



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 24, 2018

ST. CHARLES COUNTY 911 UPGRADE PROVIDES FASTER, MORE ACCURATE LOCATION INFORMATION

Apple iOS 12 mobile users first to benefit

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Working closely with its industry partners, St. Charles County Emergency Communications has successfully upgraded the countywide 911 system with an integration of RapidSOS. All dispatch agencies in St. Charles County now can locate 911 callers who are using Apple’s iOS 12 on their iPhones faster and with more accuracy.

“The safety of our residents and visitors is a priority for St. Charles County Government,” says County Executive Steve Ehlmann. “Our new Emergency Operations Center in O’Fallon, which houses the County’s 911 dispatch, is equipped with the latest technology to maintain and support the County’s Next Generation 911 phone system and digital P25 radio system. RapidSOS enables us to provide even better services in an emergency.”

Apple, in cooperation with RapidSOS, uses Hybridized Emergency Location (HELO) information, which pinpoints the location of the caller and allows for faster dispatch of police, fire and EMS resources as is appropriate for a reported emergency.

“Location accuracy on mobile devices sometimes has been difficult,” says Jeff Smith, St. Charles County’s Director of Emergency Communications, “but this new technology is going to make a significant difference in the time it takes us to pinpoint callers.”

Unlike landline users, mobile callers could be anywhere. Without RapidSOS, the dispatchers first receive the address of a cell tower the caller’s phone is affiliated with. Typically, in approximately 30 seconds the system will provide updated location information which is generally within 50 feet of the caller’s location. With RapidSOS technology, the caller’s actual location is provided almost instantly and is accurate within approximately 3 feet.

“We tested the new system with a call from an iPhone that has iOS 12,” Smith says. “We were able to immediately see exactly where the person was located.”

Those with iPhones who have downloaded iOS 12, and have location services enabled, don’t need to do anything further; Apple has made RapidSOS the default, and there is no additional cost. Google has announced that it, too, will be partnering with RapidSOS by the end of the year, which is great news for Android users.

-end-

Media Contact: Mary Enger, Communications Director, 636-949-1856, or 636-443-1008, menger@sccmo.org

About St. Charles County:

Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state's third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 15 scenic county parks encompassing more than 3,643 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.

With a population of 395,504, St Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County Government employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit sccmo.org.