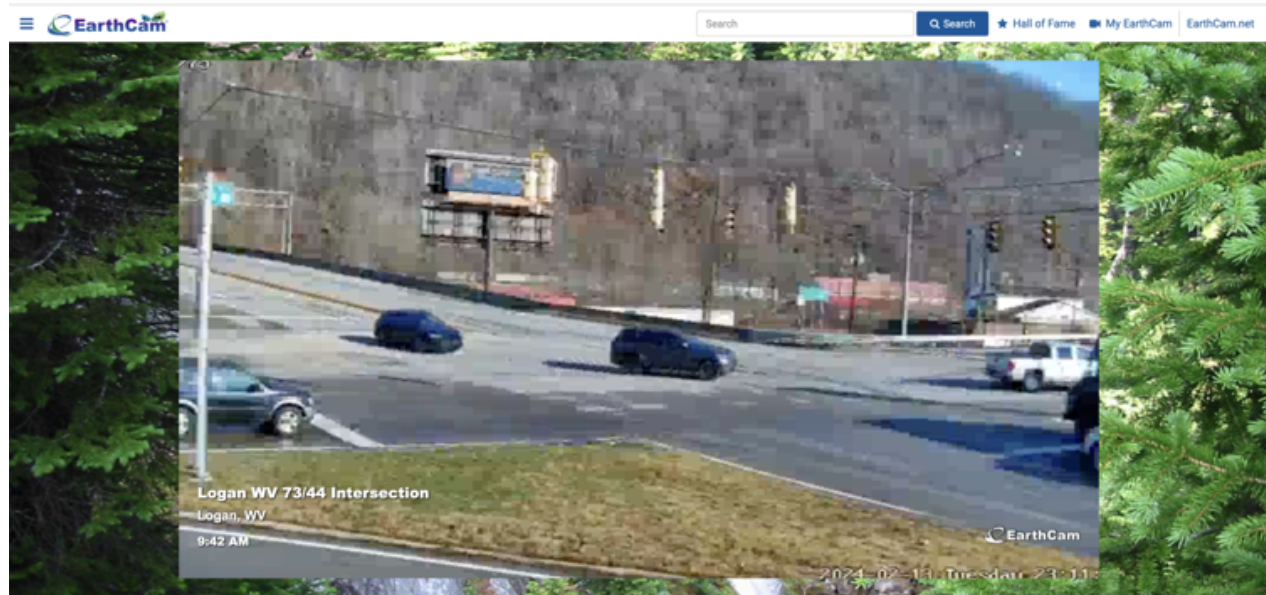


# THE LOGAN BANNER

## Logan County 911 cameras help dispatchers get a clearer picture

By [Dylan Vidovich](#), February 13, 2024



**Logan WV 73/44 Intersection**

A recent initiative by Logan County 911 aims to provide better information to dispatchers during emergency situations like traffic accidents and housefires.

With the help of some local towns and officials, Logan County 911 has now installed five of their own cameras which operate a 24/7 stream. The cameras are located in several areas often deemed to be dangerous or accident-prone intersections: the war memorial in Man, the Appalachian Outpost intersection, Old Logan Road, downtown Logan at the Main St. intersection, and the W.Va. 73/44 intersection.

Ted Sparks, director of Logan County 911, said the purpose behind the cameras is to provide more accurate information to dispatchers during emergency situations.

“The whole idea of the project is not to stop crime,” Sparks said. “I know a lot of people think that it’s about speed cameras and traffic cameras and things like that, but it’s to get better information to the dispatchers quicker. A lot of times, you’ll have these bad wrecks and the information you get is sometimes sparse. Now, the dispatchers can actually see that, yes, we have a car that’s on fire, we have one on its side. The first couple calls we got involved two cars, but whenever we actually looked at the camera, it was actually four cars or three cars, so we’re getting better quality information and we’re able to relay that directly to the first responders as they’re rolling so they have kind of a mental picture of the scene as they’re approaching.”

Due to the sheer amount of storage that would be required to do so, Sparks said the cameras do not record anything permanently, but there is around a 15-minute buffer first responders can roll back on if needed. The cameras also include pan-tilt zooming, which allows multiple angles to be viewed.

911 has partnered with municipalities, county officials, and business owners to broaden the project’s scope. The camera located at the war memorial in Man, for example, was the result of Sparks approaching the Man Town Council about providing the power to do so, and the one at the Appalachian Outpost was the result of Logan County Commission President Diana Barnette seeking one be put there.

The power to that one, Sparks said, was provided by Fuji Williams, who co-owns the Broken Axle restaurant located at the Outpost, which, as a whole, is co-owned by Barnette. Williams is Barnette’s son-in-law.

Looking forward, Sparks said he has approached Chapmanville Mayor Joel McNeely about potentially installing a camera at the

Chapmanville Towers looking toward the town exit on U.S. 119. Sparks said that area is known as a prominent vehicular accident site.

Sparks said he also hopes to install one near the Whitman exit on U.S. 119, another spot prone to accidents.

Sparks said the whole idea came after West Virginia 511, which is operated by the state, installed one of their traffic cameras at the Crawley Dip on U.S. 119 a few years ago. To date, that one remains the only traffic camera operated by 511 in Logan County.

Sparks said 911 had reached out to the state about providing more cameras, but the state's camera project had reached the end of its life. However, since Logan County 911 had already appropriated money for it, they decided to tackle it on a county level and at a lower cost.

Sparks said community response to the cameras has been mostly positive, and they have even managed to reach over 200,000 combined online visits. Sparks said the public has learned to use the cameras for other purposes like assessing road conditions during inclement weather.

"We have a lot of people talking about how they used it for this winter, during the last little storm we had, for weather, to see how the road conditions are," Sparks said, "and I would say that we have received 20%, if not 30%, less calls from people checking on road conditions since those cameras went up."

Sparks said 911 dispatchers have been able to utilize the cameras for emergencies other than traffic accidents as well.

"We've used it for several things," Sparks said. "As far as structure fires over on High Street that we've had, we've looked at and been able to get very good footage and know as soon as they call in, we swing it around and you're able to say, yes, there's some heavy smoke and flames showing."

Sparks said the cameras 911 are using are highly cost-effective, costing only around \$200 or so per camera. He said one that somebody donates power to, such as the one in Man, can be installed for under \$1,000, with the modems providing the connectivity costing around \$300-400.

The only reoccurring cost is for the SIM cards in the modems. Some of the cameras, like the ones at Old Logan Road and the W.Va. 73/44 intersection, are operated off solar power, which come in at under \$1,500 per install, Sparks said.

The cameras can be viewed online at [www.earthcam.com](http://www.earthcam.com). To find them, just search for Logan County, West Virginia.