

Dalton

## Location key for new 911 center

### *All emergencies will be handled at new facility*

*By Amy Carr, Berkshire Eagle Staff*

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DALTON — One-stop emergency shop.

That is the marquee benefit of the police station's new \$180,000 emergency communications center officially up and running today. The state-mandated upgrade features more than a dozen computer monitors, a consolidated radio command center and reverse 911 technology. But, Director of Communications Michael J. Norton says, the location of the high-tech hub is its most important asset.

"As of 7 a.m. (today), all emergencies will be handled here," said Norton, while showcasing the new command center twice the size of the one previously housed in a small room at the fire station. "Now people can come here 24 hours a day instead of the fire station, which means we will have our on-duty officers and dispatchers at the same location. That will make responding to calls a lot easier."

The \$23,750 grant given to the town by the Executive Office of Public Safety in October has helped to pay for new electrical service, 911 center and emergency generator, which is capable of providing power to all of Town Hall.

Police Chief John W. Bartels Jr. said the new center offers priceless simplicity and efficiency as the answering point for police, fire, ambulance, highway, cemetery, water and animal control departments. The technology works to visually track emergency calls on a geographical grid and track calls even in "dead zone" areas.

"They say this 911 stuff is really something," said Bartels. "We've been working on this project since January. It's exciting, because it's all by computer so it's more efficient in knowing where the manpower is at all times."

Officials remind residents that all emergencies will now be handled exclusively through the police station's emergency communication center.

"We're going to put up signs that direct people here instead of the fire department," said Norton. "It's really important that people realize if they have a problem, they should just come here."