



Iowa's Newsletter for Emergency Communications

The Iowa Telecommunicator

The First Line of Defense in an Emergency



Volume 1, Issue 2

April 2007

<http://www.state.ia.us/ilea/>

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Looking for News Articles!

Please share your stories for the Iowa Telecommunicator newsletter! Whether you want to tell about great calls, innovative ideas, retirements, new jobs, remodeling projects, send them to me, at nancy911ilea@yahoo.com.

TRAINING

If you are interested in hosting ILEA training, please contact Nancy or Carolyn at ILEA, 515-242-5357, or email nancy911ilea@yahoo.com



Mark Murphy has taken the helm at Dubuque County Communications. Mark spent ten years dispatching for Dubuque County prior to joining the Dubuque Fire Department in 1998. He most recently served as a lieutenant and paramedic specialist instructor on the Dubuque Fire Department. He has also served as a ski patrol at Sundown Mountain, a captain with the Asbury Fire Department, and as a substitute teacher.



Lieutenant Scott Locker has been appointed to the position of Polk County Communications Supervisor. Scott has been a deputy with Polk County for fifteen years. For several years he has managed Polk County's computer systems, so he has worked closely with the communications center in that capacity for many years.



Steven Ray is the new center manager for Des Moines and Atlantic State Patrol Communications Centers. Steven began his career dispatching at Boone Sheriff's Office in 1988, just two weeks before his 18th birthday. He moved from there to Des Moines State Patrol since 1995. He was promoted to lead operator there in 2003.

Note: Scott Locker received the John P. Stark Award for top shooter when he graduated from ILEA in 1993. The Stark Award is named for former Story County Sheriff John T. Stark, Steven Ray's grandfather.



Mark Konrad

Mark Konrad is the new trainer for the Technology Services Bureau. He is filling the position left by Pauline Van Wyk who retired in December after nearly thirty-five years with the Iowa Department of Public Safety. Mark has worked in the Polk County Sheriff's Communications Center for the past fifteen years. He has been a trainer and a lead operator. Good luck, Mark! We look forward to hearing lots from you in the future.

Technology Services Bureau will be moving in April

The former telephone numbers will transfer automatically for a short time. The 800 number will remain the same: 800-362-2297. The new local numbers will be (voice) 515-725-6620 and (fax) 515-725-6201. New address: Technology Services Bureau, 215 East 7th Street. Des Moines IA 50319-0045

Ellen Copeland Retires After Thirty- three Years



Ellen Copeland retired in February after thirty-three years dispatching for the Dallas County Sheriff's Office Communications Center. In her tenure, Ellen worked for nine sheriffs. We wish her all the best in her retirement after many years of saving lives and property.



Pauline Rentschler

Pauline Rentschler, communications supervisor for Iowa State University Department of Public Safety, passed away on February 18, 2007. Her son Steven manages Des Moines State Patrol Comm. Pauline began her career at ISU Public Safety in 1978. She has been like a mother to the numerous ISU students who dispatched throughout her long career. Her dedication to law enforcement will missed.

Caller Expresses Gratitude to Dispatchers By Gloria Isham, Scott County Communications Center Director

On Tuesday July 12, 2006 at 0154 hours, Scott County Sheriff's Office dispatcher's, **Carrie Nurse** and **Ashley Baustian** received a cellular 9-1-1 call from a young man who had been severely injured in a motorcycle accident and had no idea where he was. The first words out of his mouth were "can you track my location, since I called 9 - 1 - 1?" Unfortunately, at that time we were not phase 2 compliant.

Carrie and Ashley attempted to determine his location, but all he was able to tell them was he was laying in a ditch, had no idea how he had gotten there and could see some lights a few miles away.

He knew where he had been earlier in the evening and knew where he lived, but had no recollection of anything else.

Carrie and Ashley dispatched what information they had available, advising the tower site the cellular call was hitting on and directed officers to search all the possible roads he may have taken to get from his last known location heading toward his home.

They took turns questioning him, trying to keep him alert, and trying to get him to crawl up to the road to help determine

what road he was on. He was injured so severely that he could not move without severe pain and was not able to get from the ditch to the roadway. They kept calming him and reassuring him, but they knew they were looking for a needle in a haystack. It was determined that MedForce, our local air ambulance would be dispatched to assist in the search, but at 0215 our caller was located. An officer spotted a dim taillight in a cornfield that belonged to the motorcycle our caller had been driving.

The patient was air lifted to a local hospital and later transported to University of Iowa Hospitals in Iowa City for further treatment. It was touch and go for awhile, but he survived. His recovery has been difficult but a couple months after the incident he contacted our department and we were able

to arrange a meeting for him and the two dispatchers who helped save his life. It meant a great deal to him to meet and thank them personally for saving his life and going the extra mile to help him.

We now have Phase 2 in place at Scott County and hope we will not face this same type of challenge again. But, as we all know, there will always be challenges in our line of work. This call is just one example of dispatchers rising to the occasion, overcoming the challenges they face, sometimes flying by the seat of their pants to get the job done and help save lives.

(Editor's note: **Gloria Isham** is the Communications Director for the Scott County Sheriff's Office Communications Center where she has worked for 27 years. Thanks to Gloria for an excellent article and for recognizing her people for a job well done!)



Caroline Wilkens takes time out at Scott County for a Kodak Moment

Emergency Medical Dispatch In Iowa

Where Have We Been, And Where Are We Going?

M. J. Hartley, REMT-P, UI EMD Program Coordinator



In October of 1992, the American Heart Association released its latest guidelines (at the time) for the performance of CPR and advanced cardiac resuscitation. Included in those guidelines, for the first time ever, was a significant statement about EMD. It was not a new concept in 1992, in fact EMD had existed in the U.S. since its birth in Salt Lake City in 1978. However, this prestigious medical standards-setting group chose that year to make a pretty bold statement about how EMD should be integrated in to the nation's emergency response systems.

In the chapter dealing with Adult Basic Life Support, the AHA said the following: "EMDs have been identified as a vital but often neglected part of the EMS system. All communities should provide formal training in emergency medical dispatch and require the use of medical dispatch protocols, including prearrival instructions for airway control, foreign-body airway obstruction (Heimlich), and CPR by telephone." JAMA, October 28, 1992 – Vol 268, No. 16; 2184-85.

It was no surprise that this statement quickly prompted physicians and other EMS professionals at the University of Iowa to question the status of this service within Iowa's borders. The Chairman of the AHA's ECC group that wrote those guidelines in 1992 was Dr. Richard Kerber, Professor of Cardiology at UI. Under the guidance of Dr. Don Brown, also a UI Cardiologist and Medical Director of UI EMSLRC, Iowa had made considerable progress during the previous decade in making early defibrillation of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) patients available in most corners of Iowa, but survival remained low.

It was determined through research done at UI that fewer than 19% of SCA victims in Iowa had CPR begun at the scene by family or bystanders prior to the arrival of the first EMS unit. Given that rural EMS unit response times can be extended in many cases, early bystander CPR is crucial in maximizing the SCA victim's potential for survival. EMD was looked upon as a partial solution to this problem, based upon models examined from other communities in the U.S. such as Seattle, WA.

The AHA reported that bystander CPR can occur in as many as 60% of cases when EMD exists in a community. In 1992, it was not well known how many 911 services there were in Iowa that accepted emergency medical calls for assistance from the public, let alone how many attempted anything resembling EMD. In time, formalized EMD programs were discovered to be rare in Iowa, perhaps four or five existed state-wide.

Based on this information, the University of Iowa EMS Learning Resources Center began to explore potential solutions to this shortage. With several national EMD programs to choose from, plus the option of developing our own program, it was decided that we would pursue the importation of an existing national program. Discussions were begun with Dr. Jeff Clawson of Salt Lake City, UT, who is widely identified as the "Father of EMD", with the intent of bringing the nation's longest-standing EMD program to Iowa. The concept was to base the program within the state to reduce over-all costs to the end user (rural dispatch center budgets are not known to be robust, in most cases).

This initial proposal was not met with open arms in Salt Lake City. Such an approach had never been taken before in the U.S. After approximately 9 months of negotiation and debate, it was decided by Clawson that the Iowa proposal would be a "pilot project" to test the feasibility of local distribution of EMD training under his system by an outside academic institution.

In January of 1994, the first EMD program conducted by the University of Iowa was held in Harlan, Iowa. Since then, approximately 68 programs have been conducted for Iowa's 911 Telecommunicators, resulting in the training of nearly (continued on p.8)



Mike Hartley, Lorri Simmons of Jefferson County and Jodi Larson of Allamakee County practice scenarios.

Their work shift begins and ends with help

Emergency dispatchers help save lives, but stress means burnout risk

Used with permission of Des Moines Register Reporter Abby Simons and

The Des Moines Register



Matt Graves of Des Moines Police Department answering a call for help.

Doug Richardson was manning the phones for the Des Moines Fire Department when he took two emergency calls in five minutes.

Both the persons were not breathing, their family members told the dispatcher. One was a 78-year-old woman, the other a 35-year-old man.

Richardson instructed frantic family members how to give CPR until paramedics arrived at the residences.

Richardson, 28, found out later that the woman had survived, after her daughter sent him a thank-you note. The man didn't make it.

"I had to call for the medical examiner," Richardson said. "That's how I knew."

In a job that remains as stressful as it is thankless, life-or-death situations are as commonplace to public safety dispatchers as a stroll to the fax machine is to the office worker. As a result, the 1,200 dispatchers in Iowa are at high risk for burnout, professionals say.

"First, it's a 24-7 operation, and they don't get much recognition," said Nancy Brady, telecommunications training coordinator at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in Johnston. "When people have an emergency and it has a successful outcome, people will write to the newspaper and say, 'Thanks to the fire department and police officers for saving my life,' but they forget about the people who got them there in the first place."

Since 1998, every dispatcher in Iowa has gone through a one-week class with Brady at the academy before he or she sat at the switchboard. It's there that the dispatcher learns not only to manage the telecommunications systems, but also his or her own personal wellness levels.

According to Brady, only 2 percent of people have the proper skills to make it as a dispatcher - remaining calm, prioritizing and multitasking, and being able to handle the constantly changing telecommunications technology.

All for a paycheck that can be as little as \$10 an hour.

Even some veterans can reach the breaking point.

After 20 years of manning the telephones for police and fire departments in Des Moines and West Des Moines, Jerry Matalone was horrified to discover that he was bringing work home. Many mornings after his third-watch shift of taking anywhere from 300 to 600 emergency calls, he would be short with his wife and daughter, now 3.

His health also was declining. "My wife finally told me, 'You've got to do something different,'" Matalone said.

There were some difficult calls a few years back. Some officer-involved shootings, and the time a despondent caller committed suicide while he was on the line. That one, Matalone said, was tough to get over.

"I talked to him for five minutes on the phone, and the next thing you know - bang!" said Matalone, 43. "You always wonder what else could you have done to make it work."

Supervisors tried switching him to a day shift, but nothing seemed to alleviate the burnout, Matalone said.

About seven months ago, he walked away, taking a job as a project manager for an investment company. Since then, his health and relationships have improved, and there's more he doesn't miss than what he regrets.

Continued from page 4:

"I love my new job. It's a different kind of stress. ... My phones don't ring nonstop, and I'm not dealing with life and death every single day. Every time that phone rings, it's not gonna be a kid that's not breathing or someone who finds their mom or grandma every single day," he said.

That's not to say working as a dispatcher didn't have its rewards. Matalone misses his co-workers and the satisfaction of helping save lives.

"It was a good job - if nothing else, all the people you worked with were family," he said. "It was a good job, but it eats at you."

At the Westcom dispatch center based in West Des Moines, a staff of 18 handles around-the-clock police and fire calls for the suburb, as well as the cities of Clive and Urbandale.

"We try to bring people in eyes wide open," said Diana Borash, WestCom communications director. "If we're going to lose people, we generally lose them within the first three months. People will come in and say, 'You know, this isn't what I thought it would be,' or sometimes they'll have anxiety attacks. There's just very few jobs you come to and impact the lives of so many people each day."

Like all emergency dispatchers, Borash's crew also is the first to begin the process of monitoring locations, relaying information and coordinating assistance.

"It's important that people realize dispatchers are the unsung heroes," Borash said. "Much of the success of first responders in the field has to do with how well dispatchers do their job. When things happen out there, they're kind of the forgotten hero. But they certainly are our heroes."

When this article appeared on the Des Moines Register website, a video was included. The voice behind the video was Ann Moller, shown at the right. She is one of the forty telecommunicators in the Des Moines Police Department Communications Center who answer the calls for help and dispatch the assistance needed. Outstanding job on your interview, Ann!



Register Reporter Abby Simons has Roots in Law Enforcement

Thanks to Des Moines Register Reporter Abby Simons for her excellent article about the challenges faced by Iowa's telecommunicators. While growing up, Abby learned first hand all about emergency response from her dad, Deputy Doug Simons of the Buena Vista County Sheriff's Office, who has had a long and very successful career in Iowa law enforcement.

At the time he was hired by the Allison Police Department at the age of 18, Doug was Iowa's youngest law enforcement officer. Through his career he has worked at Oelwein PD and Clay County Sheriff's Office and moved to the Buena Vista County in 1979. Doug is one of Iowa's original LEIN officers and has worked on many high profile investigators throughout his career. He was named Iowa Deputy of the Year in 1991.

Abby grew up spending time in the Buena Vista County Communications Center while her dad was busy in the sheriff's office. Those experiences helped to make her the outstanding reporter that she is today.

Many thanks to Abby for "telling it like it is" for our family of communications professionals. Providing awareness about our profession helps the public to have a better understanding, and it might even entice a few people to apply for the job.

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, April 8-14, 2007

Each year, the second full week in April is dedicated to the men and women who serve our nation as public safety telecommunicators. As we all know, the telecommunicators are the *unsung heroes* of emergency response, often forgotten because they are unseen by those at the scene of the incident. But as we also know, it is the telecommunicator who sets the tone for the response by calming often hysterical callers and by providing the best information to all who are responding to the scene of the incident. The American Heart Association refers to the 9-1-1 telecommunicator as the "first link" in the chain of survival, followed by early CPR, early defibrillation, and early Advanced Care. Every day, countless lives and property are saved by America's First First Responders. In 1991, the United States Congress signed the first *National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week* proclamation.

There are many ways to celebrate this important occasion such as submitting articles to your local newspapers, holding an open house to show off your center and provide public awareness. For other ideas, check out the website <http://www.911dispatch.com/info/ntw/index.html>



ILEA In-service at Spencer

Sue Bates, Julie Brehmer, Rhanah Becknal, and Mickey Conlon take a break from ILEA In-service held at the Spencer Fire Department to look around the newly remodeled station.



Milestones



20 Years of Service

In 2007, 58 Iowa telecommunicators celebrate milestones in their careers by reaching twenty, twenty-five, thirty, and thirty-five years of service to our profession. That is a combined total of 1,375 years of experience shared among 47 communications centers in Iowa. Just think of the number of lives that have been saved, the people who have been helped, and the property that has been saved because of you.

Congratulations to all who have accomplished another milestone in their careers! Your dedication to the job provides an example and a goal for others to aspire to.

35 Years of Service

Ed Roach, Jasper Co
Debra Fox, Oelwein PD
Chuck Rausch, Storm Lake State

30 Years of Service
Ina Hansen, Adair Co
Deb Smith, Algona PD
Scott Werling, Cedar Rapids State
Nancy Wright, Centerville PD
Dennis Ohlert, Decorah PD
Sandy Rich, Des Moines PD
Cheryl Meyer, Harrison Co
Marianne Woodard, Harrison Co
Donna Bogs, Iowa City PD
Jim Thayer, Johnson Co
Bonnie Klobassa, Mitchell Co
Marilyn Foy, Montgomery Co
Jackie Laire, Montgomery Co
Linda Saathoff, Pocahontas Co

25 Years of Service

Pam Litchfield, Ames PD
Sharon Lingren, Boone Co
Joe Houck, Cedar Falls State
Barb Glime, Cedar Falls State
Tara McComb, Clarinda PD
Mary Helen Meyers, Clear Lake PD
Ron Roberts, Cedar Rapids State
Kathy Benda, Ft. Madison PD
Cathy Lames, Henry Co
Barb Loop, Jones Co
Dona Russell, Madison Co
Kathy Williams, Marshalltown PD
Rick Deen, Monona Co
Brenda Hibbing, Osceola Co
Mickey Conlon, Palo Alto Co
Mary Jo Sitzman, Plymouth Co
Jean Stribling, Shenandoah PD
Carl Stansberry, Wapello Co

Diane Grant, Algona PD
Fred Mallett, Blackhawk Co
Deb Frye, Butler Co
Lorri McClintock, Calhoun Co
Pam Ricke, Cerro Gordo Co
Kathy Bahls, Clayton Co
Sue Gallentine, Denison PD
Marilyn Hariri, Des Moines PD
Kathy Jinkens, Fairfield State
Sandy White, Greene Co
Miriam Schultz, Grinnell PD
Joyce Matern, Hancock Co
Dora Bentler, Henry Co
Kim Balmer, Jasper Co
Bob Lane, Maquoketa PD
Elizabeth Bellis, Monona Co
Sandy Cramblit, Ottumwa PD
Linda Pote, Perry PD
Gary Nosa, Scott Co
Laureen Ipsen, U of Iowa

The 48th ILEA Basic 40-Hour Telecommunicator Class Graduates!



Front Row: Kari Jones, Jackie Jepsen, Brenda Adams, Nancy Brady, Joe Yarkosky, Jessica Dorhout-Vanengen.
Rear: Pauline Grandors, Amelia Luscombe, Corinna Catlett, Billy Hosch, Roxanne Petersen, Justin Bailey,

This proud group is the *48th Basic Iowa Law Enforcement Academy 40-Hour Telecommunicator Class*. 1085 students have completed this program since its inception in May of 1998. Classes have ranged in size from 12 to 35, depending on the number of telecommunicators that have been hired by the state's 130 plus communications centers. They come from local, state and privately owned communications centers of all sizes, and all types of jurisdictions. Over four thousand students have attended many different ILEA communications training courses. Iowa holds the distinction of being

one of less than ten states with legislatively mandated basic telecommunicator training. The program's success is due in large part to the many local, state and federal agencies that assist ILEA by providing instructors, equipment, and tours. The week long program provides our state's telecommunicators the opportunity to spend a week with their peers from all across Iowa; building friendships, providing contacts, and learning about other Iowa agencies. All of that shared knowledge will greatly benefit the students and their own departments in the future.

This year for the first time, the Advanced Telecommunicator course is going on the road. Watch the ILEA website and the IOWA System calendar file for dates and locations.



Ernest George of Polk County SO is one of many professionals who teach in the ILEA Basic 40 Hour Telecommunicator Classes.

EMD continued from page 3.

900 personnel in 49 Iowa counties.

To our knowledge, Iowa's EMDs have coached the public through the successful delivery of 17 babies, guided callers through countless incidents involving CPR, the Heimlich Maneuver, the controlling of bleeding and the management of unconscious victim's airways, all without a single lawsuit or serious complaint that we are aware of. The EMD has become an integral part of many Iowa EMS systems, assisting local medical directors in (Page 8) reducing unnecessary red lights and siren responses, calming frantic callers while they wait for help, and keeping responding crews better-informed about patient's conditions while they are enroute to the scene.

However, although EMD has enjoyed a good measure of success in Iowa simply based upon the program's merits, the future of the program is not completely clear. EMD does not exist in about half of Iowa's counties, unbeknownst to the public by-in-large. There is no formal state support for EMD programs, and the EMD remains an "unofficial" part of Iowa's emergency response system. Formal references to EMD in The Iowa Code or Administrative Code are essentially non-existent.

The EMD remains a vital part of the EMS system in the United States in 2007. The AHA has continued to support the concept, as is evident in their most recent guidelines release in Nov. of 2005. It has become a vital part of the EMS system in a number of communities across Iowa, but not in all. Unsubstantiated fear of litigation has held some 911 center administrators back from adopting it, lack of funding plagues others and simple disagreement with the concept still remains with a few.

One thing is clear...our EMS crews, despite their devotion and heroic efforts, cannot save patients who are involved in serious medical emergencies by themselves. The public must call 911 right away and help the patient as much as possible while they wait for help. The 911 system must operate at peak efficiency and capability in the gathering and distribution of information vital to the call. EMS crews must respond appropriately with the best knowledge and technology that we can provide to them. The patient must then make it to the hospital as expeditiously and safely as possible so that highly-trained physicians will have the best chance at saving the patient.

Perhaps the proper rearing of children "takes a village", but the saving of lives takes a system...a complete EMS system.



DPS Implements New Policy on 10-codes

The Iowa Department of Public Safety has implemented a new policy for its personnel on use of 10-codes, reducing the number of 10-codes that they will be using to twenty-nine. Red indicates hold all traffic unless 10-33. Blue indicates may use plain language or 10-code. To obtain a copy of the new policy, email nancy.brady@ilea.state.ia.us.

10-4 Acknowledgement	10-32 Person with a gun	10-95 Prisoner/subject in custody
10-7 Out of service (give location & telephone number)	10-33 EMERGENCY	(mileage)
10-8 In service	10-41 Beginning tour of duty	10-96 Mental subject
10-10 Fight in progress	10-42 Ending tour of duty	10-99 Records indicate wanted/stolen
10-20 Location	10-61 Personnel in area	10-200 Request backup
10-23 Arrived at scene	10-69 Message received (delivered)	10-250 Request K-9 unit
10-24 Assignment completed	10-78 Need assistance	10-300 Terrorist/Gang Organization
10-27 Driver license information	10-79 Notify medical examiner	Members
10-28 Vehicle registration information	10-83 Welfare check	10-350 Amber Alert
10-29 Check records for wanted/stolen	10-86 Request for overtime authorization	10-400 SOR information on file