

# NEVADA 2-1-1 RESPONSE REPORT FOR THE RENO AIR RACES DISASTER

*This report was prepared for the Executive Committee of  
the Governor's Partnership for Nevada 2-1-1*

This document covers the information that could be gathered from Nevada  
2-1-1 and the Crisis Call Center's handling of the Reno Air Races Disaster.

November 8, 2011



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It is important to note that while there are numbers and values analyzed below, they cannot be taken at their face value. A few factors, which will be discussed later in this document, contributed to some unique challenges that have been identified and plans are being developed to address them in the future. A few operator notes have been selected from over 2,000 call sheets to demonstrate the types of callers and the impact that our support has made.

## OVERVIEW

The Reno Air Races Disaster (RARD) that occurred on September 16, 2011 was the first time that Nevada 2-1-1 was in a position to handle the communication for a community disaster. Calls were routed through Nevada 2-1-1 for in-state callers as well as through the business lines of Crisis Call Center to provide nationwide access for filing missing person's reports. All missing people's reports were then entered into UVIS (Unified Victim Identification System) which was being monitored by local law enforcement agencies and the Washoe County Coroner's Office.

Over 2,000 calls came in during the week that followed the RARD. Through our partnership with the Washoe County Emergency Operations Center, staff and volunteers were able to input over 1,400 missing person's reports that accounted for almost 650 individual missing people into UVIS. Many of those reports received involved duplications of reports already received, thus the difference in numbers of reports vs. individuals. In addition to the missing persons calls, over 600 calls were made to report that family, friends and loved ones had been located. In all, Nevada 2-1-1's involvement touched over 2,000 people's lives by giving them a single point of contact to communicate with their community. Staff and volunteers with Nevada 2-1-1, Crisis Call Center and the Trauma Intervention Program of Northern Nevada put in over 500 hours of service during the week long response to the RARD.

*Nevada 2-1-1's involvement touched over 2,000 people's lives*

One unique aspect of this disaster is that Nevada 2-1-1 was able to support the needs well outside of our state borders. While over 1,000 calls originated within our borders, Nevada 2-1-1 handled almost 600 calls from across the United States. Even more astonishing is that we handled international calls, a few from consulates from nations as far as Germany, while others were as close as Mexico. Our ability to inform and address the needs across such a wide spectrum of

Caller just needed to talk with someone after witnessing the carnage at the air races.

- 9/17/2011

people is a testament to Nevada 2-1-1's disaster response.

## THE STORY

5:15pm September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Crisis Call Center/Nevada 2-1-1 is notified that our services may be needed to assist with the Air Race Disaster. 8:07 pm a phone rang with a request to see if Crisis Call Center/Nevada 2-1-1 was prepared to handle support for the Reno Air Races Disaster. Our response was "Yes." A little over a half an hour later a second call came in informing the Center of the activation of Nevada 2-1-1's disaster response. Moments after answering the call for activation, a wave of calls flooded the call center through the 2-1-1 lines and the business lines. This was the beginning of something big.

*Caller was at the Air Races in box seats; his friend, an EMT, helped a woman who lost her arm into a waiting helicopter. They wanted to check and see if she was okay.*

- 9/17/2011

Over the next week, hundreds of volunteer hours were dedicated to keeping our community informed and together. The blessing of this disaster is the quality of volunteer operators answering the lines. Volunteers were trained in handling callers in crisis, many of which were volunteers with either Crisis Call Center itself or the Trauma Intervention Program of Northern Nevada. Operators were lucky to have the benefit of crisis training, which was a necessity to deal with the many difficult calls that would continue well into the week. Witnesses of the crash, family members in distress, first responders needing emotional support, people injured in the crash and family members of the deceased needing bereavement counseling and information are just a few examples of RARD callers in crisis.

*Calling to report missing person has been located. Spoke with caller for a few minutes about his friend who was the pilot killed in the plane crash. I validated his feelings about his loss and his concern for other friends.*

- 9/18/2011

Without the training to handle callers in crisis, our community would have frayed. However, because our operators were not mechanically answering calls and distributing resources, because they took the time to address the emotional needs of the callers, because our operators were volunteers with so much experience in times of crisis, our community pulled through. Not just our community locally here in Reno or Nevada or even in the United States, but it was our global community that benefited from our call center having people who are trained in crisis, supporting our community in crisis.

## CHALLENGES

Aside from the immense challenges involved with coordinating volunteers from multiple programs and handling callers that had witnessed and experienced a horrific tragedy, we had to confront a difficult truth: *what do we need to record and how should we record it to give people the most accurate picture of what happened?*

In any disaster, things do not go according to plan.

*Caller lost a family member at the air races and does not know where to go. Referred to Family Assistance Center and encouraged to call us back for additional support and resources.*

- 9/19/2011

Carefully drawn out plans get scrapped immediately when they do not perform in real world scenarios. During the RARD, we did not have the luxury of predetermined plans, but in the same token were able to be flexible to the needs of the disaster, adapting to best serve our community. This flexibility helped us identify the greatest opportunities to prepare our processes for future disasters.

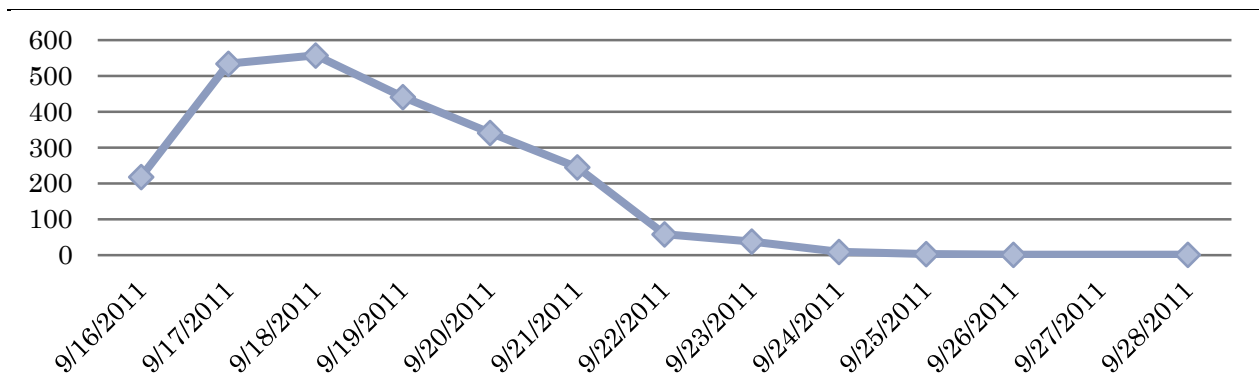
*Caller's brother and nephew were at air races, 25 feet away from crash. Calling to see if any memorials were being planned, told her to give them our number and that she could also call back if she needed us.*

- 9/18/2011

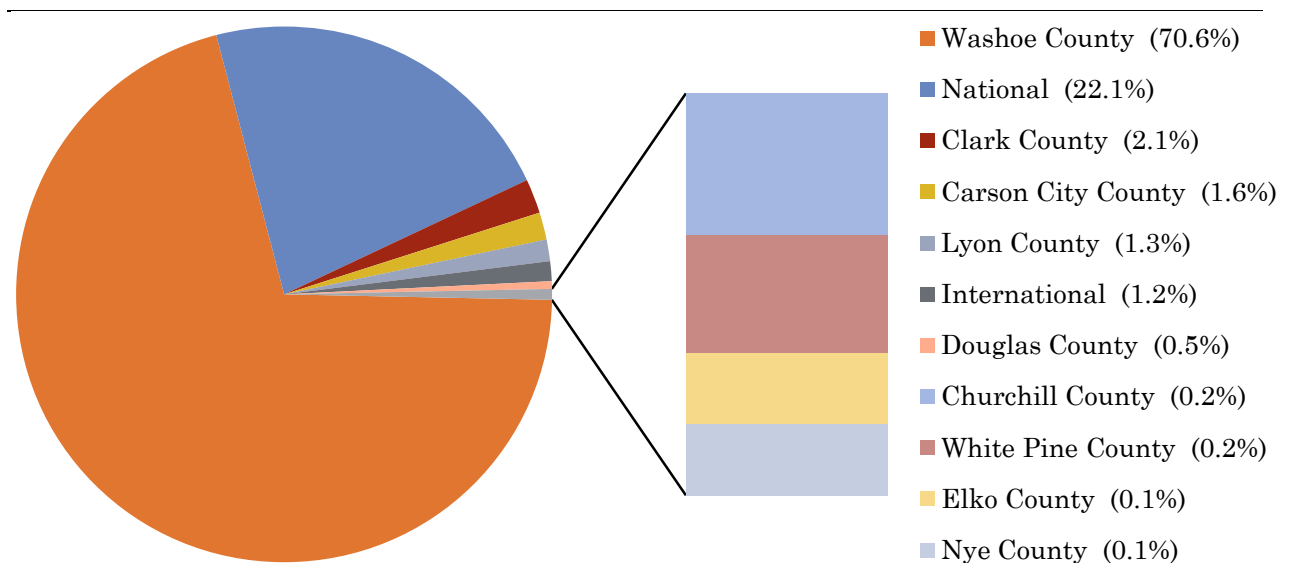
Below are the factors that could have had an effect on the data:

- *Communication challenges*
- *Unfamiliarity with UVIS*
- *Data entry by multiple untrained personnel*
- *Multiple missing persons on a single call sheet*
- *Inability to export missing person reports from UVIS*
- *Inability to directly log calls in CommunityOS*
- *No standardized call sheets in the first hours*

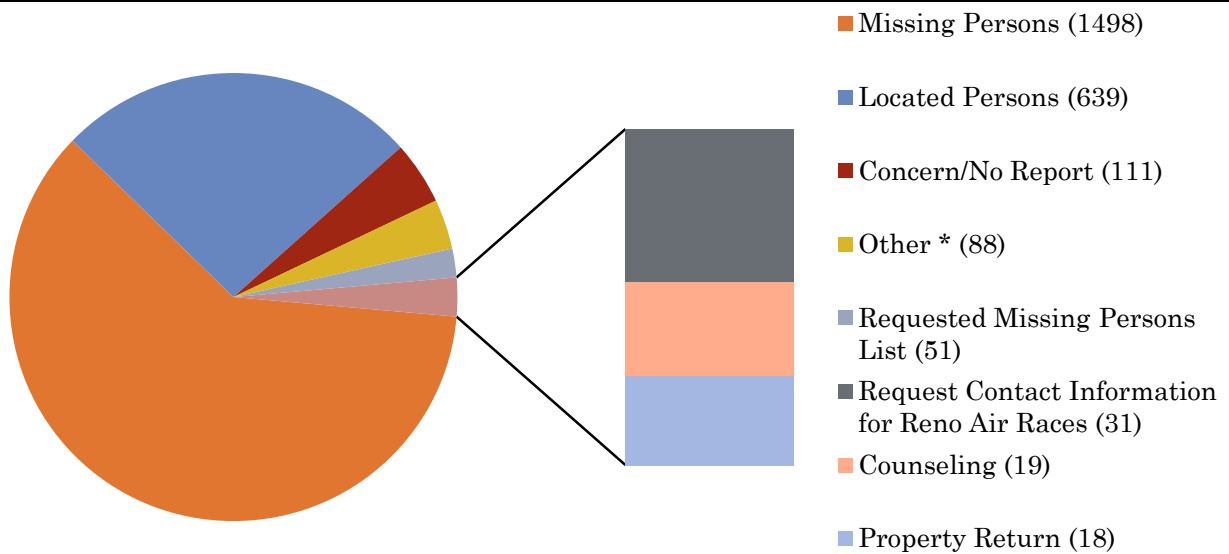
### Incoming Calls by Day



### Incoming Calls by County



## Incoming Calls by Purpose



\* includes requests to volunteer, inquiries about a memorial for the disaster, calls from the media, international calls from consulates, other agencies like the EOC to coordinate our response, calls to follow-up on missing persons, confirmations of injured and the deceased and requests for ticket refunds

## RESOLUTIONS

Since the RARD, disaster accounts have been created for volunteers in the event of a disaster in CommunityOS. Additionally, Crisis Lines Operators have been trained to use CommunityOS and Nevada 2-1-1's phone systems. Through these three actions, half of the itemized factors above have been addressed. Moreover, the factors that have been addressed account for a majority of the potential effects on the data. In addition to the steps that have already been taken, disaster plans are being drawn up to allocate resources and personnel in the event of another disaster.

*Caller was reported as missing, is alive and well.  
Said thank you for doing this.*

-9/20/2011