

December 28, 2018

Late Thursday night I got a phone call, an email and a text that the 9-1-1 system was down in Lewis County. The various communications let me know if I had an emergency I could call dispatch at 360-740-1105. This is the number normally used for non-emergent calls but is also used in situations like this when the emergent system goes down.



We did find out Friday morning that the outage was more widespread and was pretty significant. I have yet to hear what caused the problem but needless to say it got me to thinking about how much I take for granted that it will always be there. There are systems and processes in place that have been there forever, or so we think, and I hardly ever think twice about expecting it to be there.

I got this notice because I have signed up for Lewis County Alert (sign up at www.lewiscountywa.gov or by calling 360.740.1464). When signing up you can indicate how you can be reached (phone, email or text). I did learn that by responding back to the call (push 1) or text that they would have stopped there. Like many others I wasn't familiar with the process and didn't respond to any of them. From now on I will respond!

This system provides emergency alerts such as:

- Public Safety and Health issues;

- Emergency Road Closures and River Gauge Levels
- Impending Storm and Flood Warnings
- Evacuation Notices and Instructions.

Here's some history about 9-1-1 from an organization called the National Emergency Number Association or NENA
(Yes, really):



- In the United States, the first catalyst for a nationwide emergency telephone number was in 1957, when the National Association of Fire Chiefs recommended use of a single number for reporting fires.
- In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that a "single number should be established" nationwide for reporting emergency situations. The use of different telephone numbers for each type of emergency was determined to be contrary to the purpose of a single, universal number.
- In November 1967, the FCC met with the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) to find a means of establishing a universal emergency number that could be implemented quickly. In 1968, AT&T announced that it would establish the digits 9-1-1 (nine-one-one) as the emergency code throughout the United States.

Now you know!

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

