

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gov. Branstad designates April as 9-1-1 Education Month

DES MOINES – Governor Terry E. Branstad has designated April as 9-1-1 Education Month in Iowa.

Sponsored by the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) and the Iowa 9-1-1 Communications Council, 9-1-1 Education Month is an opportunity to demonstrate to all Iowans the importance of 9-1-1 and the role they play in ensuring effective emergency response.

“When calling 9-1-1, remember, stay calm, and be aware of your location so you can help 9-1-1 dispatchers locate you during an emergency,” said Barbara Vos, Iowa’s E911 program manager.

Both the U.S. Congress and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) have recognized April as National 9-1-1 Education Month.

Statewide Upgrade

HSEMD has completed an upgrade to Iowa’s 9-1-1 network that will eventually allow citizens to contact 9-1-1 using text, video and picture messaging. The upgrade is part of a national initiative to upgrade wireless 9-1-1 networks to Internet Protocol (IP)-based systems, which are more robust and capable of handling new messaging technology.

“The technology is changing, but all of the pieces are not yet in place,” said Vos. “We’ve completed the first phase of this project with the installation of the network. Over the next 18 months or so, we will work with the wireless carriers and 9-1-1 call centers as they get equipment and procedures in place that will allow them to utilize this new technology.”

Vos said even when the technology is in place to allow citizens to text 9-1-1, it will still be best to call if at all possible if you need help. “Even when text-to-9-1-1 is available, citizens should continue to contact 9-1-1 by making a voice call if they can, and use text only if calling is not a safe or feasible option,” said Vos.

Materials and other resources on 9-1-1 are available on the Ready Iowa website at www.beready.iowa.gov under the “Be Prepared” tab, and also on the NENA website at www.nena.org under the “Education” tab.

The Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management leads, coordinates and supports homeland security and emergency management functions in order to establish sustainable communities and ensure economic opportunities for Iowa and its citizens.

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