

A publication of the Virginia Chapter of the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials

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Who's ready for Roanoke!!

Shout us out on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram and let us know how excited you are! You better believe we're excited!-

#vaapcofallconf



A Message from Our President

Virginia APCO Membership,

Since our last newsletter, we've been very busy – all of us together:

Membership, Committees, and the Board. Public safety professionals from all over the Commonwealth continue to work to grow and improve training standards for telecommunicators. We've taught and taken TERT classes to enhance our emergency preparedness and mutual aid. We've advocated for EMD and *used* it to save lives. (Check out *Spotlight* below!)

We've made technical strides for the Chapter as well, including an updated [website](#) and additional [Facebook](#) and

[Twitter](#) outreach. Are you coming to the [Fall Conference](#)? We're excited about an all-new mobile/tablet app to enhance the experience and help you get around. Are you running for one of the five open seats on the Board of Directors? Thanks to new Bylaws and the Policy Manual, ratified by Membership at the Spring Conference, we'll be able to vote electronically!

If it seems like a lot, that's because it is. We did all of this work together – not just one person, not

just the Board. And we did it all while taking 9-1-1 calls, dispatching responders, managing PSAPs and systems, or even enjoying retirement. Let's be proud of what we accomplished in the first half of 2016 and work together to make the second half even better!

Thank you for all you do.

Nicola Tidey,

Virginia APCO President



SAVE THE DATE: UPCOMING EVENTS

Virginia APCO Board Meeting – Face to Face:

August 29, 2016

Southwest Virginia Criminal Justice Academy
330 Bonham Road
Bristol, VA 24201

2016 APCO/NENA Interoperability Conference:

October 25-28, 2016

Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center, Roanoke



Center Spotlight: Dispatching is Not Just an Inside Job:

Culpeper Gets Out and Dispatches in the Field

With so many community events that involve Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue in addition to their “everyday” operations, sometimes a dispatch center can be overwhelmed. To remedy this, the staff of Culpeper has started taking mobile CAD computers to larger events such as parades and air shows to help alleviate extra radio traffic going into the dispatch center. This integrated system allows the dispatch center to continue with daily activity while still

monitoring what the field Communications Officers are doing. The Communications Officers in the field are almost completely self-sufficient, with the exception of dispatching fire and rescue calls.

The process is seamless with little to no issues due to the fact that the mobile CAD is almost an exact copy of CAD that is in the center. If there are any issues, the field Communications Officer can troubleshoot with the center

over a dedicated channel to get the issue resolved. Having field Communications Officers at large events not only helps with smoothly executing the event but it also keeps responders working the event even safer. Culpeper has 26 employees. Culpeper has been a joint communications center since 1998 and is operating on a trunked 800 MHz radio system.

Great job Culpeper for going that extra mile to help make the responders and the community that much safer!

“To the world you may only be a voice on a phone, but to your caller you are a hero!”

Virginia APCO Committee Updates

Membership & Outreach:

The Membership Committee continues to communicate and reach out on behalf of the Board and the Chapter to members and interested parties, both via traditional means (ListServ and PSConnect,) as well as social media, including Facebook. If you have suggestions for newsletter content (Spotlight, Bragging Rights, or anything else!) send a note to Gabe Elias at g Elias@albemarle.org. We're always interested in new or more effective ways to communicate Chapter happenings or solicit input on projects, membership, and policies.

ProCHRT:

The Virginia APCO ProCHRT Committee continues to devote focus to the following topics: expanding Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and improving/modifying training for dispatch personnel in our state. It is hoped the educational outreach to those localities not providing EMD can begin soon and as opportunities to improve and modify training standards present, both for initial and for on-going training, the ProCHRT Committee will take an active

role.

TERT:

The TERT committee is excited to report an excellent turn out to the Tactical Emergency Dispatching/TERT training at the Spring Conference in Virginia Beach this past May. We will be offering the class again as a pre-conference course at the APCO Fall Conference at Hotel Roanoke. The course prepares communications officers for center emergencies such as radio failure and power outages, it prepares them to work in a command post, a tent or at another center. There will be some “hands on in the field” training working with the Communications Unit Leader Class and the Virginia Communications Cache during table top exercises. We hope to see you there! We are currently working on updating the application and the policies and hope to have them published this fall.

Awards:

With a successful awards season recently completed at the

Spring Conference in May, the Awards Committee is taking a well-deserved break before working on refining the awards process for next year. It's never the wrong time to consider your peers for Virginia APCO's annual awards. If you know of an individual or team deserving recognition, make notes now so you don't forget!

Bylaw/Policy:

The Bylaws and Policy Committee is finalizing documentation updates to the Virginia APCO Bylaws and Policy Manual as adopted at the May meeting during the Spring Conference.

Nominating:

The Nominating Committee is compiling and soliciting nominations for elections to the Virginia APCO Board of Directors at the Fall Conference. If you are interested in running for one of two Director-at-large seats, Treasurer, Executive Council Delegate, or Vice President, please contact Rich at TroshakR@chesterfield.gov.



VIRGINIA CHAPTER

We're on the Web!

www.virginia-apco.org

Find Virginia APCO on
Facebook and Twitter!!



*"Always remember that it
is your voice in the
darkness that gives hope
to those who really need
it."*

Bragging Rights!



Bedford County 9-1-1-

On the morning of May 29th 2016, Bedford County 9-1-1 dispatcher Michael Miller received a 9-1-1 call from a family member of a two year old boy who had been found face down in a lake where the family was vacationing. After establishing that the child had been removed from the water and was not breathing, instinct kicked in and Miller went right into EMD with the mother of the child giving her step-by-step CPR instructions.

Eventually the caller said those two little words that cause every dispatcher in this position to release the breath that they did not know they were holding, "He's back!" It is because of Miller's training and quick action that this family is still whole. After a quick trip to the emergency room, the two year is back at home with his family in North Carolina.

Michael was selected as the Telecommunicator of the Year by the Blue Ridge

Emergency Services Council and has been submitted at the state level which will be announced at the EMS Symposium later this year!

Great job Michael! APCO wishes you the best of luck and thanks you for the excellent job you did utilizing EMD!

Legislative Actions- DCJS Training Standards

Virginia APCO continues to advocate on behalf of public safety telecommunicators for changes in the DCJS "Compulsory Minimum Training Standards for Dispatchers."

Where We've Been

The last newsletter focused on the regulatory framework public comment period, which involved the Virginia Administrative Code sections that define DCJS' authority to require training and define its broad strokes. That process was followed by a public comment period on the actual content, the DCJS training manual. VA APCO, with lots of great effort and teamwork from members across the state, submitted substantial recommendations for changes to the manual and anxiously awaits the next step in that process. At the May Board Meeting in

Virginia Beach, many members and other interested parties participated in an extensive conversation with a DCJS representative so that we could all understand the regulatory and training manual processes better and help communicate our respective needs back and forth.

Where We're Going

One of the main concerns expressed by Members and peers across Virginia during the regulatory comment period was including in-service training hours. Conscientious telecommunicators and agencies everywhere undertake ongoing training and review to better serve the public and we believe this professional behavior should be reflected and required in the only currently

required telecommunicator training standard in Virginia. Virginia APCO is advocating for required training hours that are both reasonable in number and achievable by small and large agencies and departments alike. In-service training should be offered and allowed by sanctioned satellite DCJS Academies, as well as available online, thus meeting the professional need while limiting travel and cost, though some justified cost is always part of a new undertaking.

Stay tuned for updates as we move together through the regulatory process and back into the training manual update. Change isn't always fast or easy, but if we move through the process together and stick to a few guiding principles, we'll get where our profession and our customers need us.



Interoperability/ SIEC Update:

Virginia's Statewide Interoperability Executive Council, or SIEC, has a new charter, new energy, and is being rebuilt by the Interoperability Program Manager, Tom Gagnon, working with a new Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Curtis Brown. The SIEC will help guide Virginia's interoperability efforts, including FirstNet and public safety broadband, but also traditional voice and data interoperability. Virginia led the nation developing interoperability governance many years ago and Virginia APCO is excited to be part of the continued tradition of interoperability leadership in the Commonwealth.

Thanks to all the Members who responded to our request for an Alternate Representative. President Nicola Tidey has appointed John Powers of Roanoke City to represent VA APCO along with Vice President Gabe Elias on the SIEC. Virginia APCO will take its seat, along with many sister organizations and public safety professionals from around the Commonwealth, at the first SIEC meeting in August.

Telecommunicator Central

911 Public Education: Is It Important for Citizens to Know What We Do?

The normal everyday citizen has an assumption of what 9-1-1 is from what they see on TV and in the movies. They believe that we have their exact location 100% of the time, all of their contact information and that a response will be at their location within seconds. That obviously is far from the truth. These are some of the reasons we need to educate the public, to a certain extent, on how we work, why we need what we ask, assure them that we are local and that we do not personally staff the ambulance ourselves after we get off the phone, among other things.

There are several ways that public education can be accomplished. The most common and easiest way is to simply explain what you are doing on the phone with the caller, if you are able to without delaying service. This assures the caller that you are doing what they need as well as teaching them our processes; giving them an understanding of what we truly do. Another effective way is getting out into the public and doing community

events face to face with the citizens. This gives you a chance to meet people that you may talk to often and they can see that call takers and communications officers are not at a large call center somewhere out in the Midwest. This can also be an opportunity to give our 911 related items (swag as these items are commonly called) and literature to further enlighten the public. "Swag" can be a fun and interactive tool to help inform and expand on what we do, especially with children. Not all agencies can utilize swag due to financial constraints, but it could be a good idea to look into and even providing pamphlets or brochures can be helpful in boosting public education. A third means to providing education is through tours and visits of your agency, if your local policies and procedures allow. This usually revolves around Boy Scout troops, church groups and school fields that focus on educating children. Additionally, to have a more adult centered program, you can host a type of dispatch citizen's academy or include a dispatch aspect into a law enforcement citizen's academy if your local law enforcement agencies conduct them. The citizen's academies can be a huge commitment for

your agency involving large resources that not all agencies can provide but can provide a more in depth route to showing citizens what we do.

These are just a few ideas to help promote public education in your area. Enlightening citizens of some of our job functions can help alleviate a lot of problems that callers may give us and in addition to our training can help us be the most proficient and effective communications officers we can be!

For further information contact Richard Moylan by email at RMOYLAN@CULPEPERCOUNTY.GOV



Legislative Actions – Department of Labor Standard Occupational Classifications Update

Virginia APCO continues to coordinate with APCO International on changes to the federal labor classification for telecommunicators, supporting International's stance that telecommunicators should be moved from "Administrative" to "Protective Services" with the rest of public safety. This is fast-moving and you can find more information and background at APCO's website [here](#). Virginia APCO will communicate immediately any feedback or updates from International on the best, most productive way to move forward and communicate our strong support for reclassification.