

Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive



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Contact: Julianne Klimetz – Executive Assistant, (262) 548-7902

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DIRECTOR TO ASSIST NORTHERN LOUISIANA PARISHES

Richard Tuma will help 18 Parishes implement Wireless Phase II technology

WAUKESHA, Wis. – Richard Tuma, Waukesha County Director of Emergency Preparedness, will travel to Northern Louisiana later this month to assist 18 Parishes with implementing Wireless Phase II technology. The technology is used by 9-1-1 dispatchers to identify the location of a cell phone caller.

In 2004, Tuma spearheaded the Waukesha County implementation of Phase II, making Waukesha County the first County in Wisconsin to utilize the technology. Tuma, who is recognized by his peers as an expert in Phase II implementation, will travel alongside two other colleagues from the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials (APCO) February 11th – 13th to assist the Parishes in their efforts toward implementing Phase II technology.

These Parishes, which in many cases are impoverished, currently do not have the ability to locate cell phone callers and some Parishes do not have the capability of receiving emergency calls from cell phones at all.

Tuma, who is using personal vacation days to assist with the efforts, will spend three days working with local elected officials, wireless phone companies, 9-1-1 center directors, and police and fire chiefs advising and assisting them through the implementation process. According to Tuma, the process, which normally takes 6 to 12 months, is largely unknown to officials in the Parishes he will be visiting.

“The ultimate goal is to have the entire nation covered with the technology,” Tuma said. “People need to feel safe knowing that wherever they go they are covered.”

Plans for the trip include introducing stakeholders to alternative technologies, assisting with grant applications and clarifying legislation as well as building working relationships between neighboring communities. Regionalization of the Phase II system, Tuma points out, may be the best solution for some of the participating Parishes.

“The County is very proud of Richard Tuma,” said County Executive Dan Vrakas, “not only because of the great things he has done for safety in Waukesha County, but the work he is doing to help others nationwide.”

This is not the first time Tuma has traveled to Louisiana to assist with emergency efforts. Following Hurricane Katrina, in January 2006, Tuma traveled with his church to assist with clean-up efforts.

“We all need to give back a little bit,” Tuma said. “I feel that’s what people should be doing.”

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1320 Pewaukee Road • Room 320
Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188
Phone: (262) 548-7902 • Fax: (262) 896-8510
TDD: (262) 548-7903
www.waukeshacounty.gov