



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 21, 2004

E9-1-1 Institute Partnering With Homeland Security Office To Focus Local Attention on Emergency Services

Local Events to Build Bridges Among First Responders and the Public

Washington, DC -- The E9-1-1 Institute, a support mechanism for the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus, is joining forces with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps to launch a series of awareness-raising events across the country.

At an event this morning on Capitol Hill, the E9-1-1 Institute and Citizen Corps announced plans to cosponsor a series of events on 9-1-1 and emergency communications issues in Congressional districts across the country.

Local events will be hosted by members of Congress and will focus on questions such as: How does our local emergency response system work, and what role can citizens play in hometown security? Who are the heroes working behind the scenes of our local 9-1-1 system? Does our community have advanced technology for detecting the location of wireless callers? What is a family disaster communications plan?

"Homeland security is really about hometown security, and 9-1-1 services are at the heart of local emergency response," said C. Suzanne Mencer, Director of the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness at the Department of Homeland Security. "We appreciate this partnership with our colleagues in Congress to help educate the public and to provide local training and volunteer opportunities to help make our communities better prepared to deal with the full range of today's threats."

"In this era of heightened homeland security concerns, it is more important than ever for local, state and federal officials to come together on emergency communications issues," said Gregory L. Rohde, Executive Director of the E9-1-1 Institute. "Through these local events, we're aiming to bring all of the key players together, educate decision makers and the public at large, and promote stronger, more effective 9-1-1 services."

Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT), co-chair of the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus and chairman of the Senate Communications Subcommittee, said, "The only way to succeed in making our emergency communications systems and 9-1-1 systems more effective is to make sure we are all working together. This has been my priority in developing E9-1-1 legislation, and I look forward to these events which will bring more insight to these safety issues for our communities across the nation."

Caucus Co-Chair Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), added: "Without question, the more all members of a community understand our homeland defense and the vital work of our first responders, the better prepared we all will be to respond to any terrorist threat."

"This will be a great opportunity for Members of Congress to work with their constituents on emergency response preparedness," said Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL), one of the House co-chairs of the Caucus. "It is important to have citizens learn how to work with public safety officials on responding to emergencies. The more prepared we are, the better."

And Co-Chair Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), said: "In a post-September 11th world, it's more essential than ever to ensure that our hometown emergency personnel have the technology and resources they need. These events will help raise awareness and promote improved cooperation among local, state, and federal officials so that Americans will have the hometown security they expect and deserve."

The local events are expected to be held over the next few months, although specific dates and locations have not yet been announced.

* * * * *

EDITOR'S NOTES: *The announcement of this partnership took place this morning, Friday, May 21, 2004, at 9:30 am, in Room 138 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington.*

The E9-1-1 Institute (www.e911institute.org) is a not-for-profit organization which provides administrative and policy support to the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus. The purpose of the E9-1-1 Institute is to promote public education and awareness of E9-1-1 and emergency communications issues and serve the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus as a facilitator of dialogue and clearinghouse of information. The Caucus is co-chaired by Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT), Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Congressman John Shimkus (R-IL) and Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (D-CA). Gregory L. Rohde, former Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, serves as the Institute's Executive Director.

Citizen Corps (www.citizencorps.gov) is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's nationwide grassroots movement to involve all Americans in making our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for emergencies. Through a nationwide network of more than 1,100 local Councils, Citizen Corps brings together the homeland security expertise of emergency responders with the energy and spirit of volunteers, the private sector and other community stakeholders to engage everyone in the community. The Department's website, www.ready.gov, also provides critical information on citizen preparedness.

* * * * *

Media Inquiries: Dale Curtis, 202-715-1520, dale.curtis@dittus.com (for the E9-1-1 Institute) or Liz Hays, 202-828-8802, haysl@fleishman.com (for Citizen Corps)

All other inquiries: Erica Orange, 202-292-4603, erica.orange@e911institute.org

END