

# COMMUNICATIONS CORNER

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## SEASONS CHANGE

Autumn is upon us and with the change in season our Center's call volume will fluctuate as well. We all know that generally the colder it is outside, the fewer calls for service we receive. Fortunately (or unfortunately if you prefer the bitter cold), there should still be some "nice" fall days ahead. With the students all moving back into town, we can expect increased call volume if not simply due to the fact that Madison's population "grows" by several thousand as students return to school each year.

The return of the UW school year also means home football games at Camp Randall. Those games usually lead to a greatly increased workload for us working the floor. Please remember, these games actually do come to an end. Eventually it will get colder and our call volume will drop, allowing us all to reflect upon the previous year and "study up" on policy & procedure during downtime.

Most important, during this fall, we are preparing ten new Communicators to join the ranks which will reduce the number of "holes" in our current work schedule. This means less mandatory overtime (which could be a good or bad thing depending on your preference). Either way you look at it, adding ten new Communicators to our current staff can only help the Department in many ways, not just in alleviating overtime. Vacation, holiday, and comp time should be much more easy to use once the new hires have successfully completed their call taking & Data certifications. Another plus for most of us is with the new additions, there will be more opportunity for radio channel time for those certified

to staff those channels. We should also be able to perform some cross-training to interested people who want to learn a new radio discipline!

Winter will be upon us soon enough and this would be a great time to "brush up" on your winter call taking skills. Check with your supervisor if you have any questions or need a refresher on handling certain winter weather-related events (such as how to handle the 20th call about the same vehicle stuck in the snow bank). This would also be a good time to review EMD Protocols 8 (CO poisoning), 20 (Cold Exposure) and EFD Protocol 72 (relating to the inevitable ice rescue calls we will receive).

This is also a great time to review the .ID file under "Winter" for a list of the winter parking regulations for many of the municipalities we serve.

Let's all hope for a safe, relatively uneventful transition from fall into winter!



## H1N1 INFORMATION



The flu season is upon us and this year we have the added pleasure of dealing with not only the “normal” flu outbreaks that happen during the fall & winter months, but we also get to deal with the possibility of a “Swine Flu” pandemic.

In preparation for the possible pandemic, we have “turned on” the SRI Evaluation tool in Pro-QA. This tool allows us to collect data for the health care community to monitor trends of possible outbreaks of “the flu”. For the latest informa-

tion on H1N1, you can refer to many official websites including the CDC at: <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/>

The CDC website recommends the following actions we can take to minimize issues in dealing with a possible pandemic and “the flu” in general:

**Stay informed.** Influenza is thought to **spread mainly person-to-person** through coughing or sneezing of infected people. **Take everyday actions to stay healthy.**

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

- Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

**Follow public health advice** regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures. Find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.

## NEW COMMUNICATORS

A group of 10 new Communicators began their career with Public Safety Communications on Monday September 14th. Each one will go through an intensive, several-week long academy prior to be released to the operations floor to sit with a dedicated Communications Training

Officer (CTO). They will remain with CTOs for several more weeks before being certified to sit alone at various positions in the Center. Please give a warm welcome to our latest staff members: Joshua Berg, Amie Brown, Hunter Hill, Marlis Lambson, Lindsey Lukens, Ashley

Sanders, Stephanie Sejut, Nicole Smith, Ashley Sweeney, and Chor Vang.

We also had our second Intern, Andrew Henter join the new hires for the majority of classroom training!

Welcome everyone to the PSC family!

## TRAINING UPDATE

The Center is in the process of recertifying those that require it. This includes CPR, EMD, EFD, and TIME system recertifications. We will continue to attempt to perform these recerts with minimal impact to floor operations.

The new hires are “on the floor”, but will remain out of

the count until they are certified at one of the Center’s positions. We are doing something different with this class to alleviate the backlog of calls that would happen if we had 10 new call takers on the floor at once.

This year, half of the class is starting out with call taking & Data training as usual, but the

other five will begin at a radio position instead!

A training class of this size has never taken place before and there will be some “growing pains” that we will inevitably need to go through.

You may spend a few extra days call taking and/or a few extra days at a radio position.

Please keep in mind that it will only be for a few weeks of your life and will come to an end.

Then, once the new hires are properly trained, they will give us some “breathing room” that will afford us the opportunity to take some well-deserved time off!

# REMODEL UPDATE

There have been many changes since the last newsletter in reference to the Center remodel project. Here's a quick rundown of the latest info:

We have secured some additional space in the City Engineering Annex (located adjacent to room 109). Their personnel should be completely move out of that space by 12/31/09. Beginning on or about 1/11/2010, the construction project will begin.

The old City Annex space will be set up as a temporary Comm Center where we will work while renovation takes place in room 109. We won't have to put up with much noise since they will not be demo-ing anything close to our temporary workspaces. This should save some time on

when the project will reach completion. Nevertheless, it will still be April or May of 2010 before the remodel of room 109 is complete.

Quite a bit of work will be taking place besides the installation of new consoles. First, the old annex space will need to be prepared for use as a temporary Comm Center. That means HVAC, electrical, and connectivity improvements need to be done in that space prior to shifting operations there. After the temporary Comm Center is online, we will shift all operations over and demolition and remodeling of room 109 can begin!

Once we have returned to the newly-remodeled room 109, the temporary Comm Center will be taken

down and the space will be remodeled to house Support Services.

Samples of the color scheme were available in the Comm Center to review. These were selected by a group of Communicators some time ago but since it's been so long since the decision was made, Xybix (the console vendor) has shipped us a sample board with the console color scheme on it to refresh our memories.

Things will seem to be moving slowly, but at least we will be moving forward with the project. There are several entities that are involved in the project and considering the scope of this remodel, it is important that we "get it right" the first time. This means working slowly, but surely through the design phases of the project.

Once all of the work is complete, I'm sure it will be worth what little inconvenience experienced during the construction phase of the project.

If you have any questions, please direct them to the current project manager, Chad Fleck at [fleck@co.dane.wi.us](mailto:fleck@co.dane.wi.us).

# CRITICALL IS COMING!

Criticall is a wonderful piece of computer software designed to test prospective new hires on how they may perform. The software consists of key-boarding, decision-making, call summarization, cross-referencing, and most importantly, multi-tasking testing! This software will help us "weed out" potential new hires that can't perform the basic tasks of our jobs. It's been a long time in coming, but we finally have a way available to us to capture "the best" of the available hiring pool!

I recently had the chance to try out Criticall myself and I was impressed. The software seems to cover most of our job functions and runs the new hires through various scenarios. At the same time they are doing scenarios, the software gives them other tasks to perform such as dispatching a call while still listening to a caller report something. It was simply awesome!

If you would like to learn more about Criticall, you can check them out on the web at: <http://www.criticall911.com>.



# CAD Analyst

## 2nd Quarter 2009 Call Stats

All Incoming: 112,919

All Outgoing: 31,655

Wireless 9-1-1: 28,294

Landline 9-1-1: 11,985

VOIP 9-1-1: 147

Other 9-1-1: 446

Non 9-1-1: 77,317

Average answer time: 7.38 sec

Average for 911 calls: 6.50 sec

We are pleased to introduce new employee James Holmes who started 10/12/2009. Jim is our CAD Analyst in Support Services and his duties include supporting PSCC staff and member agencies with data requests and providing information for quality assurance. Jim's background includes system administration, user support, training, report generation and data conversion in the public and private sectors.

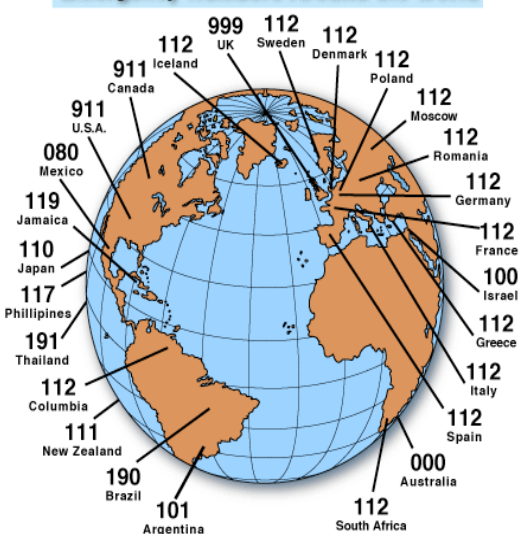
He recently completed a degree from MATC's "Network Security Specialist" program that included computer forensics, technical reporting and intrusion detection & prevention. Besides computers Jim is also interested in things mechanical, scientific or on fire. He is Wildland Firefighter trained and volunteers on prescribed

burn crews with The Nature's Conservancy. He helps maintain Waterloo's circa 1911 CW Parker carousel, and enjoys supporting the Marshall Science Olympiad team where both his children have been state champions in their disciplines. He has clearance from the Federal BATF and is licensed by the Illinois DNR for fireworks/explosives and has worked many regional municipal fireworks shows, Black Wolf games, homecomings, and even wedding receptions.

Please take a minute, or two, and help Jim feel welcome here and we can begin to put his many skills to work for our organizations.



## Emergency Numbers Around the World



DISPATCH Monthly graphic

# Data Base Coordinator

Our Center's Data Base Coordinator position is currently vacant. A search for a replacement will begin as soon as possible.

This position was previously filled by Rick Hammond, who will be assuming other roles within the Department.

If your agency has anything that you would normally forward to Rick Hammond (the Data Base Coordinator), please route your requests and information to Support Services Supervisor Chad Fleck at [fleck@co.dane.wi.us](mailto:fleck@co.dane.wi.us).



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We're on the web!  
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Just search for: Dane County Public Safety Communications when logged into Facebook!

*"The mission of the Dane County Public Safety Communications Department is to provide a fast, effective communications link between the citizens of Dane County requesting public safety services and the public safety agencies charged with providing emergency and non-emergency services to those citizens."*

# FROM THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE . . .

A mom hearing an intruder try to break into her home. A dad who just crashed his car on the way home from work. A family at a neighbor's house because their home is filling with smoke.

great pride in being the first link in a very important chain. Everyday, they make a difference in the lives of our family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbors.

day of the year, to make sure help gets to those who need it. As County Executive, I am incredibly appreciative of the good work they do for our nearly half-million citizens.

Regardless of the emergency, when Dane County citizens call 911 for help, the compassionate care and prompt service they receive from Dane County Public Safety Communications is second to none.

The work our 911 dispatchers do is difficult and unpredictable -- they never know what they'll find on the other end of the phone.

Public safety is a partnership and I know our team of 911 dispatchers take

Thanks to the direction and guidance of our terrific new 911 Director John DeJung, we're moving forward with important improvements like a new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, Interoperable Radio Communications Network, and automated technology to reduce the number of non-emergency calls that come into the Center. In addition to these upgrades, we're training a great new class of dispatchers with better training facilities.

Our 911 team stands ready 24 hours a day, every



## PSC Matters

The work of the Dane County Public Safety Communications Center really does matter. Some recent heroics have been recorded that remind us of just how important 9-1-1 (and those who make it work) are to those in need...just since summer started:

June 4 - Camille Jiminez provided pre-arrival instructions that helped save the life of a man in Oregon.

July 6 - Chris Regenauer provided pre-arrival instructions and helped deliver a baby in Cottage Grove.

July 12 - Lisa Hayes provided

pre-arrival instructions and helped deliver a baby boy in Madison.

August 15 - Frank Washa properly employed EFD and helped a mother and child trapped in a burning building.

September 27 - Lisa Hayes provided pre-arrival instructions and helped a caller save the life of her 90 year grandfather who was choking.

The continuous improvement efforts continue with both "little" efforts and "big" projects.

Staffing/Training: The training and quality assurance

programs are in full swing. Ten new Communicators were hired in September and ten are still with us, having "graduated" from 8 weeks in the classroom and moved onto the operations floor for on-the-job training with our very important (and sometimes undersung) Certified Training Officers. 10 more trainees should be joining us in early 2010 as we seek to come up to the staffing levels recommended in the Matrix, Inc. audit and recommended for funding by the County Executive (it looks like the County Board will agree).

## PSC Matters

QA and accreditation: Quality assurance checks are done by the Support Services Division staff for EMS and Fire calls and dispatches and are done for general 9-1-1 calls. Efforts to move to a standardized law enforcement "protocol" and a quality assurance program to go with it are continuing. Standardized and consistent training, procedures, and quality assurance are the engine of the continuous improvement that PSC is in the midst of. As we move forward on those fronts, we hope to become accredited by the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch and are using the CALEA accreditation program as a guideline for overall dispatch center excellence. As we move closer to meeting the accreditation standards of CALEA, we may or may not choose to become accredited (costs money!), but we absolutely will at least have the improvements under our belt.

The radio replacement project is moving ahead surely. By the time you read this, we hope that we'll be on the cusp of a final design and be close to being able to sign a contract with Motorola to begin the 2 years or so that it will take to build the system out. Look for contract signing in the first quarter of 2010. This is complex work and we are being very careful to cross every "T" and dot every "I"...have to given the huge investment costs that are involved.

Today (as I write this) is also the start of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) consulting engagement. RCC Consulting, Inc. has been hired to help us determine what the scope of the project should be, what best practices are out there regarding combining CAD, mobile dispatching and records management systems (RMS), and very roughly what some of the options might cost. Following this initial consulting, we'll embark with efforts to write an RFP for whatever scope we collectively settle on and then seek a qualified vendor to build a new or upgraded CAD system (and related systems, if indicated in this due diligence effort we're engaging in now with Dane County agencies). Like the radio system, this system replacement will take a while to accomplish...certainly won't be done in 2010.

And, a favorite project of anyone who works in PSC...Center remodeling...looks to begin in mid-January and be done by the time the summer heats up.

Finally, we've re-doubled our efforts to do public education on the "correct use of 9-1-1". Our efforts are being aided by some "good press" (last night and tonight) and in partnership with Madison Police and Fire and the Dane County Sheriff's Office. Between the bunch of us, we are trying to get the word out to kids, seniors and everyone in between, that calling 9-1-1 is just fine (don't hesitate; "when in doubt; call 9-1-1") if you think you need a visit from police, fire, or EMS personnel. On the other hand,

let us do our jobs and ask our questions...and, don't call 9-1-1 to check on how to cook your Thanksgiving turkey (actually happened at another 9-1-1 Center) or your holiday ham. So, if you learn of opportunities anywhere in the county that would help spread the word on the subject, let us know. We have (and are creating more) handouts for community meetings and the like.

Happy Holidays,

JED  
Dane County 9-1-1 Director