Each week cell phone ads flood our newspapers and airwaves, encouraging us to upgrade to the newest technology. But what happens to all of the outdated equipment? Most of the estimated 140 million cell phones retired annually are stashed away somewhere, gathering dust. Unfortunately, many of these phones find their way to landfills where they can leach hazardous materials into the surrounding environment.

The Travis County Sheriff’s Office (TCSO) is proud to say that we can help with the solution by announcing our participation in the 911 Cell Phone Bank. Used cell phones, no matter their condition, can now be recycled to raise funds and provide emergency communications. The 911 cell phones will be provided to our senior Project Lifesaver clients and victims of domestic abuse in our community. All funds collected through 911 Cell Phone Bank program are maintained and managed by the Austin Community Foundation. All proceeds will be applied to TCSO’s Project Lifesaver: Travis County.

We are asking individuals, businesses and other organizations to donate cell phones to help. Starting March 16, 2009, you are encouraged to drop off your phones at the Travis County Sheriff’s Office at 5555 Airport Blvd., Austin, TX 78751.

Over 520 law enforcement and community service organizations around the country have signed up to participate in the 911 Cell Phone Bank program. The program donates nearly 2,000 phones a month to law enforcement and other agencies for use as 911 emergency phones. Your donation may provide the critical link between law enforcement and someone in trouble.

To recycle your retired cell phones or for more information, please contact Nicole Durand at nicole.durand@co.travis.tx.us or 512.854.7786.

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Submitted By: Roger Wade, Public Information Officer, (512) 854-4986