

DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

FALL 2008

NEWS ABOUT THE WILL COUNTY EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM • 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved, ENP

September 29

Users Conference to Feature Three 'Conversations' with Kevin Willett

For the fifth consecutive year, the Will County Emergency Telephone System is hosting a Users Conference for its 9-1-1 telecommunicators and public-safety agencies.

Scheduled for Monday, September 29, at Joliet Junior College on Houbolt Road, the 2008 edition of the conference will feature highly regarded public-safety dispatch professional Kevin Willett.

The day will start at 8:30 a.m., when attendees will sign in and enjoy a continental breakfast. Then, from 9 a.m. to about 3 p.m. the focus will be on three "Conversations with Kevin" – with morning and afternoon breaks and lunch in between.

9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved will get the conference started with a few welcoming comments. Next, Willett will begin his first "conversation," which is entitled



2008 Users Conference speaker and Senior Instructor Kevin Willett (right) leads one of PSTC's Instructor Development Workshops for its teaching staff of experienced dispatchers.

Customer Service the 9-1-1 Way!

This popular presentation uses many real examples and scenarios to provide dispatchers and records personnel with effective techniques that will result in high-quality customer service.

"We demonstrate how great customer service actually makes our jobs

easier, saving unnecessary police and fire responses, and improving the image of those agencies," said Willett.

After the first break, Willett will engage everyone in his second "conversation:" *Under the Headset: Surviving Dispatch Stress.*

(Continued on page 4)

Lincolnway Calltakers to Relocate in November

The Lincolnway Public-Safety Communications Center – now located in New Lenox – will be moving to larger quarters in Frankfort Township's new office building about a month after it is completed in November.

Lincolnway will be leasing about 2,200 square feet of space in the basement of this facility. This includes 1,000 square feet for the radio room (which now is about 300 square feet), plus 1,200 square feet for three offices, the IT room, a break room, and two storage areas.

(Continued on page 3)



A 3-year-old Lemont girl practices making a 9-1-1 call during the local police department's Kops and Kids Day. Administrative Assistant Caryn DeMarco was on hand to answer questions, pass out brochures and freebies, and take this picture. (See story on page 2.)

5,000 1st-Graders Benefit from 9-1-1 Public Education Committee Efforts

During the 2007-08 school year, two members of the Will County 9-1-1 System's Public Education Committee and several other telecommunicators made presentations to more than 5,000 first-graders in at least 36 classrooms.

Telecommunicator Denita Draper, who is public education coordinator at the Joliet Communications Center, and 15 fellow calltakers discussed calling 9-1-1 with children in 17 schools in Joliet.

Joining Draper in this public education effort last school year were telecommunicators Kim Smyth, Marcy Cardenas, Theresa Saracco, Lisa Yanchick, Dawn Barfield, Virginia Bradley, Kacey Lauer, Heather Hanbaum, Jennifer Chizmark, Zeldia Scott, Traci Sass, Susan Kljaich, Stephanie Larson, Jamie VanByssum, and Cindy Stukel.

Also, Administrative Assistant Caryn DeMarco, who chairs the Public Education Committee, made presentations in 19 classrooms elsewhere in the county – at schools in Frankfort, Romeoville, Channahon, Plainfield, Crest Hill, Shorewood, Homer, Lockport, New Lenox and Custer Park.

Further, as reported in the last (Summer 2008) issue of *Dispatch Dialogue*, Lisa Yanchick was one of eight telecommunicators in Illinois who participated in the making of three public service announcements that acknowledged the important services provided by 9-1-1 calltakers.

In August, DeMarco shared information on 9-1-1 with children and adults visiting the Illinois NENA public education booth at the Illinois State Fair. She also participated in the Lemont Police Department's "Kops and Kids Day" (See photo on page 1).

"About 25 percent of the kids we talked to (at the State Fair) didn't know their own address and/or telephone number," said DeMarco. "Therefore, it's very important that we continue – in fact, expand – our public education efforts.

"Although we are pleased with the results so far, it is obvious that we have only scratched the surface in terms of meeting our goals," said DeMarco.

"However, in order to do so, we need more Will County telecommunicators to volunteer – to help us reach more kids and many other residents."

In 2008-09, the Public Education Committee will again focus on 1st graders who attend elementary schools located in areas serviced by our Emergency Telephone System.

However, the Committee also plans to direct some attention to teen-agers and seniors, according to DeMarco.

In fact, the Committee is currently seeking a sponsor(s) for its Teen Safe Driving project, which will require an estimated \$29,750 for producing and distributing a video (DVD) that will be shown to students in high-school driver's education classes.

Entitled "The 911 Drive," this 4-5-minute DVD – and supporting class materials – focus on the distractions caused by cell phones when used by teens while driving.

"Cell-phone driving distractions are a leading cause of teen-age car crashes and fatalities," said DeMarco. "And one of the significant problems associated with this cell-phone usage is the teen drivers' inability to tell the 9-1-1 calltaker their location after a crash – because they were not paying attention while driving prior to the accident."

Actually, the video has already been created and can be viewed at the Will County 9-1-1 System's website: www.willcounty9-1-1.com

It was filmed at the Joliet Communications Center, with Denita Draper doing the audio portion and other Joliet telecommunicators appearing in it as real calltakers.

While DeMarco has been turned down by several companies that were approached for funding this public education project, she said that "we will keep seeking financial support until we find one or more contributors." ●

Investigation Discovery Channel, Website Focus On Real 9-1-1 Calls

At a time when "real TV" programming is very popular, there is little more real than the emergency telephone calls currently being featured by the Investigation Discovery Channel and its website.

From 7 to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, the cable channel's "Call 9-1-1" program enables viewers to listen to real calls to telecommunicators, who then respond to their requests for emergency help – including such situations as a house fire, robbery, a baby's birth, and vehicle accidents.

In addition to hearing the actual 9-1-1 calls, the audience views interviews with telecommunicators and police, fire and EMA responders who were directly involved with handling those emergencies.

In addition to the weekly TV program (which also is aired at other times – see your cable TV listings), the Investigation Discovery Channel has a website (<http://investigation.discovery.com>) where you can experience even more 9-1-1 calls and responses.



For example, you can hear the call from a man who is following a robber in his car while talking to 9-1-1; a woman who the calltaker teaches how to perform CPR on her husband while paramedics are proceeding to their home; and a disabled man who is rescued from his burning home with the help of telecommunicators.

In each case, there also are interviews with the telecommunicators who handled the calls and the responders.

NOTE: The producers of the "Call 9-1-1" program always are seeking additional tapes of "real-life" emergency calls for future telecasts and the website. So, if you have something that would be appropriate, don't hesitate to contact the Discovery Channel.

In fact, the Will County Emergency Telephone System also wants such tapes – to use in training classes as real examples of how to – or how not to – handle 9-1-1 calls. Send them to Training Coordinator Joanne Burian, Will County ETS, 2531 W. Division St., Suite 105, Joliet, IL 60435. ●

Steger PSAP Sixth to Get NG Upgrade

During November, the Steger PSAP also will be getting a Next Generation upgrade – which will include two new consoles and cutting-edge communications equipment.

Steger's radio room presently is staffed by seven full-time calltakers.

When Steger's cutover is complete in mid-November, it will be the Will County Emergency Telephone System's sixth PSAP (plus the EMA) to get this upgrade. Preceding it were Joliet, Lincolnway, WESCOM, Eastcom, and the Sheriff's Department.

Next, in 2009, will be Romeoville and Wilmington. ●

Lincolnway Relocation

(Continued from page 1)

Now providing 9-1-1 dispatch to three police departments – New Lenox, Frankfort and Mokena, the PSAP will be expanding its services to include a total of eight agencies.

In addition to the three police departments, Lincolnway will be handling 9-1-1 calls for the Mokena, Frankfort, New Lenox, Manhattan and East Joliet fire departments.

As a result of this expansion of services, the PSAP will be increasing the size of its staff from nine to 17 full-time telecommunicators.

"In order to handle the expanded services, we will be adding a minimum of eight new calltakers," said Deputy Director Brad Veerman.

In conjunction with this move to a new location, Lincolnway's recently upgraded (Next Generation) console furniture and communications equipment will be reinstalled at the new call center in November. However, in addition to the three consoles it currently has, three more fully equipped consoles (a total of six) will be installed and used by the additional telecommunicators.

The target cutover date for taking 9-1-1 calls at the new call center is December 8. ●

Candi Thuringer Retires After 30 Years as Telecommunicator

Although she will continue as the citizen-at-large member of the Will County 9-1-1 Board, Candi Thuringer has retired after a career of 30 years as a telecommunicator.

Following three years as a student and secretary at Southern Illinois University, she started her career as a telecommunicator with the Illinois State Police (District 5 in Joliet) in 1979.

Two years later, Thuringer was promoted to field advisor; then from 1985-95, she served as a telecommunicator for the State Police's Cook County District.

In 1995, Thuringer returned "home" to District 5, where she spent the next 13 years answering 9-1-1 calls.

"Candi has been a 'highly valued' member of our dispatch team," according to Capt. Ken Kaupas, District 5 commander.

In addition to completing many training courses during her career, Thuringer has always shared what she learned with fellow employees and, in some cases, the community.

For example, she trained State Police officers how to use LEADS (Law Enforcement Agencies Data System) and then (1998-99) served on a committee that redesigned and upgraded the system, resulting in LEADS 2000.

Also, using her training in school-crisis planning, she developed an emergency plan for Richland Elementary School in Crest Hill,



On hand for Telecommunicator Candi Thuringer's retirement party were her biggest fans: daughters Erica (left) and Robin, and her husband, Crest View Patrolman Joel Thuringer.

where she served as a member of the school's Board of Education for four years.

In order to acknowledge Thuringer's work ethic, commitment to improving herself (through training classes) and experience, she was nominated by District 5 for statewide recognition seven times. As a result, she was honored as State Police Telecommunicator of the Year in 2006.

In addition to continuing to serve on the Will County 9-1-1 Board, Thuringer is a member of Crest Hill's Planning Commission, a member of the Crest Hill Women's Civic League, and a volunteer for Crest Hill's community television station and Take Back the Night of Northern Will County.

Diehard Chicago Cubs fans, she and her husband, Joel (a patrolman with the Crest Hill Police Department for 23 years), will be taking in a few games at Wrigley Field. Also, they will soon be celebrating her retirement by going on a cruise to the southern Caribbean.

As an encore, they are planning their first trip to Hawaii, where they will cruise the islands. ●

Brad Veerman, deputy director of the Lincolnway Public Safety Communications Center, visits the construction site for Frankfort Township's new administrative building, where the Lincolnway PSAP and its radio room will be relocating in December. Inset: Veerman shows Telecommunicator Teri Killian the blueprints for the PSAP's new radio room.



Users Conference

(Continued from page 1)

This discussion is all about learning the dynamics of the stress responses encountered by 9-1-1 professionals; understanding acute and delayed reactions to post-traumatic stress; and then developing the recovery skills needed to cope with that work-related stress.

After lunch, the third and final "conversation" is dubbed *Being the Best*.

"Though your car may be running okay, you still take it in for a tune-up," Willett said. "This presentation is your Communications Center tune-up."

Among the topics he will cover are intelligent decision making, integrity and ethics, quality call-taking skills and tools, and what telecommunicators need to know about wireless, VoIP, and *On Star* calls.

Currently Senior Instructor for Public Safety Training Consultants

(PSTC) in California, Willett has more than 21 years of experience as a public-safety dispatch professional. He started his career with the Redwood City (Calif.) Police 9-1-1 Center and has worked in a wide variety of public-safety capacities – everything from line-level call-taker to management positions.

Willett is a POST (Peace Officers Standards and Training) certified instructor, an APCO Master Instructor, and the founder of the 9-1-1 CARES program that has provided emotional support and appreciation to many telecommunicators nationwide.

A very popular, nationally recognized presenter, he has been a featured speaker at nine APCO conferences, nine NENA conferences, and six Navigator conferences.

"Willett has a passion for instruction and a unique ability to combine information, laughter and

pride into every class," said Chief Administrator Figved.

For more info on the Users Conference, visit the new Will County 9-1-1 website: www.willcounty9-1-1.com
Or call 1-815-725-1911. ●

2008 TRAINING SCHEDULE

For more information or to enroll in any of the following courses, contact 9-1-1 Training Coordinator Joanne Burian at 1-815-725-9610.

September

5	PowerPhone – Non-Emergency Call Handling	Schererville, IN
5	PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention	Sterling
12	Kebcor – Critical Incident Communications	Westmont
18	SLEA – Busting Burnout	Glen Ellyn
18-19	PowerPhone – Advanced Law Enforcement Dispatch	Yorkville
22	PowerPhone – Non-Emergency Call-Handling	Libertyville
22	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Glendale Hts.
22-26	EMD Certification	Channahon
23	APCO – Active Shooter Incidents for Dispatch	Normal
23-24	Kebcor – Incident Command for Dispatch	Frankfort
24	APCO – Active Shooter Incidents for Dispatch	Normal
24-26	APCO – Communications Center Supervisor	Matteson
29	PSTC – Being the Best	Vernon Hills
30-Oct. 1	PSCMS – Surviving the Com Center Environment	New Lenox
30-Oct. 2	PSTC – Communications Training Officer Workshop	Vernon Hills

October

2	First Contact 9-1-1 – Managing Crisis Callers	Gurnee
3	First Contact 9-1-1 – Dispatch Supervisor Workshop	Gurnee
6-7	SLEA – Emergency Spanish for Telecommunicators	Glen Ellyn
6-8	CAD New-Hire Training	Joliet
17	APCO – Active Shooter Incidents for Dispatch	Gurnee
27	APCO – Active Shooter Incidents for Dispatch	Lansing
27-29	PSCMS – Supervision & Mgmt. of Public Safety Commun.	Des Plaines
30	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Matteson

November

3-7	EMD Certification	Joliet
12	Success Communications – Conflict Management	Crete
13-14	Fire Communications by Tony Harrison	Springfield
17-19	PSCMS – Working Effectively in Com Center Environ	Western Springs

December

9	Kebcor – Dispatcher Role in Terrorism/WMD	Normal
11	SLEA – Busting Burnout	Glen Ellyn

February 2009

6	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Riverside
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