

Enhanced 911 explained at meeting of Kittrell Community Watch

Despite inclement weather, 20 people attended a Kittrell Community Watch meeting on Jan. 17 to learn about Vance County's recently implemented enhanced 911 system. The event took place at the Kittrell Community House.

Edward Woodlief, Kittrell community watch president, called the meeting to order after light refreshments were served. Afterward, Henry Floyd, a local resident, delivered the invocation. Andre Alston, Vance County sheriff's deputy, was welcomed by those in attendance.

Angelia Alston, training supervisor for Vance County Emergency Operations (with more than 31 years experience in public service), presented the program.

The new system handles all of the county's emergency services: police, fire, and ambulance. A minimum of four 911 telecommunicators (to as many as



(From left) Angelia Alston, Vance County Emergency Operations training supervisor, and Andre Alston Vance County deputy sheriff, were on hand for the Kittrell Community Watch meeting back in January. For the main program, Angelia presented an overview of the county's enhanced 911 system.

six) can work at one time: each one has been trained to handle calls involving fire, law enforcement and medical emergencies, as well as suicide prevention and domestic violence. Functioning as a team, one telecommunicator fields a call and stays on the line,

asking additional questions, while another dispatches, and provides information as it is received, to responders. All calls are now automatically recorded, logged and kept indefinitely. Also, non-English speaking callers can now access the AT&T Language Line.

Backup equipment protects against equipment failure while the backup power system counters power outages. Technological upgrades include digital mapping, an addressing database, automatic number identification and location technology (allowing dispatchers to be locate callers through landlines and to be tracked while using cell phone on the move).

Alston presented scenarios in which 911 calls would be appropriate (such as a crime in progress, a fire, someone in need of an ambulance) and inappropriate (power outages). She also stressed that callers should stay on the line an inform the dispatcher when a 911 call has been made accidentally so that responders won't be dispatched needlessly.

Just before adjourning the meeting, Woodlief announced that the next meeting would be held March 21.