

Washington Parish Communications District

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National Cellular Phone Official Visits Washington Parish

John Garner, the Director of Public Safety for Cingular Wireless, and NENA's Wireless Technical Committee Chairman visited the Mt Hermon Fire Department on August 8th to review the progress of wireless communications in the United States and more specifically, Washington Parish.

NENA, the National Emergency Number Association, is a professional organization dedicated to the technological advancement, availability, and implementation of 911 in the United States.

During an informal presentation to the firefighters, Mr Garner mentioned that "Washington Parish was in the forefront of similar sized counties in the United States as to its ability to locate the latitude and longitude of 911 wireless calls. He stated that the 911 call location equipment in Washington Parish was as good as anywhere in the United States".

From a Cingular Wireless perspective, he reported that all three new Cingular towers have been tested and are fully operational. The new towers in Mt Hermon, Angie, and Enon are now on line.

Taking more about cell phone towers, Mr Garner said that "a typical tower and its related equipment can cost anywhere from \$ 350,000 to one million dollars depending on the location. In addition, once the tower is built, the wireless company must secure approvals from 66 governmental agencies before the tower is turned on. This approval process requires many months to complete, and many members of the public are not aware of this".

Mr. James Coleman, Chairman of the Washington Parish Communications District, added that "Cingular now had seven towers in Washington Parish, and that the Enon tower's accuracy had been tested to within a few feet of the caller. He added that accuracy can be influenced by many factors, including the weather and the time of day".

Mr. Garner thanked the firefighters for their hospitality and announced that he would be visiting Washington parish again on August 18th at 7 PM to discuss wireless telephones in Washington Parish with the Mt. Hermon Ruritan Club.