



## Pottawattamie County 911

Angie Dohnys talked at the Treynor Optimist Club on October 4 on the Pottawattamie County 911. It has been a division of the sheriff's office for 7 years.

Angie has worked there since high school, for 13 years. After two years she started training. In 2009 she became part of what is now called Training and Quality Assurance. Quality Assurance didn't start until 2012. They achieve a rating of 94-97% now.

The 911 office is in the basement of the Court House. They have 22 operators and are hiring two more. The total staff for the office is 30 people. They also have two technicians, a director, an assistant director, and a training office manager. There are four operators on duty at all times, with eight assigned per shift. They process about 160,000 incoming calls and 100,000 outgoing calls. The afternoon shift is the busiest, from 1:00-5:00 p.m.

The hardest parts of the job is that they do a lot of multitasking (taking a call and dispatching at the same time), and not knowing the results of most calls. They also take a lot of blame for things that happen, even though they have little control or knowledge.

It takes about 8 months to hire someone and for them to become proficient. It takes two weeks to advertize, two weeks for initial testing, several weeks of evaluations, and a minimum of 20 weeks of training. The starting salary is \$17.30/hour with good benefits.

They have a mapping system that automatically plots a call on a map sometimes. It doesn't work if an older phone is used for the call, or they have a weak signal. For cell phones, the 911 used the tower that your cell phone hits first.

The office has 10 cell phone lines, 10 land lines, 10 administration lines, and overflow calls go to Omaha. They have the capability to staff 11 positions, with 18 more shared with Omaha.

The 911 office is working on getting all school camera feeds. They have a few. All buses in the county have 911 buttons also. Coming in the future will be texting to 911 and accepting pictures sent via cell phones. Texting is useful for domestic abuse.

Operators have special software to prompt them on how to talk people through emergencies. That helps them dispatch responding personnel within two minutes of a call. Everything is recorded.

The 911 office does not monitor any city or private alarms. Their office is in a secure part of the Court house. They do not evacuate for fire or tornado in the Court House, unless the fire is in the 911 office.