

## **Communications Center**

Dispatch communications is provided through the Sheriff's Department. This Dispatch center also houses the 911 mapping office. They are currently upgrading to the AVL system which will allow faster processing of 911 calls and faster response from the closest units. The system is also in the process of replacing their tower system with one which will be more storm resistant structurally. Recently the dispatchers completed Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) courses

Citizens primarily access the County's EMS system by dialing 9-1-1 from any telephone or wireless telephone in the County. Because the County is served by the enhanced 9-1-1 capabilities, the address is recorded on the dispatcher's screen immediately after the last "1" is entered on the dial for any telephone line. This provides the location should the caller lose consciousness or any other event prevents further communication.

Through a grant obtained by Wakulla EMS, HAM radios, communication radios as well as hand held portable radios were placed in Wakulla County, and in adjacent counties to help insure continuity of communications should the main radio tower fail. The dispatch center has protocols developed with the local HAM Operators Association, who provide HAM radio specialists whenever needed. Members of the HAM Operators Association also man radios at the Emergency Operations Center during incidents.

An additional grant, obtained from the State of Florida EMS office, was combined with funds from Emergency Management to purchase a mobile radio tower that can be set up should the main tower fail, or in remote locations where increased radio coverage is needed. The HAM operators erect the mobile tower as needed.