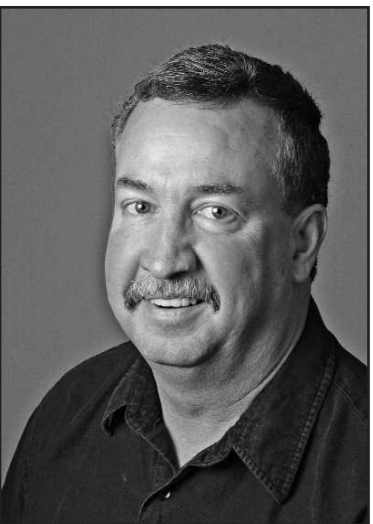


# Columbia 9-1-1 announces new administrator



**Rick Whitehead will take over the helm at Columbia 9-1-1 effective January 1.** Photo courtesy of 9-1-1.

The Board of Directors of the Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District announced last week that Richard (Rick) Whitehead of Austin, Texas, has accepted the position of Administrator of the 9-1-1 District, contingent upon successful completion of a background investigation.

The Administrator is the chief executive officer, responsible for all functions and services of the District, and answers to the elected Board of Directors. The Board governs with the involvement of a statutory Advisory Committee which consists of all fire/emergency medical chiefs, the county sheriff, all police chiefs, the county emergency manager and any other public or private entity providing public safety in the jurisdiction. The Board also appoints five citizens to its annual Budget Committee.

"We are pleased with the very high caliber of candidates who responded to our announcement and participated in our screening processes. We

are especially grateful to the many stakeholders who assisted the Board in our selection. With their help we met our goal of securing an individual that we believe is highly qualified to lead our critical services into the future, with the professional skill and prudent approach our communities rightly expect and demand," said Dee Wooley, Board President.

Administrator-Select Whitehead holds a bachelor of applied arts & sciences degree from Midwestern State University with major course work in criminal justice and public administration. He is a graduate of the FBI Academy, session No. 197, and the Leadership and Command College of Texas. He holds a Certified Public Manager designation from the Hobby Center for Public Services in Texas. His 30-plus year career has spanned all aspects of military, municipal and county law enforcement, including directing Emergency (9-1-1) Communications, Homicide, SWAT and Special Operations. He is an experienced and well respected public safety trainer. He has been responsible for various project implementations such as accreditation and regional radio and mobile data, as well as working in collaboration with child protection, family violence task force and school resource officer units. Most recently Whitehead has served on the operations board of a combined transportation emergency communications center which fostered regional interoperability and new technology installations.

Whitehead and his wife, Deb, have three grown children – two sons who are both firefighters and a daughter who is a journalist. Whitehead plans to report to work in early December and work with the District's current Administrator at least through December 31st to assure a smooth transition.

Sally Jones, hired in 1990 as Administrator when the 9-1-1 District was first formed by voters, plans to retire on December 31st. Jones, who began her emergency communications career in 1973 following a two year stint as nurse, said, "I have been so fortunate to experience myriad improvements in 9-1-1 services during my career – the most obvious of which is technologies that help us identify the location of emergencies, speed up response activations and support interoperable communications among field units. Also exciting to me, are the great advances in

emergency medical pre-ambulance arrival support, increases in volunteer involvement, fire prevention and disaster preparedness programs and other partnerships we have with citizens and local businesses that enhance our ability to prevent injury and save lives. I will miss all that, but, I will miss the many extraordinary people I have worked with most of all. I am thankful for the Board's careful selection of the next Administrator; Mr. Whitehead will serve our District mission very well and will continue our commitment to excellence in public service".

## Elder abuse may be on the rise

State officials are concerned that elder abuse may be a growing problem in Oregon, as it is nationally. National studies estimate that 3-5 million seniors age 65 and older nationwide have experienced abuse, but only one in five abuse cases is reported. With the holidays upon us and families visiting with one another, DHS would like to remind people of the signs of elder abuse.

"No type of abuse should be tolerated, but elder abuse is an under-reported crime because people do not know how to recognize the signs, and they don't know how to report it when they do see it," says James D. Toews, the Department of Human Services (DHS) assistant director for seniors and people with disabilities. "We have to raise awareness of elder abuse and ways to report it before we can hope to prevent it."

Approximately 13 percent of Oregon's population is now 65 years or older.

DHS reviewed 20,000 calls regarding allegations of abuse of elderly or physically disabled Oregonians in 2009. Of those calls 12,447 warranted DHS investigation in either the community or in facilities.

A new brochure from the DHS Seniors and People with Disabilities Division outlines adult abuse reporting. It can be found and downloaded at: <http://dhsforms.hr.state.or.us/Forms/Served/DE9373.pdf>.

The signs of elder abuse include physical injuries, emotional or behavioral changes, a decline in self-care, and changes in financial status. A complete list of the signs of abuse is available on the DHS website: [http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/spwpd/abuse/def\\_signs.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/spwpd/abuse/def_signs.shtml).

Oregon law defines elder abuse as physical injury not caused by accident, neglect leading to harm, abandonment, intentional infliction of physical pain or injury, unwanted sexual contact or the inability to consent to sexual contact, and taking or threatening to take money or property.

Anyone witnessing or suspecting abuse of seniors or people with physical disabilities is asked to call the toll-free abuse hotline: 1-800-232-3020. DHS and Area Agencies on Aging provide protective services and investigate reports of suspected abuse. They determine if abuse has occurred and work with law enforcement when a potential crime may have occurred.

"Our staff does an excellent job of identifying these situations and providing assistance, but they need help from the public," says Toews. "As Oregon's population ages, this type of abuse is bound to increase unless we all become more aware of the signs of abuse and more willing to report or prevent it."

## County to give flu shots in Mist

Columbia Health District-Public Health Authority will be providing a walk-in flu shot clinic at the Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Station, 12525 Hwy 202, on December 10. Oregon Health Plan (OHP) will be billed in lieu of the \$10 charge for those insured by OHP. The clinic will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Flu vaccine is an effective way to protect you and your family from the flu virus. For those who have private insurance or Medicare, contact your provider or pharmacist.

CHD Public Health will be offering several other walk-in flu clinics open to the county, at the Public Health clinic located at 2370 Gable Rd. in St. Helens, behind Safeway, across the street from St. Helens High School. For those additional dates, please view the website at [www.chdpublichealth.com](http://www.chdpublichealth.com).

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