



## **911 innovation wins Governor's Technology Award**

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When York County's 911 Emergency Communications Manger Terry Hall set out to streamline the emergency call process, speeding up the response time between when an alarm call came into a private alarm monitoring company and when his dispatchers were notified, he wasn't thinking of winning awards.

But that's just what he did. On Monday, Hall and his City of Richmond project partners accepted a Governor's Technology Award at this year's Commonwealth of Virginia Information Technology Symposium.

"This awards program honors outstanding achievements and recognizes innovative technology initiatives in the public sector throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia," states the Governor's Technology Awards Web site. "Government entities continue to realize new opportunities to use technology as a springboard to improve service delivery and government efficiency. The Governor's Technology Awards recognize innovation and 'big picture thinking' put into action by Virginia government entities."

The award was given to York County for a program that integrates public emergency computer aided dispatch systems with private ones run by independent security and alarm companies. The county spearheaded the pilot program for this new notification system, and has been testing it for the past three years.

"If you have an alarm system installed in your house, and that alarm goes off, the call goes to a private alarm monitoring company call center, which then notifies the local 911 dispatch center," Hall explained. "That process adds, at a minimum, an average of five minutes or longer to the response time. In an emergency, that time is crucial."

This new technology eliminates the extra step.

"We developed a way to integrate our computer aided dispatch systems so that now when an alarm is triggered, our dispatchers are notified of that alarm call within seconds after the private alarm monitoring company's call center receives the notification," Hall said. "And it's all done electronically as a simple exchange of data."

Earlier this year, the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials announced that this alarm notification interface exchange was adopted as a new American National Standard.

"We're very proud to have received such widespread recognition for this program," Hall said. "But at the end of the day, we did this for our citizens, to improve our response time for them in case of an emergency. This is the next generation of 911 services."

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