

# DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

WINTER 2009

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

## A New Year, New Beginnings, Some New Ideas

During the past year, most of the nation has been focused on the Presidential election and the economy, as well as changes that are anticipated in 2009 (and thereafter).

Here, within the Will County Emergency Telephone System, some of us also will be facing some new beginnings and implementing some new (Next Generation) ways of doing things.



For example:

- Many new ideas were presented to telecommunicators and police, fire, and emergency medical agencies during the 2008 Users Conference.
- Lincolnway telecommunicators have moved into new quarters in the new Frankfort Township Center. And in February, they will start handling 9-1-1 calls for the Mokena, Frankfort, New Lenox, Manhattan and East Joliet Fire Departments.
- The Steger PSAP is getting Next Generation upgrades, including new furniture, consoles and communications equipment.
- The Peotone Fire Protection District is now being served by Eastcom.
- Three veteran dispatchers with combined service of more than 100 years have retired and will be starting new chapters in their lives: Joliet's Pam Schaubel, Lincolnway's Suzanne Modlinski, and Candi Thuringer of the Illinois State Police.

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## Lincolnway Completes Move to New Location

The anxiously awaited move of the Lincolnway Public Safety Communications Center to larger quarters has been accomplished.

In December, Lincolnway telecommunicators moved from a small 300-square-foot room in New Lenox into a 2,200-square-foot location in the new Frankfort Township Center.

Arrangements for this move were facilitated by Frankfort Township Supervisor and Will County Board Chairman Jim Moustis, through a cooperative intergovernmental agreement with the Lincolnway 9-1-1 Board.

Located in the lower level of the  
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Lincolnway Telecommunicators Kandi Myers (left) and Jenette Turner look on as Will County 9-1-1 Network Engineer Dale Murray tests communications equipment in the PSAP's new radio room at the Frankfort Township Center.

### We've Moved, too

The next time you visit the administrative offices of the Will County Emergency Telephone System, you will find that we've moved to larger quarters not far away in the same business park.

Although our telephone numbers have not changed, we have a new address:



2561W. Division Street  
Suite 101  
Joliet, IL 60435

"The new location provides more space for training and larger meeting rooms, which will enable us to improve the services we provide to our PSAPs and user agencies," said 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved. ●

## 2008 Users Conference Bowls Everyone Over

Although no one was keeping score – except during the break – the response to the 2008 Users Conference was akin to bowling a perfect game.

Hosted at Joliet Junior College (on Houbolt Road) by Will County 9-1-1 administrators wearing bowling shirts, the September 29 conference was attended by more than

80 telecommunicators and police, fire and emergency medical personnel.

For the first time, the telecommunicators and the users had their own separate “alleys” – with each group listening to presentations tailored specifically to them.

The telecommunicators were bowled over by three an-

imated “conversations” with well-known public-safety dispatch professional Kevin Willet, who focused on customer service, telecommunicator stress, and “being the best you can.”

At the same time (in an adjacent room), the users learned about the ZOLL TabletPCR EMS Reporting project, Group 1

**Right:** Will County ETS telecommunicators enjoy one of dispatch professional Kevin Willet's humorous anecdotes.

**Below:** From left, Eastcom telecommunicators Natalie Krapf, Megan Enright and Sharon Wall talk to NICE vendor Jim Halsmer, vice president of Word Systems in Indianapolis, during a break.



**Above:** Attending a conference session for users were, front to back, Plainfield Fire Chief John Eichelberger, Assistant Chief Bruce Boyle of the Elwood Fire Protection District, and Battalion Chief Andrew Doyle and Administrative Secretary Deb Krut, both of the Troy Fire Protection District. **Left:** Mike Trotter of ZOLL Data Systems helps answer question about his company's TabletPCR.

*Solutions' Mobile Mapping, Motorola's Advanced Vehicle Location (AVL) project, A-Beep-Zetron's Station Monitoring project, the countywide data microwave project, the Intrado PSAP Network, and the Federal Signal Codespear project.*

*According to an unofficial poll of conference attendees, there were plenty of strikes*

*and no gutter balls thrown during the morning and afternoon sessions.*

*In other words, everyone learned some things they didn't know when the day started. And everyone picked up some good ideas that they hopefully have shared with peers at their Will County PSAPs and public-safety agencies. ●*



*Bowling with the Stars trophy winners included, above, from left, Crete Township Fire Chief Jeff Panega, WESCOM Dispatch Supervisor Erich Sommer, and Romeoville Communications Center Director Kim Knutsen, as well as, right, Lt. Brian Jamrok (left) of the Homer Fire Protection District and Lt. Mark Fischer of the Channahon Police Department. Below: Romeoville Telecommunicator Kellee Konieczny appears to have "thrown" a ball that's headed for the pocket.*



*Upon announcing her yearend retirement plans, Will County 9-1-1 Board Member and Lincolnway PSAP Director Suzanne Modlinski accepts plaque and best wishes from Chief Jim Grady, Board chairman (left), and Steve Figved, 9-1-1 chief administrator, during October 23 Board meeting.*

## Suzanne Modlinski Retires After 30 Years at Lincolnway

To those who spend a lot of time going to and coming from the Lincolnway Public-Safety Communications Center, it's going to seem strange to no longer see Director Suzanne Modlinski there.

That's because, after more than 30 years at the Lincolnway PSAP, including 23 years as its director, Modlinski has retired. Also, she has already attended her last meeting as a director on the Will County 9-1-1 Board.

Modlinski started as a dispatcher for Lincolnway in 1978 and became director in 1985. She was the first civilian to graduate from Northwestern University's 10-week (400-hour) Staff and Command course, and she has received several commendations over the years.

"When I started my career, there were only four full-time and a couple part-time dispatchers – which means we operated the call center with only one dispatcher per shift," she said.

"Today, we have 20 employees and will be running four dispatchers per shift beginning in February, when Lincolnway will start serving five fire districts for the first time.

"In 1978, we served a population of less than 10,000; now, the three villages we serve (New Lenox, Frankfort and Mokena) have a combined population of about 60,000," she added.

Another change Modlinski has experienced is the technology, which has "most definitely made dispatching, record keeping and all aspects of providing public-safety services a lot more effective and time efficient," she said.

Modlinski and her husband are looking forward to moving to the Ozark Mountains, where they will live

*(Continued on page 4)*





*During her last day (December 12) at the Joliet Comm Center, Operations Manager Pam Schaubel, third from right, enjoys the applause of her peers – from left, Telecommunicators Darrell Hudgens, Jen Chizmark, Traci Farley, and Zelda Scott, Technical Support Supervisor Patti Deffenbaugh, and Telecommunicators Cindy Stukel, Denita Draper, and Chris Grutzius. The first person ever to retire from the Comm Center, she also was honored by having her badge number retired by the Joliet Police Department.*

## Pam Schaubel Retires from Joliet 9-1-1 Center

When Pam Schaubel joined the Joliet Police Department more than 34 years ago, she served as an aide to the investigation division.

Schaubel said that while she found this work interesting, she also thought a lot about becoming a dispatcher – which she believed would be “more exciting.” Although initially she was leery of a job that involves shift work, she applied to be a dispatcher in 1983.

Twenty-five years later, Schaubel has no regrets.

“I have enjoyed being in a position to help people – including Will County citizens, police officers, and firefighters,” she said. “The staff here has become my extended family, my kids – and you better not mess with my kids.”

Operations manager at the Joliet Comm Center for the past 11 years, Schaubel has received several awards of merit and commendations during her career. Also, she and Director Julie Ponce-Doyle were the first telecommunicators in Will County to earn the designation of Emergency Number Professional.

“It has been an honor to work with Pam for the past 25 years,” said Ponce-Doyle. “She has left a legacy that will not be forgotten. We will do our best to continue living up to it.”

When asked to explain what that legacy is, Ponce-Doyle said that it was difficult to list her accomplishments because “she has accomplished something every day of her career.

“It is hard to find words to thank someone for their dedication to duty when that person (Pam) has never been off duty,” said Ponce-Doyle. “She has responded to anyone’s request at any time, whether by phone, email, or in person.”

For example, when she was IWIN coordinator, she had police officers come to her home seeking help with a problem or question related to their mobile data terminals (MDTs).

Ponce-Doyle added that Schaubel also has “fought for employee rights, such as breaks for staff members; she has been innovative with technology (e.g., she brought – from

home – the first computer ever used in the Joliet Comm Center); and she created a dispatcher scheduling system that works (it was a mess before she changed it).”

Although Schaubel has no “immediate” retirement plans, she said that she and her husband, Bill (who retired after 27 years with the Joliet Police Department), plan to stay in Joliet and spend more time with their six grandchildren.

Schaubel added that, while she was looking forward to retirement, she will miss her extended family – “because they are the best.” ●

## Suzanne Modlinski Retires

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on Bull Shoals Lake in southern Missouri.

She also indicated that she appreciated her short experience as a 9-1-1 Board member (since being sworn in on March 5, 2008).

“The Board does a fabulous job of keeping all the PSAPs updated with state-of-the-art equipment,” she said.

“It has been my pleasure to not only work with Suzanne these past few years, but to get to know her as a friend,” said 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved.

“I want to thank Suzanne for all the great things she has accomplished at Lincolnway. Indeed, she has put in place the very foundations that have made the Lincolnway PSAP such a success.

“She is truly a 9-1-1 professional,” Figved added. “The Will County 9-1-1 System will be somewhat emptier without her dedication, wit, wisdom and committed spirit.

“I read somewhere that retirement is ‘when you stop living at work and begin working at living,’” he said.

“I know that Suzanne is going to do just that. I want to wish her all the best on behalf of all of us in 9-1-1.

I hope that she enjoys her happy, warm, and sunny days in Missouri and that she will keep in touch!”

Also, Modlinski wanted to “thank Steve Figved and the Board for being major factors in making Lincolnway’s dreams of a new center possible. And special thanks go to Dale Murray and Jim Ariagno for all their hard work putting together the 9-1-1 portion of the new center.”

Serving as the new director of the Lincolnway Public-Safety Communications Center is former Deputy Director Brad Veerman. ●

## Three Joliet Telecommunicators Celebrate 20 Years



In the stressful environment of a busy 9-1-1 center, 20-year veterans are rare.

However, in 1988, three telecommunicators started working at the Joliet 9-1-1 Center – within a month of each other. And 20 years later, all three are still there.

To celebrate this occasion, their peers honored them during a surprise Trifecta anniversary party in October.

The three stars of the day – each “extremely vital” to the Joliet 9-1-1 Center – were:

- Susan Kljaich, supervisor of the afternoon shift (which is the busiest) and a Joliet TERT Team leader who has been deployed as such many times during her career.
- Traci Farley, a public safety dispatcher who is Joliet’s LEADS coordinator and was an original member of the Joliet TERT Team.
- Denita Draper, a public safety dispatcher who was the first 9-1-1 public education coordinator in Will County and has been honored as the Joliet, Will County, and State of Illinois Telecommunicator of the Year.

“The dedication of these three telecommunicators is truly inspirational,” said Joliet Police Chief Fred Hayes upon presenting them with their 20-year police department service pins.

In addition, 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved presented the three telecommunicators with certificates of appreciation on behalf of the Will County Emergency Telephone System. ●

## New Year, New Beginnings

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- And last but not least, the Will County ETS administrative staff has moved into new, larger quarters a very short distance away.

However, “despite such new beginnings, one thing will stay the same in 2009,” said 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved. “That is the dedication and commitment to public safety and the professionalism exhibited daily by telecommunicators and user agencies throughout Will County.

“As a result, I am confident in wishing you a Happy New Year – because, with the help of your ongoing efforts and support, I am sure that 2009 will be a good one.” ●

## Lincolnway Relocation

(Continued from page 1)

facility, this new space includes 1,000 square feet for the radio room and 1,200 square feet for three offices, the IT room, a break room, and two storage areas.

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 February, Lincolnway also will be handling 9-1-1 calls for the Mokena, Frankfort, New Lenox, Manhattan and East Joliet fire departments.

As a result of this increase in user services, the PSAP will be increasing the size of its staff from nine to 17 full-time dispatchers, according to Director Brad Veerman.

To accommodate this larger staff, six consoles (twice the previous number) were installed, along with the Next Generation communications equipment.

The cutover date for taking 9-1-1 calls at the new dispatch center was December 8. ●



Everyone is all smiles after Joliet Comm Center Director Julie Ponce-Doyle (second from left) gave bouquets of flowers to (from left) Telecommunicators Traci Farley, Denita Draper, and Susan Kljaich during celebration of their 20 years of service.



### Out with the Old, In with the New

In December, the Will County Sheriff's Office PSAP replaced its old radio tower with a new one, which has resulted in improved communications. Here, workers check out the last section (with a warning beacon on top) before it is put in place at the summit of the new 200-foot tower. It was purchased from and erected by MidAmerica Towers, Inc., Mokena, at a cost of about \$150,000. ●

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**DISPATCH** 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

## 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.

### January

5-9	EMD Certification	New Lenox
9	Kebcor – Critical Incidence Communications	Joliet
15	SLEA – Busting Burnout	Winnetka
21-22	SLEA – Emergency Spanish for Telecommunicators	Glen Ellyn

### February

6	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Riverside
9	PowerPhone – Domestic Violence Intervention	Lansing
9-11	CAD New-Hire Training	Joliet
19	SLEA – Busting Burnout	Glen Ellyn
20	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Schererville
23	APCO – Active Shooter Incidents	Oregon
24	APCO – Active Shooter Incidents	Oregon

### March

10-11	Success Communications – Conflict Resolution	Crete
12-13	PowerPhone – Advanced Fire Service Dispatch	Matteson
16-18	APCO – CTO Training	Mundelien
20	PowerPhone – Domestic Violence Intervention	Oregon
23-25	SLEA – Comm FTO Training Program (San Jose Model)	Glen Ellyn

### April

17	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Sterling
20-24	EMD Certification	Plainfield

### May

15	PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention	Matteson
20-22	PSCMS – Supervision/Management of Comm Center	Niles

### June

15	PowerPhone – Stress Identification/Management	Oregon
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### July

13-15	PSCMS – Working Effectively in Comm Center	Des Plaines
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### September

14	PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention	Oregon
15-16	PSCMS – Surviving the Comm Center Environment	St. Charles

### 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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