

DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

SUMMER 2009

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

New Site

2009 Users Conference Scheduled for Oct. 6

The 2009 edition of the Will County 9-1-1 System's Users Conference has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, at a picturesque new site: **The Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, 25055 W. Walnut Lane, in Channahon.**

As in past years, conference participants will begin signing in and enjoy a continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Then, there will be informative seminars from 9 a.m. to Noon and 1 to 3 p.m., with a lunch served in between.

The focus of the seminars will be on improving emergency telephone services and therefore public safety, with sessions that are designed especially for telecommunicators, as well as sessions targeted at fire and police user agencies.

For example, one session will be devoted to Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) training – which provides continuing-education credits.

Another session will include discussion of future 9-1-1 trends, such as text messaging and how it relates to the hearing-impaired community in Will County.

Also, information will be provided about the latest cutting-edge technologies that are being introduced at national NENA, APCO and Motorola conferences.

Agenda specifics and registration information will be emailed and available at the Will County 9-1-1 website: www.willcounty9-1-1.com Or call 1-815-725-1911.

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Hopefully this young family will never have to call 9-1-1. But, while visiting the KidsWork Children's Museum in Frankfort, their child eagerly practiced using the phone. See story on the museum's new Emergency Call Center exhibit on page 2.



State Legislators OK Acquisition of Site for Communications and Command Center

Legislation (SB1934) that will enable the acquisition of a 20-acre site on Caton Farm Road, Joliet, from the Illinois Department of Corrections, has passed both the State House and Senate (on May 30).

Although, at press time, the measure was on Governor Pat Quinn's desk awaiting his signature, it will become law if he does not sign it within 60 days (by July 29).

The site will be the future location of a new Will County Communications and Command Center, which has been under consideration for several years.

As currently conceived, the two-story (plus basement) command center will be occu-

piated by seven tenants: the Will County 9-1-1 administrative staff, the WESCOM and Will County Sheriff PSAPs, the Will County Coroner's office, the County Sheriff's Warrants Division, the County Radio Department, and the County Emergency Management Agency (EMA).

At its June 23 meeting, the 9-1-1 Board authorized the staff to arrange for soil borings, three appraisals, and an environmental assessment of the property.

Then, according to provisions in SB 1934, the average of those three appraisals will be used to determine the actual per-acre cost of the land. And this average will be

(Continued on page 3)

Bolingbrook to Join Will ETS

During the first quarter of 2010, the Bolingbrook Police and Fire Dispatch Center will become part of the Will County Emergency Telephone System and its CAD network.

Staffed by a total of 16 full-time telecommunicators (including two unfilled positions) and two supervisors, the Bolingbrook PSAP provides dispatch services to the Bolingbrook Police and Fire Departments, according to E-9-1-1 Director AnnMarie Reynolds.

Bolingbrook currently has its own CAD system. However, by joining the county-wide 9-1-1 system, "we will become part of a much bigger network that provides continuity – and shared information – among police, fire, and emergency medical agencies throughout Will County," said Dispatch Supervisor Nancy Ann Slater.

"By improving communications between the CAD users in these communities, we also will be improving public safety."

Bolingbrook will be the ninth PSAP in the Will County Emergency Telephone System. ●

PSAPs to Benefit from Microwave System

The 9-1-1 administrative staff has been working with the PSAPs and user agencies to develop a county-wide microwave system that will interconnect the smaller systems and create a large one that will include all of the dispatch centers.

"We want to integrate and standardize our data links and communications," said 9-1-1 Board Member and WESCOM Executive Director Steve Rauter.

Currently, the three primary microwave systems are operated by County Radio, Lincolnway and WESCOM. The County Radio and Lincolnway systems already are operating, while WESCOM's system is ready to start.

WESCOM is using some of their surcharge reallocation funds for part of this project. Also, the 9-1-1 Board has agreed to fund 50 percent of the project's total cost, as was done for Lincolnway.

"When built out, the interconnected microwave system will provide all PSAPs with both communications data routing and radio back-up capabilities county-wide," according to Will County 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved. "At the present time, we depend on AT&T's underground copper-wire infrastructure. There is no back-up.

"The end result will be improved emergency telephone services and better public safety for Will County residents and businesses," he said. ●

Public Education Efforts Expanded, Volunteers Needed

The scope of the Will County 9-1-1 System's public education efforts has expanded in 2009, with a couple new programs – including a children's museum exhibit in Frankfort and classroom presentations to teen drivers.

In addition, Will County Office Administrator/Public Education Coordinator Caryn DeMarco and several Joliet telecommunicators (see story in Spring 2009 issue of *Dispatch Dialogue*) continued making 9-1-1 presentations to first-graders during the 2008-09 school year.

DeMarco (who chairs the Will County 9-1-1 System's Public Education Committee) and other volunteers also will be distributing 9-1-1 information from the NENA booth at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield (Aug. 14-23).

Also, Will County 9-1-1 will have a booth at the Will County Fair (Aug. 26-30) in Peotone. DeMarco is seeking volunteers to help distribute 9-1-1 materials at the local fair. So, if you'd like to volunteer at the County Fair, email Caryn at cdemarco@willcounty9-1-1.com or call her at 815-725-1911. ●

Children's Museum Provides Hands-on 9-1-1 Experiences

Thanks to a new hands-on addition to the KidsWork Children's Museum in downtown Frankfort, many more kids will be learning how and when to dial 9-1-1.

Introduced to the public during an open house on June 6, an Emergency Call Center is now a permanent exhibit at the museum.

The exhibit includes a few telephones that children use to practice calling 9-1-1. Also, kids can get an idea of what it's like being in a dispatch center – by sitting at a small desk in front of three computer monitors and answering a "9-1-1 call," with the help of a Teletrainer (9-1-1 phone simulator). And there is a computer that is available for accessing an interactive website, which provides information about 9-1-1.

The permanent exhibit became a reality after Frankfort Fire Prevention Officer Dennis Merz approached Rosalie Plechaty of the museum staff about the possibility of creating a 9-1-1 learning experience.

In addition to Merz (who provided the 9-1-1 phone simulator), the exhibit was created with the help of Frankfort firefighter/paramedic Randy Maurisak, who designed and built the 9-1-1 display board and shelves; Chief Deputy Patrick Maher of the Will County Sheriff's Enforcement Division, who supplied the squad-car lighting bar; and Will County Office Administrator Caryn DeMarco, who provided the computer monitors, telephones and framed photos.

Open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and Noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday (it's closed Mondays), the KidsWork Children's Museum is located in the Trolley Barn in downtown Frankfort's historic district. Its address is 11 S. White Street, Frankfort. For more information, call 815-469-1199. ●



Kids who stop at the KidsWork Children's Museum in Frankfort now have an opportunity to learn how and when to dial 9-1-1. Included in its new Emergency Call Center exhibit is a dispatcher console, lower right, with three monitors.

850 Teen Drivers View 9-1-1 Video

Another new public education program has started reaching teenagers who are enrolled in high-school driver's ed classes.

During the 2008-09 school year, Will County Office Administrator/Public Education Coordinator Caryn DeMarco made 9-1-1 presentations to about 850 students (mostly sophomores). They attend Bolingbrook High School, Lincolnway East High School, or Lockport High School.

"Prior to showing our Teen Drive video (which was prepared by the Will County ETS and supported by the 9-1-1 Board), I discussed the (Continued on page 3)



Joliet Telecommunicator Kris Wilkerson and Officer Chuck Mascolino of the Joliet Police Department were among the volunteers who answered questions and distributed info about law enforcement and 9-1-1 during a recent business expo at the Joliet Westfield Mall. ●

Patti Deffenbaugh Celebrates 25 Years at Joliet Comm Center

Time flies when you're having fun – especially if you are Joliet Technical Support Supervisor Patti Deffenbaugh, who celebrated 25 years of service in June.

Actually, Patti's public-safety career spans 28 years, as she started as a part-time dispatcher at the Lincolnway Communications Center in 1980, about a year after graduating from Joliet East High School.

"Dispatching 'back in the day' with the ticker-tape teletype machine was a challenge," she said. "If you made one mistake, you had to redo the whole thing. So, you learned quickly not to make mistakes.

"[Also,] we didn't have headsets. Instead, there was a boom microphone hanging down in front of us and, when we transmitted, we talked into it."

Upon graduating high school, Patti initially wanted to be a police officer. However, after a year and a half at Lincolnway, she decided "I have found my calling."

She started her first full-time dispatch job at the Will County Sheriff's Department in 1983 and then joined the City of Joliet's Police Department Communications Center the next year.

During her brief tenure at the Sheriff's PSAP, she learned to separate personal from professional – after being the only dispatcher working the day of the Cass Street Ceramic Shop murders and learning that a friend was one of the several victims.

That day was "a true character builder" for Deffenbaugh.

When she started at the Joliet Comm Center, she said "I came with some knowledge under my belt, but I really had no idea I would stay here as long as I have. I trained with Julie (Ponce-Doyle) and showed her a thing or two that I had learned; then, of course, she showed me a lot more.

"I've met a lot of people along the way, going to conferences, classes, and seminars, and I have always taken pride in telling them where I work. Some of those people are still in the business, but a lot of them aren't. It takes a special kind of person to survive this career."

Deffenbaugh plans to retire in seven years, when she and her husband will head west to Arizona.

"Until then, I will continue doing the job that I've always wanted to do" – with Joliet dispatchers who "truly are a family of friends," Patti said. "We've been through a lot together." ●



Patti Deffenbaugh gets ready to cut her "congratulations cake" into 25 pieces – one for each of her 25 years at the Joliet Comm Center.



Terri DeSonia New Computer Technician

Since joining the Will County 9-1-1 System's administrative team in May, computer technician Terri DeSonia has spent more time on the road than in her office.

DeSonia and Network Engineers Dale Murray and Jim Ariagno are in the field almost every day – servicing Will County 9-1-1's CAD system and related communications equipment.

In other words, DeSonia has wasted no time getting acclimated to her new job and meeting the tech-service needs of the PSAPs and user agencies.

DeSonia previously served as director of the Braidwood PSAP, where she worked for 15 years – until it closed last year and a decision was made to have its calls handled by WESCOM.

A resident of Braidwood, she currently is working toward an associate's degree in networking security at Joliet Junior College. ●

Teen Drivers *(Continued from page 2)*

importance of knowing your location when driving – paying attention to your surroundings," DeMarco said.

"Also, I gave them a five-question test before they viewed the video – to see what they knew about 9-1-1," she said.

The results of this pre-test were enlightening – and confirmed the need for more 9-1-1 public education, especially among teens.

"They apparently have some misconceptions about using 9-1-1," according to DeMarco.

For example, the test results showed that 20 percent of the students thought they could "text" 9-1-1. And 60 percent of them thought that 9-1-1 dispatchers knew their "exact" location when they made a wireless call.

In addition to the video, there was an audio of a 19-year-old girl who drowned in her car when it went into a ravine. Even though she did call 9-1-1, she panicked and didn't know what to do or where she was.

"There was a discussion about how that situation might have had a different outcome," DeMarco said. ●

State Legislators *(Continued from page 1)*

submitted to the Department of Corrections – to be considered as Will County's offer to buy the property, at a price not to exceed \$45,000 per acre or \$900,000.

Therefore, when this sale is completed, the property will be owned by Will County and leased to the 9-1-1 Board on a long-term basis.

"This acquisition is the end result of many meetings with state officials, as well as many hours of 9-1-1 staff work," said 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved.

"However, I also want to give a lot of credit for this sale to State Sen. A.J. Wilhelmi of the 43rd District, who has been a strong supporter of this public-safety project," he added. "He and State Rep. Emily McAsey of the 85th District were sponsors of the legislation."

While the acquisition progresses, and after it is completed, the 9-1-1 staff will be meeting with the command center's architects – Healy and Bender and HSSM (now AECOM) – to fine-tune the design and development plans (Phase II) for this building. ●

Will County 9-1-1, EMA to Use New Citizen Alert Notification System

After filing an RFP (Request for Proposals) and reviewing various alternatives, the Will County 9-1-1 staff and the County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) decided to recommend replacing their current Citizen Alert Notification System with one that is faster and easier to use.

During its June 24 meeting, the 9-1-1 Board agreed with this proposal and authorized purchasing the Codespear Citizen Alert Notification System from Federal Signal of University Park for five years – with the cost shared 50/50 with the EMA.



"Since we are nearing the end of our contract with our current system provider, and since 9-1-1, the PSAPs, and our user agencies are moving to the Federal Signal Codespear product for team notifications, it makes good sense to look at this part of the system for county-wide use," said 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved.

"The new Codespear product can make 210,000 calls to residents/businesses per hour, compared to our current system's 80,000 calls per hour. And it is much more user-friendly." ●

Dale Murray Earns ENP Certification

Will County Network Engineer Dale Murray has become the County 9-1-1 System's fourth Emergency Number Professional (ENP), which is considered the highest form of recognition in the emergency telephone industry.

To be certified as an ENP, Murray had to pass a three-hour, 150-question exam, after spending several months studying for it.

Currently responsible for maintaining Will County 9-1-1's CAD system and related communications equipment, Murray joined the County ETS administrative team as a fire records management administrator in 2003, after 13 years with the University Park Police Department.

The ENP designation is considered a worthwhile indicator of professionalism, much like an accountant with CPA status, according to NENA, which administers the certification program.

Previously, 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved, Training Coordinator Joanne Burian, and Will County Board Member and Joliet Communications Center Director Julie Ponce-Doyle earned ENP certification. In fact, when Burian achieved this designation in 1997, she was a member of the nation's first ENP "graduating" class, along with former 9-1-1 Chief Administrator John Karubas.

In addition to three years of supervisory experience, ENP candidates must meet certain education and professional development/service criteria.

For more information and/or to request an ENP application form, contact NENA headquarters at 1-800-332-3911 or visit the NENA website at www.nena.org

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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DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE



Users Conference (Continued from page 1)

(NOTE: The Four Rivers Environmental Education Center is a new facility operated by the Forest Preserve District of Will County. Located in McKinley Woods, on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by water, the center is situated in a grove of mature oak trees. It is positioned where the Des Plaines, DuPage and Kankakee Rivers meet to form the Illinois River.

Four Rivers has three classrooms – each of which offers a view of the Des Plaines River. However, it's most memorable feature is the Illinois Grand Hall, which has windows that extend the height of the room, offering a great view of the outdoor surroundings; it opens to a river-view patio, with access to a scenic river walk.) ●

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

JULY

20 PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response Ottawa

AUGUST

3-5 CAD New-Hire Training Joliet
 5 PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention Riverside
 12-13 PowerPhone – Advanced Law Enforcement Dispatch Yorkville
 24 PSCT – Active Shooter Pekin

SEPTEMBER

14 PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention Oregon
 14-18 EMD Certification Frankfort
 15-16 PSCMS – Surviving the Comm Center Environment St. Charles
 17-18 PSCMS – Surviving the Comm Center Environment St. Charles
 18 Kebcor – Critical Incident Comm for Dispatch Westmont
 28-Oct. 1 APCO – Fire Service Communications Romeoville
 30-Oct. 1 SLEA – FTO for Communications/Dispatchers Glen Ellyn
 30-Oct. 2 SLEA – Instructor Development Training Glen Ellyn

OCTOBER

5-6 PowerPhone – Advanced Law Enforcement Dispatch Matteson
 7-9 CAD New-Hire Training Joliet
 19 PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response Arlington Hts.
 30 PowerPhone – Hostage Negotiations Sterling

NOVEMBER

16-20 EMD Certification Frankfort
 18-19 PowerPhone – Advanced Fire Service Dispatch Oregon

DECEMBER

2 PowerPhone – Suicide Intervention Des Plaines



Printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

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