

## Why Addressing Changes With E9-1-1

Residents in more than one county have ground the E9-1-1 process to a screeching halt when they found out that their addresses would be changing. This very important information should be widespread, common knowledge long before those address notification letters are ready to be delivered. Public relations and press releases from the onset of the project should let residents know what is to come, and set a schedule for the implementation. So, why ARE those addresses changing, anyway?

- 1) Rural Route and Box addresses are assigned by the post office to facilitate mail delivery only. They address mailboxes, not homes and businesses. Mailboxes are often found in clusters where the rural carrier does not drive into a particular trailer court or road. Residents sometimes move their boxes several miles from home to take advantage of earlier mail delivery or a more “favorable” zip code. A mailbox alone gives no indication of the location of a home.
- 2) Box numbers are sequential, not discriminating between the even and odd sides of a road. When more development occurs, letters are usually added after the number to “fit” more deliveries into the system.
- 3) A city-style address gives the emergency responder more information to work with. Each home or business receives an address, no matter where they receive mail. These addresses are logical and permanent, and do not change when or if a resident or post office moves a mailbox.
- 4) The house number has meaning. It locates the house on a specific road and perhaps on a grid in the county. Numbers get sequentially larger as you travel up the road, with even numbers and odd numbers on opposite sides.
- 5) The road name has meaning. It can be found and located on county paper or digital maps.
- 6) The new addresses will appear automatically on the dispatcher’s screen when the resident dials 9-1-1. With the system, a team can be dispatched to the emergency even if the caller hangs up or is disconnected and is unable to give his name, address or directions. This system would not be possible with rural route addressing.

- 7) “But everyone knows where I live. They’ve never had trouble finding me before.” That might indeed be true, but when a new sheriff’s deputy is hired and sent to your home, what do you do? And is this only about you? What about the county’s other 7500 rural homes? Do all emergency responders know where each of them lives?
- 8) Seconds save lives and property. Reaching a rural home on fire two minutes earlier might mean the difference between life and death to someone trapped inside, and might save thousands of dollars of property.
- 9) A well-assigned city-style address will not change again, even when the post office splits a route. Residents who have had many address changes in the past can be assured that their new address is permanent.