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New agreements bolster county's aging 911 system

*Regionalization, equipment
offer better service in area*

By Justin Eger
of Mainline Newspapers

With the approval granted to three agreements the morning of May 8, the Cambria County Board of Commissioners furthered the county's effort to not only replace aging equipment at the 911 Center, but to also advance the services offered by the center in a number of ways.

The contracts themselves were discussed only briefly, the first establishing a shared distribution agreement with the other ten

counties of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Emergency Response Group and United Telephone Company of Pennsylvania for regionally shared host equipment and maintenance costs in the amount of \$100,707. Another agreement with United Telephone for local 911 shared distribution equipment and maintenance was also approved in the amount of \$404,413, effective for a term of five years.

SEE 911, PAGE 2B

CISLH becomes Respective Solutions

Since 1999, a local nonprofit formerly known as Communities In Schools of the Laurel Highlands has served youth and families in the central and northern regions of Cambria County through afterschool programs and Center for Families services. This week, they announced a new name and an expanded mission.

"Today we are pleased to announce that CISLH is rebranding as Respective Solutions Group. We're the same great people and great services with a new name. Simple," Sue Sheehan, vice president and director of local services, said in her address to board members and supporters on Monday.

With this new name, Respective Solutions Group (RSG) will continue to provide after school programs and help to

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Andrea Niedererr, president of Respective Solutions Group, and Sue Sheehan, vice president, announced the formation of the organization earlier this week, a rebranding of the former Communities In Schools of the Laurel Highlands. Submitted photo.

RSG accepts \$1.2M grant from Dept. of Education

Respective Solutions Group, Inc. has received a \$1.2 million grant award from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, under 21st Century Community Learning Center funds. The three-year award will be used to provide free after school programs to local youth in grades 3-8.

RSG has provided quality after-school programs in Cambria County for 15 years. This opportunity will grow the current programs in Blacklick Valley, Cambria Heights, Central Cambria and Northern Cambria school districts, and expand the programs to also serve the Glendale and Harmony Area School Districts. Programs include: snacks, academic assistance, tutoring and mentoring. They also offer a variety of extra learning opportunities, like STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), creative arts, culture, and health and fitness programs. Students are supervised by teachers and RSG staff.

President Andrea Niedererr said,

"RSG's commitment to after school programs is the foundation of our organization. We are pleased that over these many years, rural communities are recognized as important, and that our children continue to receive services that make all the difference in education."

Vice president Sue Sheehan adds, "We have been serving middle school students with tutoring and enrichment activities for years; now we can work with students on developing important skills and healthy habits, even before they reach the critical middle school age."

"We are thankful to our board of directors for their vision in this expansion and to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for this opportunity to provide support that helps our students achieve academically," Niedererr concluded.

For more information on RSG's programs, call the office at 814-472-2225 ext. 2 or visit www.respectivesolutions.com.



The board of directors for Respective Solutions Group includes (front row, from left) fiscal manager Brian Riffle, vice president Susan Sheehan, board member Robin Ribarich, president Andrea Niedererr, chairwoman Shari McConnell, (back row) board member Doris Gray, secretary Miche' Harrison, treasurer Elaine Evon, and board member David Killen. Photo by Justin Eger.

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THE PROGRESS

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Harmony's after-school program celebrates first anniversary

By Dianne Byers
Staff Writer

WESTOVER — An after-school program at Harmony Area Elementary School is celebrating its first anniversary. The program is sponsored by Respective Solutions of Ebensburg, Cambria County.

It is a collaborative, non-profit organization, whose mission is to create "safe learning environments and support school professionals through resources that make a difference in education."

It currently operates six after-school programs using grant funding from the state Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

In addition to Harmony, there are programs at Glendale Area School District in Clearfield County and Blacklick Valley, Cambria Heights, Central Cambria and Northern Cambria in Cambria County. Each program offers its participating students an opportunity to take part in a supervised, educational and fun experiences.

Sue Sheehan, vice president of RS, said there are currently a total of about 300 students enrolled in the six programs. The program is free and open to any students in grades 3-8.

Each day, students receive a snack, a minimum of one hour of homework help and tutoring and an enrichment activity, that could be a craft, a game or some other endeavor where the group works together. Emphasis is placed on activities where there is a focus on science, technology, engineering or mathematics and often art.

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Photo by Dianne Byers

Homework help — Hunter Taraschi, a fourth grade student at Harmony Area Elementary School, receives homework help from Megan Kephart, a member of the Respective Solutions staff. Respective Solutions operates an after-school program at Harmony during the school week.