

DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

MAY 2009

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

SPECIAL ISSUE

Will County ETS Celebrates National 9-1-1 Education Month and National Public-Safety Telecommunicators Week

During April, the Will County Emergency Telephone System joined municipalities, governmental bodies and organizations across the U.S. in recognizing the vital role played by telecommunicators in helping to ensure public safety.

In order to encourage such recognition, the United States Congress and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) designated April as National 9-1-1 Education Month. And the week of April 12-18 was celebrated as National Public-Safety Telecommunicators Week.

As a result, this special issue of Dispatch Dialogue is devoted to acknowledging some of the special events that took place last month to honor these special people in Will County.



9-1-1 Board Chairman James Grady congratulates Romeoville's Shari Reinbacher, who was named Will County Telecommunicator of the Year for 2009.

Shari Reinbacher Is Will County Telecommunicator of the Year

One special event took place on April 23, when the 9-1-1 Board honored Romeoville's Shari Reinbacher as Will County Telecommunicator of the Year for 2009.

Employed by the Village of Romeoville since 2005, Reinbacher was nominated for this recognition because "she displays a positive and proactive approach to dispatching on a daily basis," according to Romeoville Dispatch Center Director Kim Knutsen, who added that she is a "true asset."

Reinbacher is considered "an exemplary training officer" who is "patient, explains policies and procedures in depth, and encourages trainees to set specific and measurable goals," said Knutsen when nominating her. "She exhibits a positive attitude toward training and" (Continued on page 2)

Joliet, WESCOM Honor Telecommunicators of the Year

Joliet's Traci Farley



The highlight of the Joliet Comm Center's annual Public Safety Telecommunicators Week celebration is always the announcement of its Telecommunicator of the Year.

For 2009, the deserving recipient of this honor is Telecommunicator Traci Farley, who began her dispatching career for the City of Joliet in 1988 and celebrated her 20th anniversary last year.

According to her peers (three of whom nominated Farley) – intellect, tenacity, (Continued on page 4)

WESCOM's Janice Savage

Another dispatcher recognized by her peers as Telecommunicator of the Year for 2009 is WESCOM's Janice Savage.



Nominated for this honor by three of her co-workers, Savage has been a WESCOM telecommunicator since 2005.

In addition to being commended for her hard work and dedication, Savage is described as a team player with a "great attitude" – who "always is willing to help with a smile on her face." For instance, she "always is willing to jump in and help with" (Continued on page 4)

NATIONAL PUBLIC-SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK IN WILL COUNTY

During National Public-Safety Telecommunicators Week, Will County Training Coordinator Joanne Burian, Administrative Assistant Caryn DeMarco, Geo-File Manager Barb Steffen, and Assistant Geo-File Manager Mary Jo Szymanski visited all eight of the Will County 9-1-1 System's dispatch centers. They came bearing thank-you gifts – a re-usable grocery bag filled with a 9-1-1 sweatshirt and a lanyard provided by console furniture supplier Xybix. Here are some of the photos taken during these visits and at special events held this special week.

EASTCOM: Telecommunicator Megan Enright, right, anticipates checking out the contents of her gift bag.

Below: Getting ready to sample their "Thanks for all you do!" cake after a special "thank-you" luncheon are, from left, Eastcom Telecommunicators Sharon Wall, Kelly Yedinak, Tina Haemker, Cindy Sepula and Natalie Krapf.



WESCOM: Above, Telecommunicator of the Year Janice Savage, left, holds award certificates while Supervisor Melissa Huff holds the WESCOM blanket she presented to Janice.

Middle: Telecommunicator Kathi Driscoll reaches for one of the Subway sandwiches delivered to the WESCOM Comm Center, compliments of the Shorewood Police Department. **Left:** From left, Telecommunicators Tina Boudreau, Janice Savage, Dora Finley, Billy Jo Noll-Brink and Sheila Kuehni.



Shari Reinbacher

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respects the opinions, abilities and contributions" of her co-workers.

In her nomination of Reinbacher, Knutsen also indicated that she "displays strong leadership skills and recognizes the importance of shared knowledge.

"She is assigned to the busiest shift (afternoons) and handles (its) high volume of calls with tact and humor," according to Knutsen. "The officers she works with have an unspoken trust in her abilities and openly accept her as one of the team."

In January 2008, Reinbacher received a Romeoville Police Department commendation for her handling of a third-party call from a suicidal subject.

She was able to convince the caller to allow the Police Department to help him. As a result of her "patience and determination, there was a positive outcome," Knutsen said.

Also, in July 2008, Reinbacher was nominated for a commendation after responding to a call from the victim of an armed robbery at a local business.

She was "able to effectively coordinate the police response, while conducting herself with the utmost

professionalism and compassion as she maintained communications and consoled the victim until responding officers arrived on the scene," said Knutsen.

Another noteworthy response mentioned in Knutsen's nomination was a call regarding a large fight involving several hundred partygoers, which was handled by Reinbacher and her peers in March 2009.

"Shari maintained radio contact with responding officers as she assisted her co-workers with notifications to request emergency assistance," said Knutsen. "As always, Shari performed well under pressure and displayed a calm demeanor."

In addition to being honored as Will County Telecommunicator of the Year, Reinbacher will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the 2009 Illinois NENA/APCO Conference – October 18-21 – in Springfield.

Sheriff's Office Nominates Carol Adair

In addition to Reinbacher, the 9-1-1 Board honorably mentioned Will County Sheriff's Department Senior Telecommunicator Carol Adair,

who also was nominated for the annual award.

A dispatch veteran with 31 years of service to the Sheriff's Office, Adair was commended for "her calming demeanor, professionalism, and knowledge – above and beyond what words can describe.

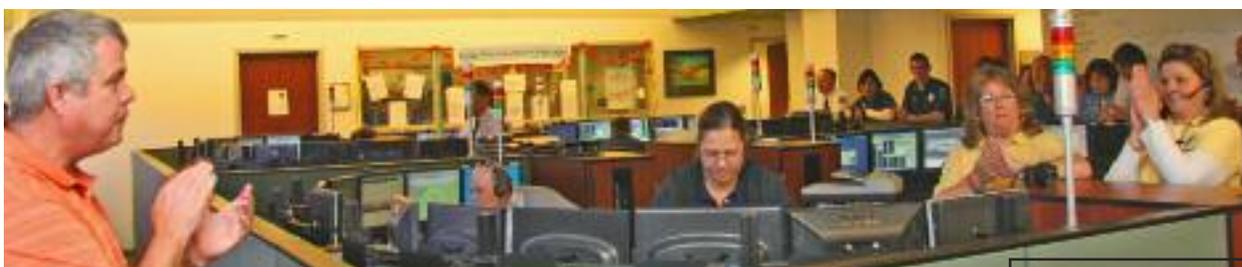
"She continues to be a true asset to the Sheriff's Office not only for her qualifications as a 9-1-1 operator and training officer, but also as a member of the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team," said Sergeants Mark Rojkowski and Mark Fisch, supervisors of the 7a.m. to 3 p.m. shift.

"Carol's cheerful personality and unwavering ability to handle the day-to-day demands of her job have proven her to be a real role model to newly hired telecommunicators," they said.

Also, Adair was lauded for her "dedication to the safety of all the deputies on her shift...and the citizens needing assistance." ●



NATIONAL PUBLIC-SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK IN WILL COUNTY



JOLIET: Above: Chief Fred Hayes, left, of the Joliet Police Department thanks Joliet telecommunicators for a job well done. Right: Chief Hayes joins Comm Center Director Julie Ponce-Doyle, left, in congratulating Joliet Telecommunicator of the Year Traci Farley.



SHERIFF'S OFFICE: Admiring their gift bags are Will County Sheriff's Office telecommunicators Julie Murnane, left, and Cindy Wilson.



STEGER: Far left – Will County 9-1-1 Training Coordinator Joanne Burian, right, presents gift bag to Steger Telecommunicator Rachel Teneyuca.
LINCOLNWAY: Above, from left, Kim Gouwens, Teri Killian, and Jennette Turner admire their 9-1-1 Dispatcher sweatshirts. Left: Will County 9-1-1 Administrative Assistant Caryn DeMarco has her hands full of gift bags, which she presented to Lincolnway's (and other PSAP) telecommunicators.



ROMEOVILLE: Telecommunicators Sharon Whitaker, left, and Peggy Karkula



Traci Farley

(Continued from page 1)

versatility, creativity, strong work ethic, great sense of humor and good “old school” common sense are just some of the characteristics that she exhibits in the course of doing her job.

“As our ‘reluctant hero,’ she aggressively shuns the spotlight, but never shuns any task to which she is assigned,” said Joliet Communications Center Director Julie Ponce-Doyle. “A simple ‘thank you’ is the only reward she requires.

“Traci is one of our most multi-faceted telecommunicators,” said her shift supervisor, Zelda Scott. “At some point in her career, she has been a part of almost every program and specialized training our center has initiated. She takes great pride in producing the highest quality work, something that we all rely on.”

Farley has served as a CTO; a member of Joliet’s TERT Team; and as a contributor to the center’s 9-1-1 public education efforts. And she has provided technical assistance to the center’s IWIN/MDT program and operator training on its Reverse 9-1-1 system.

Also, “most notably,” according to Public Safety Dispatcher Denita Draper, “she has been our LEADS Coordinator since 2005. As such, she is responsible for the accuracy and maintenance of LEADS files and entries, including validations; LEADS training activities and the development of related training tasks; and sex-offender registry, related files, and coordination with the Investigations Division. Further, she is responsible for maintaining data/LEADS certification for approximately 400 civilian/sworn members of the Joliet Police Department.”

“While Traci doesn’t need any recognition for her hard work, her award of Telecommunicator of the Year is overdue,” said Ponce-Doyle. ●

Janice Savage

(Continued from page 1)

both the fire and police sides whenever needed.”

She also is described as “an awesome trainer” – especially when it comes to “call-taking training, which is one of the hardest things to teach.” And she is “patient and encouraging with new trainees.”

Perhaps that’s because, at times, she is a trainee herself. For example, she has been cross-training on the po-

lice side, even though it takes considerable time and persistence.

Although it’s not always easy to get along with co-workers, who have so many strong personalities and work in a small area under stressful circumstances, Savage does so “with ease and everybody enjoys working with her,” according to one of her peers.

Other personal and professional attributes credited to Savage by her co-workers include:

- *Exceptional dedication with a professional image*
- *Handles pressure well – e.g., standing strong during critical incidents*
- *Kind and patient with callers and trainees*
- *Willing to ask for and give help*
- *Not afraid to speak up*
- *Can give tough love when it is needed*
- *Admits when she has made a mistake and learns from it*
- *Eager to learn and teach*



While all of these attributes are worth acknowledging, perhaps one WESCOM co-worker says it best: “I think my life – and many other lives – are better because of Janice.” ●

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