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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attention required when using mobile phones for 9-1-1

MURPHY (December 11, 2015) A 2013 survey by the Pew Research Center revealed that 90 percent of Americans own and use a mobile phone, many of them abandoning the landline even for their homes or businesses.

“Mobile phones have become essential and ubiquitous,” said Police Chief Arthur “Trey” Cotten. “They serve an invaluable role in our lives and many of us feel unprotected and vulnerable without them.”

And, while their value is unquestioned, mobile phone users must be aware of their limitations, especially when dealing with 9-1-1 operators. “When on the road and wanting to report an accident or other emergency, the caller must be specific about the location,” he said. “Mobile phones depend on cellular towers to transmit their signal, and because of their portable nature, pinpointing locations is extremely difficult.”

Reporting an emergency using a mobile phone requires the caller to pay extra attention to their surroundings. A street address, or a street name with the closest cross streets, a well-known landmark, a mile marker, if available, all assist the 9-1-1 operator in sending first responders to the affected location quickly and efficiently.

“Using a landline makes it easy to pinpoint the location of the call, and thus dispatching the responders,” said the Chief. “However, with cell phones, a caller may be within the Murphy’s city limits, but the call may go to Plano’s dispatch center. That’s why knowing exactly where you are, and relaying that information to the dispatcher, is crucial.”

Emergency calls can be easily transferred between dispatch offices, saving valuable time. But, when callers are not aware of their location, there may be a delay in dispatching emergency crews. And, depending on the emergency, that delay can be catastrophic.

Enabling the GPS feature, available on most mobile phones, aids in pinpointing a caller’s location, but mobile phones that do not have that feature or have that feature disabled, are harder to locate. Triangulating the signal from the various towers that connect to the phone can help, but that process is time-consuming.

“It is, of course, much better to avoid having to work at finding a mobile caller in an emergency,” he said. “Helping our dispatchers, and ultimately the first responders, by being precise in providing as close as possible to an exact location, benefits everyone in the end.”

Murphy’s dispatch center operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and is staffed with professional, highly-trained, knowledgeable personnel who daily exhibit great patience when responding to calls. They are certified in all aspects of dispatch service, including the ability to instruct life-saving techniques over the phone.

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ABOUT MURPHY -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 18,020, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income above the state average. With more than 70 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a country feel while exhibiting an aggressive economic development stance. The centrally-located municipal complex includes four buildings that house Fire, Police, City Administration and Public Works. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27th Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.