

Improved 911 emergency system begins next year

By Mary Jo Fitzl

A new and improved 911 emergency telephone system in Lincoln, will begin in January, according to Randy Arno, coordinator of the County-City Implementation Commission (CCIC).

A center of Lincoln emergency telephone services will "improve coordination between area emergency services and reduce response time to emergency calls," Arno said.

"The new system proposes to have each emergency agency pick up its gear and move into one central location," he said.

The CCIC has contracted with Arthur D. Little Systems to design and implement a center for the 911 system. The City Council approved the \$57,000 contract on Monday.

Work will begin on the 12-week project at the end of October, Arno said.

The current 911 switchboard is at the Lincoln Fire Dept. (LFD) headquarters. A fire dispatch officer answers all incoming calls and transfers them to the proper service area, such as the Lincoln Police Dept., ambulance or the Bryan Hospital heart team. The Fire Dept. is usually the first to respond to emergency calls, Arno said, because it operates the switchboard.

The project will consolidate all emergency services into one center, Arno said. A central switchboard operator will answer calls phoned into the 911 emergency, Arno explained. This should cut down on response time, he said.

Emergency services included under the new 911 consolidation are the Lincoln Police Dept., the Lincoln Fire Dept., the Civil Defense Dept., the Bryan Memorial Heart Team, area hospitals, rural fire districts, the county sheriff, the State Patrol and ambulance systems. Some of these services are not covered by the 911 system now, Arno said.

The Lincoln Electric System, the Public Works Office and the City Engineering Dept. also may be plugged into the 911 network, Arno said. However, he added that those proposals "are down the road," and need to be studied by the CCIC to see how they would fit into the system.

"Nine-one-one is not a total system yet in Lincoln," Jim Cary, LFD communications supervisor, said. The new system "could be more effective for Lincoln if it is handled right," Cary said.

Cary said 4,144 calls to 911 were received from January to June of this year. Of those calls, 40 per cent were for the police, 24 per cent for central ambulance

dispatch, 22 per cent for the Fire Dept. nine per cent to the mobile heart team, four per cent for the State Patrol, and one per cent for the county sheriff.

Lack of publicity has hampered the effectiveness of the Lincoln 911 system, Cary said. Last year, 911 operators sent out about 6,000 emergency dispatches, although total calls to the number were "about four or five times that amount," he said. Some persons call thinking 911 is an information number, or because it is the only number that can be called free from a public telephone booth.

Arno said increased publicity will be used to make the public more aware of 911 as the common emergency number for Lincoln.

The basement of the County-City Bldg. is the proposed site for the new center. The administrative offices of the Civil Defense Dept. are there now. Arno said construction of the office should begin by Dec. 1.

It will cost nearly \$10,000 to move all the emergency agency's communications equipment to the new location, Arno said. CCIC is trying to get federal funds to finance the move, he said.

news digest

By The Associated Press

China silent

Tokyo—Hua Kuo-feng was believed to be consolidating his position as China's top leader at a high-level meeting in Peking on Thursday, but the government maintained its official silence on the reported turmoil in the Chinese hierarchy. Scores of limousines were seen outside Peking's Great Hall of the People on Wednesday night, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported. In Taipei, a Nationalist Chinese analyst said members of the Communist party Central Committee had begun gathering in Peking on Tuesday. It was not known whether the reported meeting would be faced merely with the task of rubber-stamping Hua's selection to succeed the late Mao Tse-tung as party chairman, or would have to deal with factional strife surrounding the question of succession. The first signs of such a power struggle were reports that more than 30 leaders of the party's radical faction, including Mao's widow, Chiang Ching, had been arrested as a result of a plot to forge Mao's directives in order to have his widow succeed him. Peking has not confirmed the arrests.

Clinics reopen

Swine flu clinics in several areas reopened Thursday, as the troubled immunization program was boosted by President Ford and his family who got their vaccinations at the White House. Officials in the Pittsburgh area said they would resume their immunization program for the elderly on Monday. The announcement Tuesday of deaths of three elderly Pittsburgh residents who were vaccinated at a local clinic touched off the concern that led to suspension of immunization programs in parts of Pennsylvania and elsewhere. "The official explanation is the three deaths were a coincidence," said Dr. Frank Clack, director of the Allegheny County Health Department.

Soviets in orbit

Moscow—The Soviet Union launched a Soyuz spacecraft into orbit Thursday with two cosmonauts aboard, Tass reported. Soyuz 23, launched three weeks after the successful return of another manned craft, was carrying pilot Vyacheslav Zudov and flight engineer Valery Rozhdestvensky, the official news agency said. The Tass report said the cosmonauts will attempt to board the orbiting Salyut 5 research station, which housed its first two-man crew for 48 days last summer. Soyuz 23 blasted off from Baikonur space center in central Kazakhstan some 1,500 miles southeast of Moscow Tass said. It was a nighttime launch here. Both cosmonauts are making their first space flight.

Lincoln will get work release center

The Omaha Work Release Center for Women will be moved to Lincoln today. According to Correctional Services Director Joseph Vitek, the move is being made because "we couldn't see continuing a program in Omaha that was obviously going downhill."

The Lincoln home at 1133 S. 11th St. formerly was used as a halfway house for 13 women. Eight women, most of whom are within one year of discharge or final parole hearings, will be moved to the house this week.

Vitek said another location for the house was sought in Omaha's Cathedral-Dundee area, but Douglas County officials and area residents "indicated very strongly that they didn't want us to move in."

The program was begun in 1974 and most recently was located on the top floor of the YMCA Administration Bldg. in Omaha. Vitek said the housing was

inadequate for the program. When the Cathedral-Dundee relocation was opposed, the only alternative left was to move to Lincoln, he said.

"We also felt that we were not serving the interests of the women we were sending there as long as we weren't welcome in Omaha," he said.

No Lincoln officials or residents have raised objections to the center, according to Brian Hendrickson, work release director. The men's work release program has been operating in Lincoln for nine years. It has operated relatively smoothly and should have a positive effect on the women's program, Hendrickson said.

The women have had no problems finding employment in Lincoln, he said, adding that it seemed harder for women to find jobs in Omaha.

short stuff

The Political Science Dept. at Nebraska Wesleyan University is sponsoring a rally at 10 a.m. today in the Hall of Science, Olin B Lecture Hall. U.S. Senate candidate Edward Zorinsky will speak.

The UNL Student Alumni Board is taking applications for new members today. Anyone interested in joining the board should fill out an application at the Alumni House, 1520 R St.

The Physics and Astronomy Dept. will open the Behlen Observatory to the public from 7 to 10 tonight and on Oct. 29.

Norman Allinger, a University of Georgia professor, will speak about *Recent Applications of Molecular Mechanics to Structural Problems in Organic Chemistry* at 3:30 p.m. today in Hamilton Hall 110.

Alpha Chi Omega sorority and Delta Tau Delta fraternity are sponsoring an ice cream social from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. Saturday in the Alpha Chi Omega parking lot, 10th and Vine streets.

A workshop in intra-personal communications will be from 7 a.m. to 7

p.m. Sunday. The philosophies of Eastern yoga and Western psychology will be explored through mind, movement and music at the UMHE Commonplace, sponsored by the Human Potentials Committee. Balthazar and Gordon Becker will conduct the workshop, which is limited to 30 participants. Registration is \$15 for UNL students, \$30 for others.

calendar

12:30 p.m.—Engineering Mechanics luncheon, Nebraska Union 243.

12:30 p.m.—Muslim Student Association, Union 337.

3:30 p.m.—Political Science Dept. lecture, Union Auditorium.

6:00 p.m.—Tassels-Corn Cobs pep rally, Union south steps.

7:30 p.m.—Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship, Union 202.

7:30 p.m.—Rek-suhn-roc homecoming celebration, Union Ballroom, Harvest Room, Main Lounge, Centennial Room and Auditorium.

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