

DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

SPRING 2009

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

National Public-Safety Telecommunications Week - April 12-18

Although 9-1-1 dispatchers deserve thanks every day of the year, National Public-Safety Telecommunications Week annually provides another opportunity to recognize them for a job well done.

During this special week - to be celebrated April 12-18 - the 9-1-1 administrative staff will be visiting each PSAP in the Will County Emergency Telephone System.

"As in past years, we are looking forward to these visits and the chance to offer them a small token of our appreciation," said 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved.

"Professional and committed to public safety, they routinely perform one of the most important - and most stressful - jobs there is," he added, indicating that he will be joining his staff in making the PSAP visits. ●

Steger Joins CAD, Gets NG Upgrades

The New Year may have arrived a few days late at the Steger Dispatch Center. But, on January 9, when Steger joined CAD and went live with new Next Generation (NG) consoles and equipment, there was still plenty to celebrate.

Although Steger has one of the smallest PSAPs in the Will County Emergency Telephone System - with seven full-time

telecommunicators, they reportedly had the biggest of smiles on their faces when they took in their new surroundings.

In fact, "if trophies were awarded after NG upgrades, we probably would be cited for being 'Most Appreciative' and undergoing the 'Biggest Changes,'" said Steger PSAP Supervisor Mary Jo Seehausen.

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Steger Telecommunicator Rachel Teneyuca answers a 9-1-1 call using new Next Generation technology.

New 9-1-1 Board Member Brad Veerman, left, attends his first meeting, while seven-year Board Member Richard Brandolino attends his last.



4 Reappointed, 2 Added to 9-1-1 Board

At its February 19 meeting, the County Board of Will County approved the reappointment of four 9-1-1 Board members and the appointment of two new ones.

Sworn in at the 9-1-1 Board's February 26 meeting were Frankfort Fire Chief James Grady, who has been serving as Board chairman, East-com Director Pam Buzan, Peotone Police Chief

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120 Complete EMD Training

When an improved EMD training program was introduced by the Will County Emergency Telephone System in 2007, the intent was to get all telecommunicators (TCs) certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch.

Eighteen months later (through October 2008), a total of about 120 dispatchers and other PSAP personnel had completed the EMD training, while 50 more still needed to complete the five-day class and become certified.

"With the help of input from our dispatchers, we have improved our training program," said Training Coordinator Joanne Burian. "So, it is encouraging to see that our PSAPs now have a greater commitment to training, and that more people are taking advantage of it.

"In the case of EMD certification, completing this course can mean the difference between life and death when responding to a 9-1-1 call," she added.

"Since the 9-1-1 Board mandated that ALL dispatchers in Will County be EMD certified, we are encouraging all PSAPs to comply with that mandate – which means finding a way to give each dispatcher the release time needed to take the EMD classes."

(NOTE: The next EMD Certification class is scheduled for April 20-24 – from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day at the Plainfield Fire Department, 15025 DesPlaines, Plainfield.)

In addition to becoming EMD certified, "it is important for



Will County Training Director Joanne Burian, left, and Joliet Telecommunicator Kacey Lauer make a presentation on EMD certification program at last October's Illinois Public Safety Conference in Springfield.

each TC to meet the 9-1-1 Board's Minimum Training Standards," said Burian. "These standards require a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education per dispatcher.

"In 2009, we want more dispatchers to enhance their professionalism by registering for and completing more training (see 2009 Training Schedule on page 4 or visit Will County 9-1-1's website: www.willcounty9-1-1.com).

"Remember that the 9-1-1 Board pays for the class registration fees and reimburses PSAPs for the hours their dispatchers devote to approved training," Burian said. ●

Steger Joins CAD

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For example, after using the same, old equipment for all 14 of her years at Steger, Seehausen and her dispatchers are benefiting from the CAD system for the first time.

"This definitely has been a big revelation to all of us," she said, indicating that they have been accustomed to using punch cards (speedies) and hand-typing logs.

"Everything was done manually," she added.

Due to the NG upgrades, Steger's telecommunicators also are enjoying work at two new consoles.

Other big changes include:

- A new Positron phone system – "Previously, we didn't even have caller ID," said Seehausen.
- A new radio system – "Ours was dying; and we couldn't get parts or a maintenance contract," she said.
- A new voicelogger, which has meant "much less busy work."

"There is no one word I can use to describe the affects of these changes,

because the result has been an entirely different way of dispatching," said Telecommunicator Rachel Teneyuca, who has been a TC at Steger for nine years.

"What we have now is more efficient, provides us with access to more information – instantly, and simplifies recordkeeping," she said.

(NOTE: In addition to Teneyuca, Steger's TCs include Christine Davies, Randy Johnston, Melissa Mieszczyk, Bill Perry, and Jeremiah Stultz.



Left, the Steger Dispatch Center before its Next Generation upgrade. Below, Steger Dispatch Center Supervisor Mary Jo Seehausen enjoys ease of using Will County's CAD system after 14 years of working without it.



"We are very happy with the upgrades, but we also appreciate all the time and effort put in by Dale (Murray), Jim (Ariagno) and Joanne (Burian)" of the County 9-1-1 administrative staff, who were "here all the time," according to Seehausen.

"We were ready to go live with CAD in January because we had a head start using it during the 30 days we spent in temporary quarters," she said. "We were able to work out the kinks – even before two additional days of formal training."

Speaking of the training, Seehausen also wanted to thank Eastcom Director Pam Buzan for making her office available for training purposes one day when such space wasn't available at the Steger PSAP.

Next in line to receive Next Generation upgrades are the PSAPs in Wilmington and Romeoville. ●

Telecommunicator Award Nominations Sought for 2009

Will County 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved is seeking nominations for the Will County Telecommunicator of the Year award for 2009.

Presented each year, this award honors a telecommunicator who performs at the highest levels of personal and professional conduct. To qualify, nominees must:

- *Have at least one year of continuous service with their PSAP.*
- *Work 20 or more hours per week as a telecommunicator.*
- *Be nominated by a shift supervisor or the manager of their center.*

Nominations should be sent by April 1 to:

Will County 9-1-1
2561 W. Division St.
Suite 101
Joliet, IL 60435

Encourage your supervisor to nominate a co-worker who you think deserves this recognition. The winner will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the 2009 Illinois NENA/APCO Conference – October 18-21 in Springfield. ●

20,000 First-Graders Learn When to Call

Denita Draper Still Committed to 9-1-1 Education

A pioneer when it comes to educating Will County residents about 9-1-1, Joliet Telecommunicator Denita Draper has led a city-wide program that has reached more than 20,000 first-graders during the past seven years.

The first 9-1-1 public education coordinator in Will County, Draper recognized the need for such an effort while visiting schools and reading to students as a Junior Achievement volunteer.

In 2002, after considering that experience, Draper approached her supervisors about creating a fun, entertaining, but highly educational program that would focus on how and when to call 9-1-1.

Draper helped select instructional materials and taught other Joliet telecommunicators how to make in-school presentations – which resulted in a test program that reached 500 first graders in about 20 classrooms at five elementary schools in Joliet District 86.

In 2003 – encouraged by the tremendous response to that initial effort – the program was expanded to include first graders in all 15 of Dist. 86's elementary schools.

Since then the program has been expanded further – to include parochial schools in Joliet, as well as public schools in Plainfield that are served by the Joliet Police and/or Fire Departments.

As a result, the number of schools participating in this program has increased to 29, the number of classrooms is now about 120, and the number of first-graders in those classes totals about 3,000.

Over the last seven years, approximately 20,000 first-graders have benefited from the program – which likely is a conservative estimate.

Among those who have joined Draper in making the 9-1-1 presentations are Joliet Communication Center telecommunicators Dawn Barfield, Virginia Bradley, Stephanie Brooks, Jennifer Chizmark, Andrea Delap, Heather Hanbaum, Francesca Hernandez, Susan Kljaich, Kacey Lauer, Marybett Marino, Theresa Saracco, Zelda Scott, Kim Smyth, Cindy Stukel, Kris Wilkerson and Lisa Yanchick.

However, Draper quickly added that “we wouldn't be able to schedule all the classroom visits without

the support of (Joliet Comm Center Director) Julie Ponce-Doyle, who has authorized the necessary release time” – which apparently has been time very well spent.

“Since we started making our 9-1-1 presentations to first-graders, we've noticed a reduction in the number of ‘mischief’ calls made by kids – such as those who dial 9-1-1 to see what happens,” Draper said.

“Also, on several occasions, children who have dialed 9-1-1 and helped save a life have attributed their actions to what they learned in school.”

Draper added that “such feedback really makes us feel good because it's an indication that what we are doing is making a difference.”

In addition to her ongoing efforts with first-graders, Draper has made public-safety presentations to groups of Girl Scouts (Brownies) and other students.

Also, in 2007, she joined the Will County Emergency Telephone System's Public Education Committee, which is chaired by Administrative Assistant Caryn DeMarco.

Although she has been a telecommunicator for more than 20 years, Draper said that her first career goal was to become a teacher. Therefore, it's not too surprising that she's thinking of continuing her work as an educator after retiring from the Joliet Comm Center (hopefully no time soon). ●

Joliet Telecommunicator Denita Draper displays some of the 9-1-1 educational materials she uses when teaching first-graders.



9-1-1 Board Appointees

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Bill Mort, and Channahon Fire Chief David Riddle. Their new terms will expire February 1, 2012.

Also sworn in were new appointees:

- *Brad Veerman, director of the Lincolnway Public Safety Communications Center, who will be a PSAP rep and serve the remainder of Suzanne Modlinski's term, which expires February 1, 2011.*
- *Tom Weigel, a former 9-1-1 Board member who replaces*

Richard Brandolino as the Will County Board rep. A village trustee in New Lenox for 17 years, he was re-elected to the County Board (District 2) last November. His 9-1-1 term will expire on February 1, 2012.

Modlinski retired at year-end as director of the Lincolnway PSAP and as a 9-1-1 Board member. And Brandolino retired in November after 19 years on the County Board and seven years on the 9-1-1 Board.

The Board will elect officers and make committee assignments at its April 23 meeting. ●

PSAP Caller Activity Down Slightly in 2008

After 14 consecutive years of increased caller activity, the total number of calls handled by PSAPs in Will County's 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System

decreased slightly (less than 1 percent) in 2008.

"Our telecommunicators handled 327,730 calls last year, which is about 0.4 percent fewer than the 328,959 calls answered in 2007," said 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved, who attributed this decrease to 9-1-1 public education efforts that have helped to reduce the number of "mischief" calls.

Among the Will County system's PSAPs, Lincoln-

way experienced the greatest (7.7%) increase in caller volume in 2008 compared to 2007. Romeoville had the biggest decrease (7.9%). And Joliet handled the most calls (116,812), which was 815 fewer than in 2007. ●

PSAP Caller Activity 2008 vs. 2007

	2008	2007	+/- %
Braidwood	—	1,443	—
Eastcom	26,642	26,633	+0.034
Joliet	116,812	117,627	(-0.69)
Lincolnway	23,852	22,151	+7.7
Romeoville	11,146	12,097	(-7.9)
Sheriff	85,325	84,262	+1.3
Steger	3,114	2,966	+5.0
WESCOM	58,303	59,349	(-1.8)
Wilmington	2,536	2,431	+4.3
TOTAL	327,730	328,959	(-0.37)%

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2009 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 or go to the Will County 9-1-1 website – www.willcounty9-1-1.com

March

10-11	Success Communications – Conflict Resolution	New Lenox
12-13	PowerPhone – Advanced Fire Service Dispatch	Matteson
16-18	APCO – CTO Training	Mundelien
16-18	SLEA – Comm FTO Training Program (San Jose Model)	Glen Ellyn
20	PowerPhone – Domestic Violence Intervention	Oregon

April

2-3	SLEA – Emergency Spanish for TC Personnel	Glen Ellyn
6	PSTC – Active Shooter for 9-1-1 Professionals	DeKalb
7-9	PSTC – Communications Training Officer Workshop	DeKalb
17	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Sterling
20-24	EMD Certification	Plainfield
22-24	SLEA – Instructor Development Training	Glen Ellyn

May

11-15	APCO – Fire Service Communications	Romeoville
15	PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention	Matteson
20-22	PSCMS – Supervision/Management of Comm Center	Niles

June

3	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Des Plaines
8-10	APCO – Communications Training Officer (CTO)	Romeoville
15	PowerPhone – Stress Identification/Management	Oregon
19	PowerPhone – Domestic Violence Intervention	Lansing

July

13	PowerPhone – Domestic Violence Intervention	Glendale Heights
13-15	PSCMS – Working Effectively in Comm Center	Des Plaines

August

5	PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention	Riverside
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September

14	PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention	Oregon
15-16	PSCMS – Surviving the Comm Center Environment	St. Charles
30-Oct. 2	SLEA – Instructor Development Training	Glen Ellyn

October

5-6	PowerPhone – Advanced Law Enforcement Dispatch	Matteson
19	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Arlington Hts.

November

16-20	EMD Certification	Frankfort
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