

# DISPATCH 9-1-1 DIALOGUE

WINTER 2009-10

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



During a visit to the Joliet Communication Center, these four students from Joliet Township High School District 204 listen intently to a dispatcher's presentation on when and how to make an emergency 9-1-1 call. See story on page 2.

## A Closer Look at Planned Communications and Command Center

Over the past several months, what was once a distant vision of a new Will County Communications and Command Center has been getting clearer and a little closer on the horizon.

That's because members of the 9-1-1 Board and its advisory committees have been meeting with the project architects – Healy/Bender & Associates, Inc., and AECOM – and because Will County 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved has had countless discussions with representatives of the Will County Public Building Commission, the Will County Board and its committees, county staff members, and many others.

While there still is a lot to be done before construction can begin, the proposed 87,000 square-foot facility is at least closer to reality.

Passage of the necessary state legislation has cleared the way for purchasing a 20-acre site on Caton Farm Road in Crest Hill. But soil borings, three appraisals and an environmental assessment still have to be completed before a specific bid (no more than \$45,000 per acre) for the property can be submitted to its owner – the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Part of the Stateville Correctional Center Farms, this L-shaped tract is located north and east of an existing 10-acre Will County Department of Highways site.

“Proposed as part of an effort to strengthen Will County's emergency preparedness, this new facility will improve the interoperability between police, fire, emergency medical, and other public-safety agencies,” said Figved.

To accomplish this objective, seven of these County agencies plan to consolidate their already interdependent but separate operations into one cost-efficient, centrally located command center.

To be constructed under the auspices of the Will County Public Building Commission, the facility will be occupied by the:



- Will County Emergency Operations Center (20% of the tenant space in the main building) and the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) (11%)
- EMA's radio system (3%)
- Will County Sheriff's dispatch center (9%)

- County Sheriff's Warrants Division (4%)
- Western Will County Communications Center/WESCOM (10%)
- Will County Coroner's Office (11%), and
- Will County ETSB and 9-1-1 administrative staff (33%)

The Communications and Command Center will be:  
• Operated with state-of-the-art two-way radio and data communications equipment – currently referred to as Next Generation technology.  
(Continued on page 2)

## National Public-Safety Telecommunications Week Is April 11-17

Each year since the U.S. Congress acted in 1991, April has been the month when telecommunicators are recognized nationally for their professionalism, work ethic, and devotion to public safety.

Again this year, the second full week of the month – April 11-17 – will be celebrated as National Public-Safety Telecommunications Week.

During this well-deserved week of recognition, the Will County Emergency Telephone System, municipalities, and user agencies (police, fire, and emergency medical) will acknowledge their telecommunicators.



“We always look forward to saying ‘thank you for what you do,’” said Will County 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved. “However, saying it only once a year is not enough.

“That's why we like to do stories about our telecommunicators in *Dispatch Dialogue* throughout the year. And that's why we try to express our gratitude whenever there is an opportunity to do so.”

In addition, the month of April is 9-1-1 Education Month, according to NENA, APCO and the E9-1-1 Institute, which schedule a variety of special events that focus on when and how to dial 9-1-1. ●

## High-School Students Visit Joliet Comm Center

During the last week of October (2009), the Joliet Communication Center was visited by a group of about 15 special education students from Joliet Township High School District 204.

The primary purpose of the visit was to enable the students to learn when and how to dial 9-1-1. But they also had a chance to walk through the center and see Joliet's dispatchers at work.

All of the students are enrolled in District 204's Adaptive Vocational and Academic Center (AVAC), which serves both of the district's campuses (Central and West).

The goal of the AVAC (which is located at the Central campus) is to prepare students with developmental disabilities for a successful transition into adult life. The program includes a comprehensive curriculum that focuses on community experiences, vocational preparation, independent living skills, func-

tional academics, communication and daily living skills.

"These independent living skills are taught both in the classroom and in natural settings – such as the Joliet Communication Center – throughout the community," according to AVAC Coordinator Vicky Soliman.

The students' visit was arranged by one of the AVAC teachers, who had a student tell her class about an experience she had calling 9-1-1.

"The teacher had heard about what we do at the grade schools and thought such 9-1-1 instruction would help her class," said Joliet Dispatcher Denita Draper, who coordinates the PSAP's public education efforts.

"We adapted our program – usually designed for younger children (1st graders) – to meet the needs of the 15-18-year-old teen-age students," she said.

"Our presentation was unique because it

was a variation of our elementary and high-school driver's education programs," added Draper. "These students are not driving, but they are old enough to experience some of the challenges that teen-age drivers may have. And they are passengers in the vehicles their parents and other students drive."

When the students (who were from two different classes) returned to their school, they told their classmates about their experience at the Joliet Comm Center.

As a result, "I have received phone calls from other teachers who want their students to visit us as well," said Draper.

"Our focus never changes," she said. "No matter what age or educational level, our main focus is on education and safety." ●

**Joliet Dispatcher Denita Draper, right, seeks volunteers to practice making an emergency call.**

## New Command Center

(Continued from page 1)

- Sustainable and serve as a model of "green architecture" that uses environmentally friendly materials and energy-saving technology.
- Designed to be functional, safe and efficient, and monitored by state-of-the-art security systems, including video surveillance, electronic access control, and building alarms.
- Designed with our public-safety employees in mind – built with hardened (secure) construction materials and ergonomic consoles (furniture) that will help relieve both physical and emotional stress.
- Considered a critical public-safety facility that will be constructed to meet U. S. Homeland Security and Department of Defense standards – as well as Will County Public Building Commission standards. The center will be able to withstand F4 tornadoes (with winds up to 260 mph) and minimize the impact of a terrorist bomb blast.

The main building will consist of two stories and a lower level (basement), with the tenants occupying 52,000 square feet of office/operational floor space, including 24,000 square feet of dispatch space with 45 consoles.

In addition, it will include 28,000 square feet of shared spaces (reception and fitness areas, classrooms, bathrooms, circulation equipment).

There also will be a separate 22,840-square-foot "out building," which will house vehicles and equipment maintained by the EMA and provide about 220 square feet of additional space for each of the tenants.

Expected to be the 2nd largest communications center in Illinois, it will be completely self-sufficient – with the ability to run for weeks without the availability of any commercial power. ●



**Above:** Students from Joliet Township High School District 204 tour the Joliet Communication Center. They were wowed by all the "TV screens," telephones, and other equipment.

**Left:** Joliet student contemplates what to say next while making a practice 9-1-1 call.



**Right:** These three students were very eager to learn about 9-1-1 – and smile for the photographer. **Bottom right:** Joliet Technical Support Supervisor Patti Deffenbaugh, left, and Dispatcher Denita Draper lead discussion about 9-1-1 and "How It's Done."



# Chief Bennett Retires After 42-Year Career

Plainfield Police Chief Don Bennett retired in December after devoting 42 years to law enforcement.

Chief of the Plainfield Police Department since 1985, Bennett began his career in 1967, when he became a deputy with the Stephenson County Sheriff's Office in Freeport, Ill.

After two years in that position, Chief Bennett served 12 years as a deputy/sergeant with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office in Golden, Col.

He returned to Illinois in 1981, when he was appointed the police chief of the Rockton, Ill., Police Department. Then, four years later, he was named the police chief in Plainfield, where he led the village's police department for the next 24 years.

Bennett also served as Plainfield's interim village administrator for more than nine months in 2008-09.

A founding member of WESCOM, which began 9-1-1 service in 1992, he was honored by the Will County PSAP's Chief Operations Committee in November, 2009.

During this event, Channahon Fire Chief David Riddle thanked Bennett for his "vision, perseverance and guidance."

Another of his peers referred to him as "a class act, a very professional chief."

In addition, Plainfield Village President Michael P. Collins thanked him in the *Village Voice* newsletter:

"His leadership has helped guide the Village during times of change and growth. We are thankful for his dedication, service, and leadership."

Born in Milledgeville, Ill., in 1945, Bennett honorably served four years in the U.S. Air Force (1963-67).

While pursuing his career, Bennett earned a B.S. degree in criminal justice from Metropolitan State College in Denver in 1977 and he was awarded a M.A. degree in criminal justice by Western Illinois University in 1998.

Plainfield's Village Employee of the Year in 1996, Chief Bennett was a member of several professional organizations. For example, he was a member of the Police Chiefs' Association of Will County, serving as its president in 2000. And, since 1982, he was a member of both the Illinois and the International Association of Chiefs.

He and his wife, Patricia, live in Plainfield. They have two adult children and three grandchildren.

**(NOTE:** William Doster, who previously had retired from the Illinois State Police, was named Plainfield's new police chief in November, 2009.) ●



On hand to congratulate retiring Plainfield Police Chief Don Bennett, second from right, were four other co-founders of WESCOM: from left, Retired Lockport Fire Chief Dave Martis and Retired Channahon Police Chief Steve Admonis (holding a special gift of framed patches from the agencies served by WESCOM), as well as Retired Shorewood Police Chief Don Lattin and Plainfield Fire Chief John Eichelberger.

## 9-1-1 Caller Activity Doubles Over 10 Years, But Down in 2009

During the past 10 years, the number of 9-1-1 calls handled by Will County Emergency Telephone System dispatchers has nearly doubled.

The total call volume in 1999 was 163,832 – compared to 312,522 in 2009. However, there were 4.7 percent fewer 9-1-1 calls last year compared to 2008.

Since 1993 – when 107,018 9-1-1 calls were received during the Will County System's first year of operation – caller activity has almost tripled.

Also, consumers have dramatically increased their use of wireless (cellular) phones to place 9-1-1 calls to Will County PSAPs – from 27 percent of all calls in 1999 to 45 percent in 2004 and about 60 percent in 2009.

Conversely, the use of hard- or land-line phones has decreased from 73 percent in 1999 to 40 percent last year.

"This nationwide trend will continue as more and more people switch to wireless and internet-based phones," said Will County 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Steve Figved.

"In response to the changing technology, all U.S. emergency telephone systems will have to upgrade with Next Generation equipment, as we have been doing at our Will County dispatch centers for the past two years."

In 2009, the Joliet Communication Center handled more than a third (34%) of the Will County System's 9-1-1 calls, followed by the Sheriff's Office (26%), WESCOM (18%), and Eastcom (9%).

**(NOTE: 2009 was the first year that Braidwood calls were dispatched by WESCOM. This year, Bolingbrook's 9-1-1 totals will be included in the Will County System totals, while Wilmington calls will be handled by WESCOM.) ●**

### PSAP Caller Activity – 1999-2009

	1999	2004	2009
Braidwood	1,354	1,633	-
Eastcom	15,129	30,642	27,861
Joliet	62,123	94,817	106,698
Lincolnway	11,429	19,768	23,338
Romeoville	6,078	12,099	10,162
Sheriff	34,134	67,001	82,344
Steger	2,717	2,999	3,825
WESCOM*	27,612	54,478	55,717
Wilmington	3,256	2,228	2,577
<b>Totals</b>	<b>163,832</b>	<b>285,665</b>	<b>312,522</b>
Cellular Calls	27%	45%	60%

**Below (top):** Shorewood Police Chief Robert Puleo (standing) commends Chief Bennett and extends best wishes to him and his wife, Patricia. **Below (bottom):** Will County 9-1-1 Board Chairman and Frankfort Fire Chief Jim Grady presents Chief Bennett with an award recognizing his 12 years (1990-2002) on the 9-1-1 Board.



## Dispatch Needs 'Job Well Done' Stories

*Dispatch Dialogue* needs your help.

We are looking for stories about telecommunicators who have done a particularly good job under difficult and/or stressful circumstances.

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 or call (815) 725-1911.

In addition to recognizing exemplary job performance, *Dispatch Dialogue* needs story 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. ●

## Telecommunicator Award Nominations

With April and National Public Safety Telecommunications Week only a couple months away, the 9-1-1 Administrative Office would like to remind PSAP directors and shift supervisors to consider submitting a nomination for Will County Telecommunicator of the Year for 2010.

Presented annually, the award recognizes 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 director/manager of their center**

Nominations should consist of a one-page description of the telecommunicator's qualifications and should be sent to:

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

Please 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 Illinois NENA/APCO Conference in Springfield in October 2010. ●

## 2009-10 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](http://www.willcounty9-1-1.com)

### February

11	SLEA – Enhancing Listening Skills	Glen Ellyn
17-18	PSCMS – Surviving the Comm Center Environment	Northbrook
22-25	APCO – Fire Service Communications	Romeoville
25	Kebcor – Suicide Recognition & Intervention	Westmont

### March

1	Tri-Rivers – School Violence	Frankfort
1-5	EMD Certification Training	Frankfort
5	PowerPhone – Protecting Law Enforcement Responders	Riverside
8	PowerPhone – 9-1-1 Liability	Matteson
10	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	W. Lafayette, IN

### April

5-7	CAD New-Hire Training	Joliet
12	PowerPhone – Active Shooting Response	Matteson
19	PowerPhone – Protecting Law Enforcement Response	Arlington Hts.
20-21	PSCMS – Surviving the Comm Center Environment	St. Charles

### May

18	Tri-Rivers – Managing Generation “y”	Frankfort
28	Tri-Rivers – Criminal Law for Non-Sworn Personnel	Monee

### June

29	PowerPhone – Protecting Law Enforcement Response	Arlington Hts.
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### July

27-29	PSCMS – Supervision & Mgmt. of the Comm Center	Yorkville
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### September

14-15	PSCMS – Surviving the Comm Center Environment	St. Charles
27-Oct.1	EMD Certification Training	Lockport

### November

27-29	EMD Certification Training	Joliet
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**Chief Administrator**, Steve Figved • **Editor/Photographer**, Owen Wavrinek  
 • **Layout Artist**, Susan Campbell • **Printer**, Dynamic Printing Source, Inc.  
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**DISPATCH 9-1-1** DIALOGUE



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Will County Emergency Telephone System  
 2561 W. Division St., Suite 101  
 Joliet, IL 60435

