

DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

WINTER 2008

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

9-1-1 Board to Reorganize with 16 Members

According to a reorganization plan that was approved by the Will County Board of Supervisors in October, the 9-1-1 Board will expand from 12 to 16 members and have greater representation from its PSAPs and less from county agencies.

Conceived during an August Will

County System retreat and then approved by the 9-1-1 Board at its August 30 meeting, the reorganization plan will be implemented as soon as the new Board is selected and approved in early 2008.

When the reorganization is

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Different Look in 2008

Happy Holidays!! Happy New Year!!

On behalf of the 9-1-1 Board and the administrative staff of the Will County Emergency Telephone System, I would like to wish all of you the very Happiest of Holidays and a Safe and Happy New Year!!

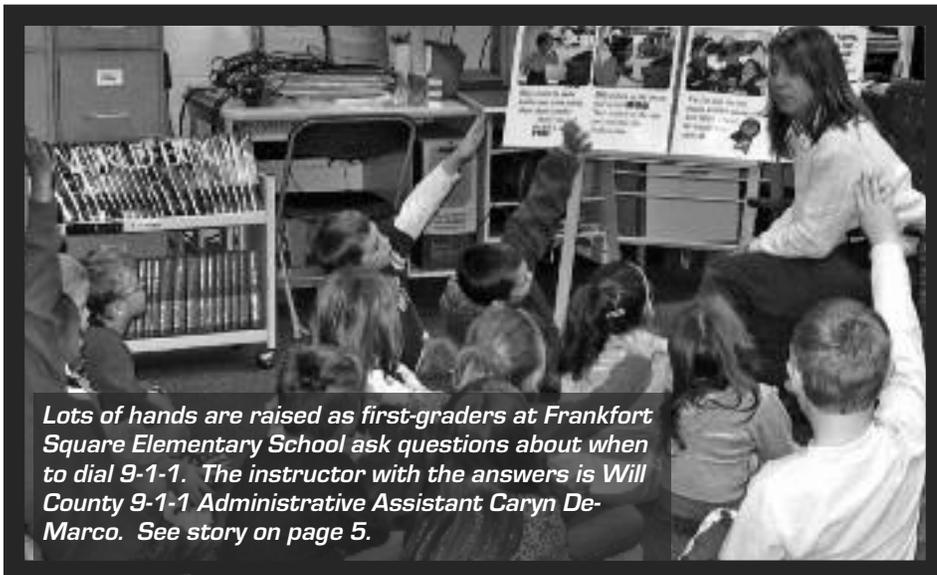
Our best wishes go to telecommunicators, law enforcement and fire protection personnel, emergency medical workers, and all other PSAP and public safety employees who are committed to serving our County's residents and businesses.

For everyone associated with the Will County Emergency Telephone System, 2008 will have a different look and provide new challenges. As a result, we – and our community – will be depending on you even more.

Within this issue of Dispatch Dialogue, there are stories that provide information about our new look, such as plans for reorganizing the 9-1-1 Board. And there are stories about some of the challenges, such as educating and reeducating the public about when to dial 9-1-1.

We hope that you will read these stories, enjoy the holidays with your families, and then apply your professionalism, skills and dedication to serving our community in 2008.

*Signed,
Steve Figved, Chief Administrator*



Lots of hands are raised as first-graders at Frankfort Square Elementary School ask questions about when to dial 9-1-1. The instructor with the answers is Will County 9-1-1 Administrative Assistant Caryn De-Marco. See story on page 5.

Zelda Scott Is APCO's Line Supervisor of Year

Joliet Day Shift Supervisor Zelda Scott was happy to be named her Comm Center's Telecommunicator of the Year in April. But she topped that honor in October when she was announced as Illinois APCO's Line Supervisor of the Year for 2007.

Scott, who celebrated her 20th anniversary with Joliet last year, was recognized for her "outstanding conduct, judgment and dedication while serving the people as a public safety telecommunicator."

Also, in her nomination letter to APCO, Joliet Comm Center Director Julie Ponce-Doyle acknowledged some of the many responsibilities she so capably performs on a regular basis, including:

- Serving as a team leader for the Joliet-TERT team and as a

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Zelda Scott with her award



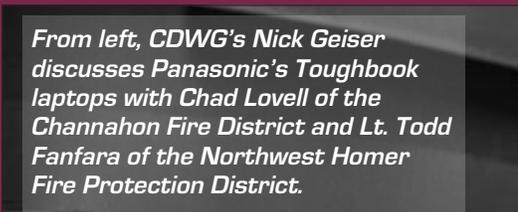
Users Conference 'A Hit'



Capt. George Bode, left, and Chuck Willard of the Joliet Fire Department



Among Conference attendees were, from left, Gus Xydakis and Carla Adams of the Plainfield Police Department, and WESCOM Executive Director Steve Rauter, center.

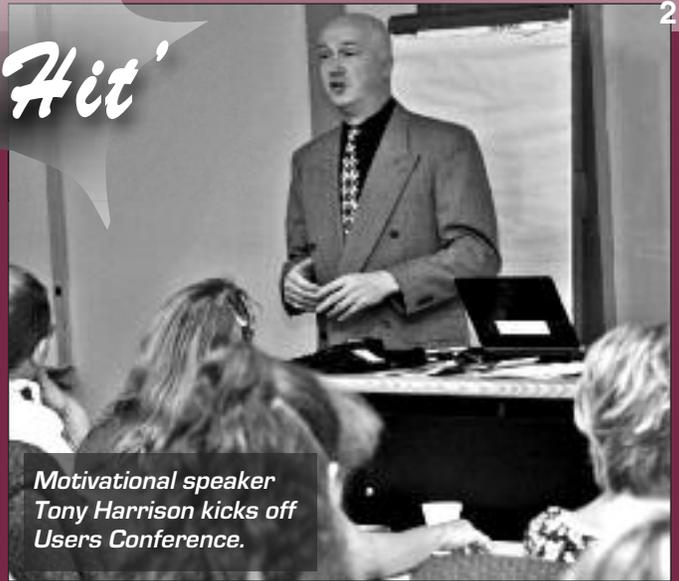


From left, CDWG's Nick Geiser discusses Panasonic's Toughbook laptops with Chad Lovell of the Channahon Fire District and Lt. Todd Fanfara of the Northwest Homer Fire Protection District.

"Team 9-1-1" was the name of the game. And there were a lot of hits - even a home-run derby - during the 2007 Will County 9-1-1 System's Users Conference on September 18. Attended by more than 80

telecommunicators, administrators, and system users, the conference at Joliet Junior College (Houbolt Road) provided the players with a lot of at-bats, but no strikeouts. Thanks to a motivational talk and several informative presentations and administrative updates, everyone went home a winner.

The pictures on this page provide a glimpse of what the conference was all about. ●



Motivational speaker Tony Harrison kicks off Users Conference.



Training Coordinator Joanne Kerney discusses EMD flipcharts.



Systems Analyst Kim Hartley distributes 'Team 9-1-1' T-shirts.



After electronic 'Home Run Derby' competition, Chief Administrator Steve Figved presents trophy to the winner - 9-1-1 Board Member Candi "Sluggger" Thuringer, circle inset.



First Time Ever**Sheriff's Department, Romeoville Have Civilian Directors**

For the first time ever, the Will County Sheriff's Department and Romeoville have civilian directors of their dispatch centers.

At the Sheriff's Department, Telecommunicator Pam Schmidt has replaced Lt. Tom Carey, who retired in November after 28 years of service, including the last seven as supervisor of the PSAP.

A telecommunicator for the Sheriff's Department since 1996, Schmidt has lived her entire life in Will County – born and raised in Frankfort and now living in Wilmington. She began her career as a dispatcher for Joliet Junior College in 1993 and then worked for the Village of Park Forest before joining the Sheriff's Department.

In Romeoville, the new director is

Kim Knutsen, who actually started her career there in 1988 as a part-time dispatcher. For the past 18 years, however, she has worked for the Village of Bolingbrook, where she began as a full-time telecommunicator in 1989, later served as a shift supervisor, and has been director of operations at the Comm Center since 2006.

She is eager to help plan the dispatch facility that will be included in a new Romeoville municipal building.

Also, the Lincolnway PSAP has welcomed Brad Veerman, who has been named deputy director. He has 20+ years of experience in law enforcement and 23+ years in fire protection. For example, he is a police officer with the New Lenox Police Department and a past president and current board member with the New Lenox Fire Protection District. Also, he was a firefighter/paramedic for Argonne Lab's Fire Department. ●

EMD Training Pays Off

The EMD training completed this year by two Joliet dispatchers – and the new electronic EMD flipcharts – recently paid big dividends to two Will County families.

On November 5, Joliet Dispatcher Jim Bagley answered the 9-1-1 call of a woman giving birth. The caller was the husband and the woman could be heard screaming in the background.

Bagley dispatched the fire department and police to the couple's address. Then, during the time it took for help to arrive on the scene, he got information from the responding units enroute and gave pre-arrival instructions from the electronic EMD flipchart to the husband.

"He also did a great job of helping the husband to calm down during this intense time for the soon-to-be dad," said shift supervisor Virginia Bradley. "By the time the responding units arrived on the scene, the child had been born."

Also, on October 19, Joliet Dispatcher Kacey Lauer handled a 9-1-1 call from the mother of a three-year-old child in cardiac arrest.

The mother was aware of the condition of the child and was prepared to assist with CPR. So, using the electronic EMD flipcharts, Lauer guided the mother in performing CPR until the emergency units arrived on the scene. ●

**Braidwood Calls Now Dispatched Through WESCOM**

Emergency calls answered by the Braidwood Police Department and Fire Protection District are now being dispatched by WESCOM in Plainfield.

"This change was made (effective December 3) because funds for maintaining the PSAP in Braidwood were not included in the city's budget for next year – due to the increasing cost of continuing to staff and operate the dispatch center there," said Will County Chief Administrator Steve Figved.

"It is expected that this change will result in annual savings of about \$100,000 per year," he added. "Also, the 9-1-1 services currently provided to residents and businesses in the Braidwood area will be maintained, and quite possibly improved." ●

Reorganization

(Continued from page 1)

complete, the 9-1-1 Board will consist of:

- *One representative from six dispatch centers, including EASTCOM, Joliet, Lincolnway, Romeoville, the Sheriff's Department, and WESCOM*
- *One member who represents the remaining, smaller PSAPs: Steger and Wilmington*
- *Two law-enforcement representatives, with the names submitted by the Police Chiefs Association of Will County*
- *Two fire-service representatives, with the selection made from a list submitted by the three Will County divisions of Mutual Aid Box Alarm Systems*
- *One representative from the Will County Emergency Management Agency*
- *One member from the Will County Executive's office*
- *One Will County Board member*
- *One member (the chairman) of the 9-1-1 Board's Technology Committee, and*
- *One Will County citizen-at-large representative*

Although the terms of all 12 current 9-1-1 Board members will not expire until February, the selection process for the new Board has already started. For example, letters requesting the names of nominees were

mailed in early December.

After the nominees have been reviewed and 16 selected/recommended, they will be approved and appointed by Will County Executive Larry Walsh, with the advice and consent of the County Board. ●

Zelda Scott

(Continued from page 1)

member of the LEOP Committee

- *Handling all front-line personnel issues with her shift, including annual evaluations and goal-setting*
- *Receiving complaints against shift members and initiating investigations*
- *Handling new-employee orientation*
- *Serving as an active member of the Joliet Comm Center's Public Education Committee*

• *Writing for the City of Joliet employee newsletter on telecommunication issues*
"Zelda is the backbone of our shift," said Dispatcher Denita Draper. "The day shift is a positive and knowledgeable team because we have a positive and knowledgeable supervisor who emphasizes team players."

Also, Dispatcher Kim Smyth nominated Scott by describing her as "a supervisor (who)... does her job with professionalism and accuracy." ●



From left, Lt. Tom Carey takes last look at Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center; Romeoville's Pat Barto enjoys thinking about her retirement; and, WESTCOM's Frank Blaskey reads placque commemorating his 11 years of service.



Three Leave Will County System

In addition to Lt. Tom Carey, supervisor of the Sheriff's Department PSAP, who retired in November after 28 years of service, two experienced telecommunicators have left the Will County Emergency Telephone System in recent months.

Telecommunicator Pat Barto retired in September after 30 years at the Romeoville Communications Center. An experienced professional with many recognitions in her file, she will be missed – especially by her co-workers, who often turned to her for advice on handling calls.

Also leaving in September was Frank Blaskey, who was a part-time fire telecommunicator at WESCOM for more than 11 years. He is moving on in his career with the Lockport Fire Department, where he serves as Lieutenant and as the Training Officer on his off-days.

"The time constraint and added responsibilities no longer allow Frank to remain at WESCOM," said Steve Rauter, executive director of WESCOM.

"He will be missed, but we know how to reach him!" ●

Call Tapes Needed

As part of their training, new telecommunicators learn from tapes of actual 9-1-1 calls.

The tapes give new employees a realistic idea of how to handle various emergencies. Also, they demonstrate call-taking techniques.

At the present time, however, the Will County 9-1-1 Administrative Office needs to replenish its supply of tapes.

"These tapes are an important component of our training effort," said Will County 9-1-1 Training Coordinator Joanne Kerney. "We want examples of calls that are handled well, as well as those that might be improved upon.

"It really helps to hear appropriate responses," she said. "But it also helps to hear the mistakes – because we all can learn from them."

Tape recorders are available at each PSAP. So please record a few of your calls and mail the tape(s) in a padded envelope to: 9-1-1 Office, 2531 W. Division Street, Suite 105 Joliet, IL 60435

The tapes will be used only for training purposes. And for your effort, you will be rewarded with a 9-1-1 T-shirt or sweatshirt. ●

Heroes, Other Stories

While the Administrative Office (Training) is seeking call tapes, Dispatch Dialogue also needs your help.

In our case, we're looking for stories about "Heroes in Our Midst" – unsung, every-day co-workers who usually don't think of themselves as heroes.

We're talking about Will County telecommunicators, who sometimes routinely handle some not so routine emergencies – by staying calm, cool and collected while under a whole lot of pressure.

If there has been one of these commendable occurrences at your PSAP, please encourage your shift supervisor to fax us a brief summary of the incident at (815) 725-7239 or call (815) 725-1911.

In addition to stories about heroes, Dispatch Dialogue needs news ideas of all kinds. Perhaps you've discovered a better way to perform some aspect of your job. Or maybe there's a training class you'd like to recommend or see added to the 9-1-1 schedule.

Whatever the story idea, we'd really like to hear from you. ●

Public Education Effort Has Reached 1,000+ First-Graders

Although it was introduced only three months ago, **Will County's 9-1-1 Kids** program already has reached more than 1,000 first-graders.

In September, the Public Education Committee sent letters to first-grade teachers at all elementary schools in areas/communities served by the Will County Emergency Telephone System.

The letters introduced the program and encouraged the teachers to schedule a classroom visit by a county telecommunicator.

"We told the teachers that our dispatchers want the kids to understand what an emergency is and know when – and when not – to dial 9-1-1," said Committee Chair Caryn DeMarco, administrative assistant at the 9-1-1 Office in Joliet.

"So far, the response to our letter has been encouraging," she said. "As of the end of November, presentations have been made to first-graders in about 40 classrooms, with many more to be scheduled."

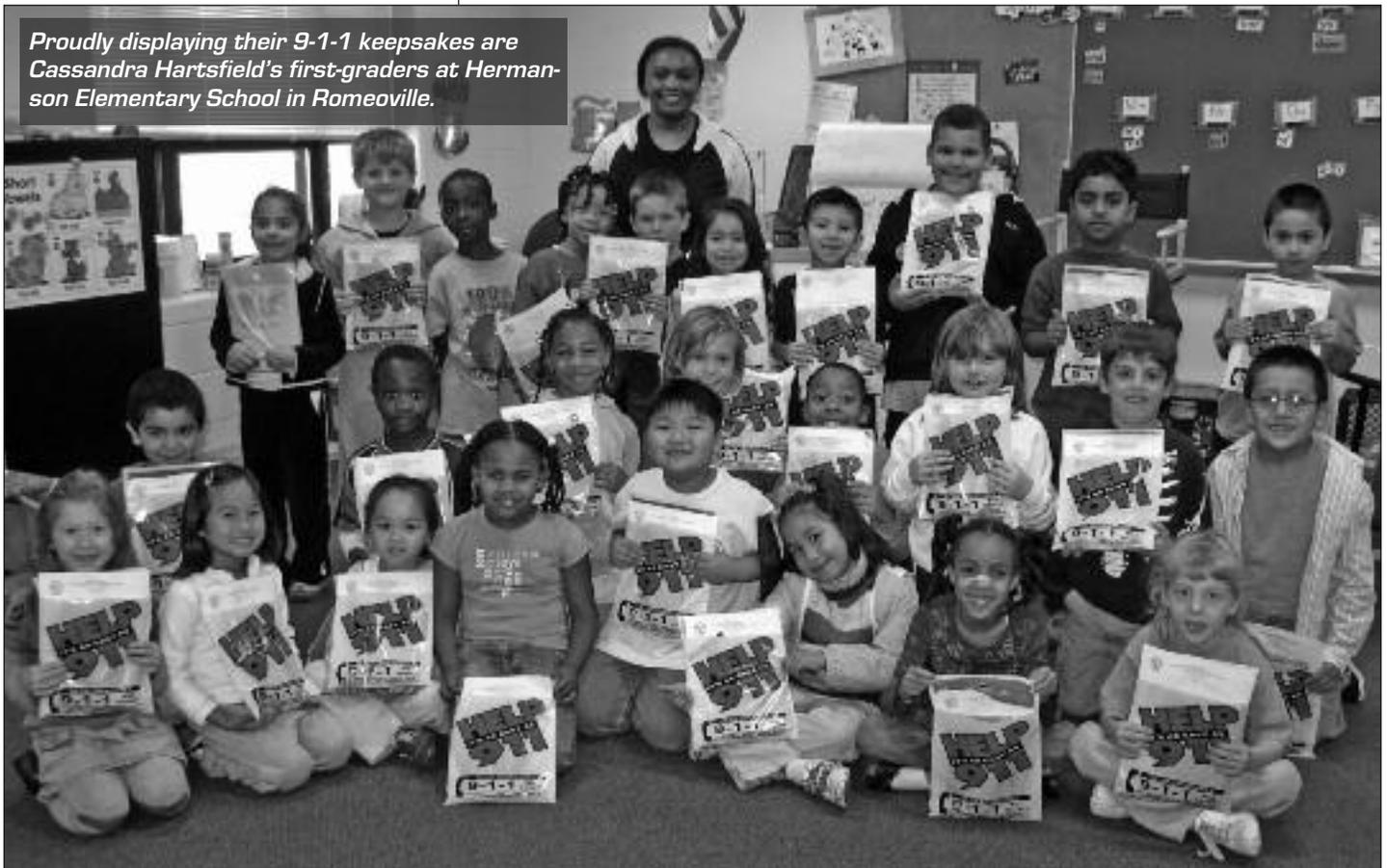
In addition to DeMarco, the Public Education Committee currently includes Dispatchers Denita Draper (Joliet), who has been teaching Joliet students about 9-1-1 for several years; Kathy Wilson (Lincolnway), and Natalie Krapf (EASTCOM).

Anyone else who is interested in joining the committee should contact Caryn DeMarco at 815-725-1911. ●

After listening to Joliet Telecommunicators Heather Hanbaum, left, and Theresa Saracco talk about when to dial 9-1-1, first-graders at Taft Elementary School in Joliet take turns practicing.



Proudly displaying their 9-1-1 keepsakes are Cassandra Hartsfield's first-graders at Hermanson Elementary School in Romeoville.



2007 TRAINING REPORT

The 9-1-1 Board established Minimum Training Standards for telecommunicators in 2003. Over the past few years, while the Minimum Standard has remained consistent, the opportunities for continuing education have expanded.

The industry has acknowledged that the job of a telecommunicator is evolving and more training is being offered.

The Will County System not only encourages its dispatch centers to send their personnel to training, it also pays the registration fees. Then, on a yearly basis, the 9-1-1 Board reimburses the PSAPs for the salaries of those persons who have attended classes and provided proof of attendance.

"Each year, participation has grown," said Training Coordinator

Joanne Kerney. "In 2007, we have had the highest percentage of participation across the county.

"The good news is that we are acknowledging the difficult job you do and supporting you by providing continuing education in your chosen field," she said.

This year's totals are listed below. The reimbursement checks have been processed for distribution to the dispatch centers.

PSAP	% Compliance
Braidwood	10 %
EASTCOM	90 %
Joliet	99 %
Lincolnway	54 %
Romeoville	93 %
Steger	0 %
Will County Sheriff	25 %
WESCOM	12 %
Wilmington	47 %

The Minimum Training Standard requires that each new telecommunicator receive a minimum of 40 hours

2008 TRAINING SCHEDULE

For more information or to enroll in any of the following courses, contact 9-1-1 Training Coordinator Joanne Kerney at 1-815-725-1911.

January		
14-16	APCO Communications Training Officer (CTO)	Rolling Meadows
14-18	EMD Certification	Plainfield
17-18	PowerPhone 9-1-1 Supervision	Libertyville
31-2/1	PowerPhone Advanced Fire Service Dispatch	Yorkville
February		
12	PowerPhone 9-1-1 Liability	Lansing
22	PowerPhone Domestic Violence	Matteson
March		
7	APCO T/C Role in Homeland Security	Deerfield
10-11	PowerPhone Fire Service Dispatch	Matteson
10-11	PowerPhone Advanced Law Enforcement Dispatch	Oregon
24-28	EMD Certification	Joliet
April		
1-3	APCO Communications Training Officer (CTO)	Western Springs
4	PowerPhone Domestic Violence Intervention	Riverside
21-22	PowerPhone Advanced Fire Service Dispatch	Oregon
25	PowerPhone Stress Identification/Management	Matteson
May		
1-2	PowerPhone Advanced Law Enforcement Dispatch	Yorkville
19	PowerPhone Domestic Violence Intervention	Libertyville
August		
1	PowerPhone Suicide Intervention	Libertyville
8	PowerPhone Domestic Violence Intervention	Yorkville
18	PowerPhone Hostage Negotiations	Riverside
September		
22	PowerPhone Non-Emergency Call-Handling	Libertyville
November		
17-19	PSCMS Working Effectively in Comm Center Environ	Western Springs

of training in his/her first year and that all other telecommunicators receive a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education per year.

"It is encouraging to note that many telecommunicators exceeded their 12 hours of continuing education training," said Kerney.

"Thank you to all the PSAP directors who have supported this program and sent their personnel to training. Keep up the good work!!!" ●

DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

Dispatch Dialogue is produced by the Will County Emergency Telephone System, which is governed by the Will County 9-1-1 Board.

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Comments and story ideas can be forwarded by fax to 815-725-7239 or mailed to *Dispatch Dialogue*, 2531 W. Division Street, Suite 105, Joliet, IL 60435

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