

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Governor Branstad Designates April as 9-1-1 Education Month

DES MOINES –Governor Terry E. Branstad has designated April as 9-1-1 Education Month in Iowa.

The Iowa 9-1-1 Communications Council and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) hope the campaign will help all Iowans recognize the importance of 9-1-1 and the role they play in ensuring effective emergency response. Both the U.S. Congress and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) have also recognized April as National 9-1-1 Education Month.

“9-1-1 public education and awareness initiatives throughout the years have contributed to the ongoing success of emergency communications as a whole,” said Barbara Vos, Iowa’s 9-1-1 program coordinator.

NENA has made a number of public safety educational resources available for the media, 9-1-1 professionals, educators, and citizens via its [website](#), including an electronic brochure entitled ***Making 9-1-1 Work for YOU!*** The brochure is designed to provide essential information about the 9-1-1 system and emergency response.

Statewide Upgrade

Iowa’s 9-1-1 program has undergone some major changes in the past year. Recently, HSEMD completed an upgrade to Iowa’s wireless 9-1-1 network that will eventually allow citizens to contact 9-1-1 using text, video and picture messaging. Iowa is one of the first states to complete a statewide upgrade of its wireless 9-1-1 network to an Internet Protocol (IP)-based system – which is more robust and capable of handling the new messaging technology. The upgrade is part of a national initiative called Next Generation 9-1-1, which is being led by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

Plan to Call

Although upgrades to Iowa’s 9-1-1 infrastructure have been, it’s still best to call 9-1-1 if you need help.

“The technology is changing, but all the pieces are not yet in place,” said Vos. “If you need to contact emergency services, call. Don’t try texting or sending photos or video, because the 9-1-1 operators won’t yet be able to receive them.”

Vos said it’s important to only call 9-1-1 in an emergency, to remain calm when calling 9-1-1, and to be aware of your location when relaying information to the 9-1-1 dispatchers.

Iowa HSEMD will have information available on both of its websites, www.iowahomelandsecurity.org and www.BeReady.iowa.gov, throughout the month of April. You can also link to HSEMD’s [Facebook](#) page and [Twitter](#) feed for regular updates during April.

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