

Emergency service offered

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Officials: Safety profile will help save lives

Smart911, a free service offered to enhance emergency communications, is available to Gothenburg residents.

By visiting the website www.smart911.com, residents can create a safety profile online that includes information they want responders to have during an emergency.

When an emergency call is made, officials said the profile is delivered immediately to the 9-1-1 call taker and results in greater emergency response effectiveness and saved lives.

According to Mary Ann Agler, telecommunications supervisor for the North Platte 911 Center, limited information is available when emergency calls are currently made.

The North Platte 911 Center provides emergency communications for the local area.

"That is especially true for calls from mobile phones," Agler said, noting that information from a profile is passed on to responders.

Those who set up a profile can include any information they want made available about themselves and family members, a residence and even pets.

Gothenburg police chief Randy Olson described profile information as invaluable.

"We have never had the ability to have this type of information available as we respond to emergencies," Olson said. "It's amazing that when the communications center receives a 911

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call, the safety profile is displayed immediately to dispatchers all without having to say a word. And this is at no additional cost to Gothenburg area citizens.”

Mark Ballmer, Gothenburg Volunteer Fire Department chief, said knowing special needs, bedroom locations and how many people are in a home can make a significant difference in a house fire or other types of emergencies.

“Anytime we can gain information while responding to an incident helps us determine what equipment is needed and how we are going to approach the problem in advance.”

Officials say that having a safety profile has positively impacted emergency situations across the country, including a missing child call when a girl’s photo and physical description was distributed to deputies while the mother was still on the phone with 9-1-1 communicators.

The girl was recovered safely soon after the call was placed and law enforcement was ahead of the normal time frame when responding to the call.