

MISSOURI APCO

Newsletter

PRESIDENTS CORNER



By: President Zachary Dykes

The tagline of my office for the past few years has been Member Focused, Change Oriented, Member Driven. It is the goal of our Board that every action we take benefits either our membership or our profession. It is with this in mind that I set a goal of increasing the involvement and engagement of our membership during 2024.

As a result of this goal, we have reorganized and renamed the ProCHRT Committee to the Membership and Engagement Committee. While the committee has the same goals and deliverables as in previous years, it has also been tasked with conducting several engagement projects throughout the year. These projects, similar to our past Christmas in July competitions, will engage our members and their agencies and benefit their local communities.

Beyond the involvement in these projects, we need your help planning them! The Membership and Engagement Committee is a great way to begin committee work at the state or national level! Most of the work is done through email and can be worked on during downtime (don't hit me) and the full committee meets quarterly or as needed. Committee work is a great way to branch out and develop your peer network as well as make lifelong friends. Beyond that, I know that YOU have the potential to make a big impact.

If you're interested in trying out committee work and you believe that the Membership and Engagement Committee is where you would like to start, I encourage you to reach out to either myself or current committee Chair, Roger Martin.

If you're interested in doing committee work on the National level, volunteer sign ups are currently underway with a deadline of April 1st. You can learn more about the various national committees <https://www.apcointl.org/community/committees/> Remember, APCO is a member driven organization. This means that involvement is key. Missouri has always been a leader when it comes to Public Safety Communications - APCO is a direct result of a call to action issued by one Missouri Communications Officer. The only way that we can continue to lead and influence is through developing our membership and preparing you to make your impact.

RPL AND HOW IT CHANGES YOU

Chelsea Finn Jasper County Emergency Services



My name is Chelsea Finn, and I am the Training Coordinator at Jasper County Emergency Services in Carthage, MO. I have been a 911 Telecommunicator for almost twelve years and I have been a trainer for ten years. I started dispatching in 2012 to get into the Criminal Justice field so I could become a Juvenile Officer. However, I fell in love with dispatching. About a year after I started dispatching, I became a trainer. I was with Branson Police Department for three years, and then moved to Springdale AR and worked for their Police Department for a year. I moved back home in 2016 and started working with JASCO. I worked hard with a wonderful team and have been able to advance my career in dispatching.

I learned that 911 dispatching is a career and it can lead to so many different opportunities. I became interested in the Registered Public-Safety Leader through APCO a few years ago when I decided I wanted to advance my career, and hopefully become a director of a 911 center one day. I had heard wonderful things about the program from the instructors to the classes, and the lifelong connections you would have with your classmates. I was told of an opportunity to apply for the first MOAPCO RPL Scholarship in the Spring of 2022. I was honored to receive the scholarship!

The RPL Program consists of six leadership/management classes and a year long service project that must be approved. The project must be something that benefits the 911 industry in either your region, state, or the nation. Now most of my classmates were trying to get the reclassification of their dispatchers to First Responders. My project was a little different than the rest. I have been apart of MOAPCOs historian committee for a couple of years now. I was approached by our President, Zachary Dykes, with an idea for my service project. It was to go through years and years of boxes of MOAPCO and APCO paperwork and scan it and archive into a database. Something we can use on our MOAPCO website to share our growth with everyone. I was very excited for this project, and I am very grateful for Zach and Roger Martin's assistance this year with accomplishing it.

This project gave me the opportunity to learn so much about MOAPCO that I was not aware of! I read so many documents and meeting minutes from about the 1970s. All the information still dances through my head. It's so much information to sort through and absorb and it is exciting. I was able to put together a timeline of our Presidents, Vice Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries etc. I have scanned all these documents and put them on a thumb drive that I will be giving to Zach to help share the knowledge and the growth of MOAPCO to our members.

Not only did the RPL teach me about MOAPCO, but it taught me better leadership skills. Better ways to communicate with my team. Better ways to communicate with my supervisors. It gave me some great insight on changes that I needed to make with my training program at my center to help us improve. The biggest thing the RPL program has done, was help me to see some of the struggles our industry still faces. One of the common struggles is support that our dispatchers need. Mental Health support. Because of the RPL program, I am getting my Master's in Clinical Psychology and I want to be a counselor for First Responders. There are not enough counselors and there are definitely not enough counselors that can truly understand what a First Responder is going through.

MOAPCO has truly changed my career path and my life goals when they awarded me the RPL Scholarship. I will be forever grateful to them and this amazing opportunity. I truly hope that MOACPO can offer this opportunity to other 911 First Responders who want to make a difference in our career.

FEZZICK AND THE CENTER

Brad England
Crawford County 911



The constant clarion sounds of 911 calls reverberates through the communications center. Dispatchers race to the phones. It's another heavy call. The call volume can be relentless. Structure fires, vehicle accidents, deaths, shootings, stabbings, and on and on. It's no different than at any other 911 answering point. However, at Crawford County 911, we have a fur covered stress reducer named Fezzick.

Fezzick lives full time at our center. He has a Designated Service Number and an ID card. He at times can be the laziest employee, or the hardest working. That hard work entails being there for the dispatcher during the aforementioned tough 911 calls.

Studies about dogs in the workplace have shown that the animal serves as a buffer to the impact of stress. More specifically, because staff can be reticent to seek help and make use of the resources available to them to reduce their stress, the integration of well-being initiatives (dogs) into employee work routines is key to experiencing a reduction in workplace stress.

The right dog for the environment is essential. They cannot be a biter, scratcher, or aggressive in any way. A medium to small size is best. Short hair helps keep them and their environment clean.

Green space is important. We have a large grassy area where Fezzick can do his business. We also are fortunate to have a trail next to a stream, where the dog and dispatcher can get some exercise.

Just like with any employee, there are issues. Such as the joy of picking up poop from a sidewalk shrubbery area. The joys of gaseous emissions in the office. The joys of barking when some cop knocks on the door.

While there are drawbacks to having a pet in the office, we feel the positives outweigh the negatives. He is a constant presence for when a dispatcher needs him. Most visitors light up when they see him. He forces the dispatchers to get up and exercise with him.

Our canine is a line item on the budget. Vet visits, baths, food, etc. It is a minimal cost for maximum value to the team, especially since 911 comm centers nationwide are pivoting to provide better mental health care for their teams. If anyone has questions about a dog in the comm center, I can be reached at 573-775-4911 x 3. Or come see us at the Spring conference!



MISSOURI TEAMMATES IN ACTION

Missouri State Highway Patrol – Troop C

On September 11, 2023, due to a what appeared to be a malicious attack on the REJIS system (a provider of data processing services and online information systems for law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, correctional institutions, and probation and parole agencies at the Federal, State, county, and local levels), agency's law enforcement printers were re-routed to Troop C. This action accounted for well over 120 agencies having their administrative messages and hit confirmation requests/responses forwarded to Troop C Communications.

For several days that followed, Troop C Communications personnel maintained normal operations for the Patrol in addition to reviewing numerous administrative messages and confirmation requests, contacting the originating agencies by phone for confirmations and sending appropriate replies, all while working with reduced staffing. Patrol personnel were also tasked with checking individuals being released from holding facilities for outstanding warrants to comply with Jake's Law. Communications personnel went above and beyond their normal duties to assist local agencies during this shutdown, performing their duties in a professional and expeditious manner to ensure no interruption of service occurred to all agencies involved.

In recognition of the outstanding actions of these first responders and communications professionals, MOAPCO is pleased to present them with a Missouri Teammates in Action.

MISSOURI TEAMMATES IN ACTION

Chief Operator Robert Schrage

Assistant Chief Operator David Axelrod

Assistant Chief Operator Regina "Jenny" Cruise

Assistant Chief Operator Christopher Feilner

Communications Operator III John "Pat" Callihan

Communications Operator III Trevor Dunn

Communications Operator III Vincent Gasperson

Communications Operator III Leslie Goedecke

Communications Operator III Karen Olejniczak

Communications Operator III Heather Thomas

Communications Operator III Kayleigh Troske

Communications Operator Trainee Rhonda Ausmus

Communications Operator Trainee Jennifer Durbin

Communications Operator Trainee Nicole Wollbrinck



MISSOURI TEAMMATES IN ACTION

Lawrence County Emergency Services operators received multiple 9-1-1 calls following a passenger vehicle crash into multiple motorcycle riders on Highway 39 near Aurora, Missouri. The crash resulted in immediate fatalities. Supervisor Mareth, Operator Wells, and Operator Norton worked together quickly to get first responders enroute while a flood of information was coming into the 911 center. Callers reported 6-7 motorcycles hit, one of the motorcycles was on fire, at least 2 people were killed, and debris from the vehicles and the victims covered the roadway. These team members communicated with and supported one another during a call, that not only sounded traumatic, but turned out to be one of the most tragic events that we've worked in quite some time. They dispatched four fire departments, two different ambulance services, assisted with getting helicopters dispatched to the scene, and three law enforcement agencies. With nonstop radio traffic, the team guided everyone to the scene and continued to manage calls from loved ones wanting to know if someone they knew was involved. The event lasted several hours resulting in 4 motorcyclist fatalities and 7 critical injuries. Director Bonnie Witt-Schulte shared, "Our team did not stop taking care of the first responders and community. The Lawrence County emergency community is grateful and blessed to have this team as part of their 9-1-1 family." Missouri APCO echoes the agency's pride for what this team did during this critical incident and what they do every time they are behind the headset. We are pleased to recognize them as Missouri Teammates in Action.



MISSOURI TEAMMATES IN ACTION

Operations Floor Supervisor Sarah Mareth

Public Safety Operator Kelsee Norton

Public Safety Operator Jeannie Wells



COLLECTIBLES ON SELL AT WWW.MOAPCO.ORG
SAVE ON SHIPPING & GET GREAT DEALS AT MPSCC



WHAT APCO MEANS TO ME!

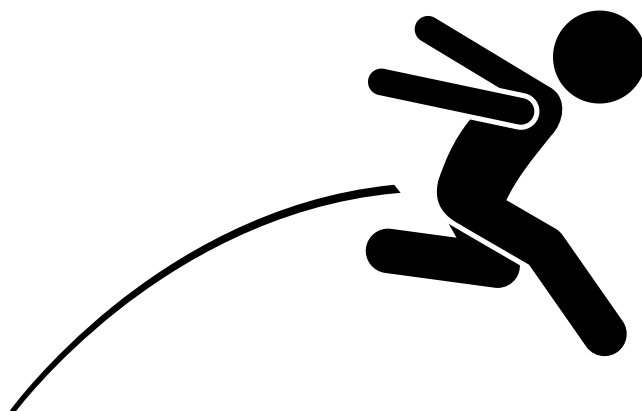
Angie Stiefernann is an Ambassador to the Central Region for the board of Missouri APCO. To pay the bills she is a Communications Supervisor at the Jefferson City Police Department.

What APCO means to me? Being a Chapter board member, I can understand how really easy it is to be involved as a member. If you want to be involved, but aren't sure how, just express your interest to a board member and eventually we'll find a place for you! I love the connections I've made from all over the state."



SO - WHAT DOES APCO MEAN?

Exceptional training, leadership opportunity, a professional network and amazing people, a toolbox, a sounding board of like-minded people, personal and professional development, help to develop ideas within your agency, industry standards for technology, funding, legislation, and a way to make a difference. Like Angie says, APCO is a place where any public safety communications professional has a place - has a family - has room to learn and grow. Many thanks to my friends - made along the way - for their comments. That's what APCO means to us! We're not keeping any secrets folks - it can mean that to you, too! ~ **Roger Martin**



LEAP OF FAITH

BONNIE WITT-SCHULTE LAWRENCE COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES 911

Talk about taking a “leap of faith” in May of 2021 I choose to retire from position as 911 Director from the City of Monett to take on the role as Executive Director of Lawrence County Emergency Services 911. The primary objective of my new position - - do everything it takes to establish an organization from the ground up AND oversee a 6 million dollar building and communications tower project!

Although I had been involved in 911 for 27 years this process was such a learning experience! There were many challenges along the way. But I am so proud to report that on September 27th, 2023, we took our first 911 call as Lawrence County Emergency Services 911 in our new facility.

Our center is an 8,250 square foot FEMA rated facility with six 911 workstations. To ensure continuous operations it includes a UPS system that can if needed power the building for 90 minutes and a generator located within a FEMA rated shelter that will power the entire building for 72 hours. The design includes two “quiet” rooms that allow for telecommunicators to utilize the rooms to decompress. We have incorporated numerous sensory items within the rooms to promote mental well-being and a stress-free environment. Additionally, we have four administrative offices that are an extension of the command center. We also have a full-functioning kitchen, showers, locker areas and large training room.

Throughout the process we have learned to be flexible and approach each roadblock with the attitude of “we can figure this out”. The end goal has always been the same - to provide excellent service to the community and the responders we work with; while continuing to keep this team of 911 professionals together no matter where we landed.

Personnel are enjoying having their own space - there is truly a sense of thankfulness amongst all of us. We know how very lucky we are to have had the community, and people such as the County Commission, the City of Mount Vernon, and the Lawrence County Emergency Services Board members support this project. We do not take it for granted and it is our intent to provide our very best to citizens and visitors of Lawrence County. We understand we are usually talking to an individual on one of their worst days; we know what is at stake and that our actions change lives. It is a job that not everyone can do - we have one of the very best teams and a lot of times they go unnoticed because they are someone that only heard and not seen. Although to most this new center is just a building - it is so much more to all of us because it is our second home and we could not ask for a better place to come to work each day.



UPCOMING TRAINING EVENTS

COURSE DATE/TIME LOCATION REGISTER AND INFORMATION

MO Public Safety Comm Conference

March 3-6, 2024

0800-1700 Daily

Union Station

St. Louis

<https://mpsc911.org/>

NENA 9-1-1 Center Supervisor Program March 19-21, 2024 0830-1700 Daily St Francois Co JCC Park Hills

<https://www.nena.org/events/register.aspx?id=1798846&itemid=800fe0ee-08f8-497d-8ef5-50e81d4e2293>

Center Training Officer (CTO) Prgrm

April 2-4, 2024

0830-1700 Daily

St Francois Co JCC

Park Hills

<https://www.nena.org/events/register.aspx?id=1798859&itemid=62c9388f-d843-4a8f-9ef7-956a4c771162>

APCO PST-1 Basic (40-Hour) April 29-May 2, 2024 0700-1800 Daily Jefferson City Police Dept.

<https://airtable.com/appEDtDdy8syCynwS/shrrL7VLGOIqal8As>

PSC Course Basic

(40-Hour)

May 6-10, 2024

0800-1700 Daily

PSTC - MSU Camdenton

<https://aceware.missouristate.edu/wconnect/ace/ShowSchedule.awp?>

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