be added to the November ballot funding replacement of radios for all Jackson County police and fire first responders who are dispatched by the 911 Emergency Call Center. The recommendation was supported by the Jackson County Supervisors Association, the Jackson County Fire Chiefs Association, and the Jackson County Township and Village Police Association. A Resolution of Support was adopted by 11 townships. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners, responding to these community voices, approved offering the following ballot proposal to voters in November:

JACKSON COUNTY CENTRAL DISPATCH PROPOSITION FOR 9-1-1 SYSTEM FUNDING

Shall the County of Jackson, Michigan, which is currently authorized to assess a charge on all landline, wireless, and voice over internet protocol service users located in Jackson County of up to \$1.50 per month, be authorized to replace that current authorization with a charge of up to \$3.00 per month on such service users, effective July 1, 2027, to be used exclusively for the funding of 9-1-1 emergency telephone call answering and dispatch services within Jackson County, including facilities, equipment and maintenance, and operating costs? If approved and levied, a portion of the additional funds generated will be used to equip all police and fire emergency first responders who are dispatched by the 9-1-1 emergency telephone call answering and dispatch services within Jackson County with new portable radios, replacing current 10-year-old radios.

Tragedy at a Lake and Terror at a School

Drowning - Wolf Lake

A tragic drowning incident took place at Big Wolf Lake on Friday, July 10. At approximately 5:00 PM the 911 emergency dispatch center received a call that an adult male had disappeared under the water while swimming and was feared drowned. Napoleon Township emergency first responders were dispatched immediately and established operational control. A search began and continued until shortly after midnight when the missing person was finally located at a depth of 35 feet on the lake bottom.

Organizations participating in the search:

Napoleon Fire Department	Jackson Community Ambulance
Napoleon Police Department	Mongomery Fire Department
Jackson County Sheriff's Department	Blackman-Leoni Public Safety
Oakland County Dive Team	Wayne County Dive Team
Livingston County Dive Team	Branch County Dive Team
City of Jackson Fire Department	Calhoun County Dive Team
Summit Township Fire Department	J-DART

Organizations en route were already in contact with incident command and knew exactly where to go and what to do on arrival. One search group worked from the Bellemere Court boat launch on the south shore while a second search group worked from a private residence on the north shore. Organizing, coordinating, commanding and performing this complex operation on the water and in the dark would have been virtually impossible without the 70 interoperable 800-Megahertz portable radios that linked all the first responders together into a single team.

School Threat - Intruder with AR-15 Assault Rifle and Bomb

The afternoon of May 5 a call was received at the township office from a man claiming to be at the Napoleon High School with an AR-15 assault rifle and a bomb. A second call was received with the voice of a young girl saying she was inside the school and there was a man with a gun. 911 emergency dispatch was contacted immediately and Napoleon Township police and fire established a unified command for operational control. As additional first responder organizations arrived they were quickly integrated into the response team and assigned a role to perform. School was locked down while an organized sweep of the building and grounds was conducted by a team of police officers, thankfully finding no actual intruder. Scared students and very worried parents were quickly reunited at a coordinated rally location once the school and grounds were judged safe. Organizations participating in the response:

Napoleon Fire Department	LAWNET/JNET
Napoleon Police Department	City of Jackson Fire Department
Jackson County Sheriff's Department	Summit Township Fire Department
City of Jackson Police Department	Columbia Township Fire Department
Spring Arbor Police Department	Liberty Township Fire Department
Springport Police Department	Jackson Community Ambulance
Michigan State Police	Jackson County Emergency Mgt
Columbia Township Police Department	Jackson County Central Dispatch

Coordinating, commanding and performing this complex operation was extremely difficult. Speed was critical and arriving resources had to immediately integrate into a fast moving and fast changing operation. All first responders were already in contact with unified command while en route. 67 interoperable 800-Megahertz portable radios had already linked all first responders together into a single team before they arrived.