

In case of emergency: Glen Carbon and Maryville now share state-of-the-art 911 call center

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GLEN CARBON - The villages of Glen Carbon and **Maryville** now share a state-of-the-art 911 dispatch center, which will allow residents experiencing emergencies to speak to a live human being 24/7.

Glen Carbon Police Department Support Supervisor of Telecommunications Coleen Schaller said the center should work for both villages for as long as three decades. She said the effort was done through the combined forces of both villages, their police departments and their fire departments. The cost of the center will be distributed equally through the agencies based on call volume - meaning the **Glen Carbon Police Department** would accept the "lion's share" of the costs due to their amount of calls.

"Everyone shares equally, based on how they utilize the call center," she said.

Not only will the newly-renovated center assist with the usual emergency calls for services, it will also field after-hours emergencies for both villages, including items such as emergency water shut off and public works management.

"If someone breaks a water pipe and needs their water shut off at 3 a.m., they can call the center and reach a real live person," Schaller said.

The center has also streamlined several of its former processes. Six separate radio channels have been consolidated into one through a new Motorola system. That fix alone will greatly improve the safety of and accessibility for all citizens. Schaller said records are now more easily shared among agencies, including the **Madison County Sheriff's Office**.

There is also room in the center for two additional operational offices. Schaller said that space may be needed thanks to the passing of a 911 Consolidation Law by the **Illinois General Assembly** in 2016. That law will require half of 911 answering points in the county to close, Schaller said. The extra space for two additional operations centers could accommodate additional adjacent communities, which may require the space for their own continued operations.

Ultimately, the new center is a monument to cooperation and intergovernmental agreements done by the **Village of Glen Carbon** and the **Village of Maryville**.

"The goal was to keep our dispatch standard of excellence and expand intergovernmental operations with other agencies closer to us," Schaller said.

