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LOCAL NEWS



Intersecting Safety and Trust

Portland Assistant Police Chief Chris Uehara meets a local family at a bicycle safety fiesta at the North Precinct in northeast Portland advancing both traffic safety and community trust. With help from the adjacent Blazer's Boys and Girls Club and the Portland Fire Bureau, the Aug. 19 event drew 350 community members and came with free school supplies and bicycle helmets and most importantly bike safety tips.

You Can Now Text 911

New technology debuts in Portland area

BY CERVANTE POPE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Multnomah County is among six counties in Oregon and three in Washington that now have the option to text 911 in the case of an emergency.

The new emergency communication service debuted last week in the Portland area as a means to offer an option to those who may not be able to use their voice due to a physical handicap such as being deaf, hard of hearing or mute, or in situations where sound is imperative to survival.

911 Communications Manager Cheryl Bledsoe of Clackamas County said in an interview with Oregon Public Broadcasting that texting 911 would be appropriate for having an intruder in your home or observing a crime like domestic violence where you don't want the parties involved to know you're calling for help. But people are encouraged to always call 911 first (or use relay services or TTY) whenever possible.

A few drawbacks do come with the text-emergency service, aside from the sometimes unreliable



Emergency dispatchers in Portland and the surrounding area now have new technology that allows people to send text messages to report emergencies. (AP photo)

tendency of text messages to not send.

"One of the big drawbacks for us is that the public cannot send us multimedia messages. Those include emojis, pictures and video images," says Bledsoe. "We want full words, but we want to make sure that if folks typically put

emojis in their conversation that they not do that for 911, because that actually corrupts the whole message and we will not receive any part of the message that they might be intending to send us."

Though it might seem unlikely

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