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Media Release

The Department of Public Safety Recognizes Dispatchers During National Public Safety Telecommunications Week, April 12 -18

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is gearing up to celebrate National Public Safety Telecommunications Week, April 12 -18, 2015. Each year, the second week of April is dedicated to honor the men and women who respond to emergency calls, dispatch emergency officials and equipment, and render lifesaving assistance.

The DPS would like to raise awareness and recognize the Nevada Public Safety Tele-Communicators (Dispatchers) that provide information and assistance to first responders and to the citizens of Nevada.

“Their dedication and support spreads out over varied shifts, 12 hour days, weekends and holidays in a 24/7, 365 days a year Communication Center,” said DPS’s Communication Center Manager Denise Stewart. “Dispatchers are the first responder to any call for service. They are responsible for answering emergency and non-emergency calls for all levels of assistance from the public and law enforcement agencies. They determine the nature of the call, location, parties involved and other agencies that need to be notified,” said Stewart.

“While on shift they receive and transmit non-emergency and emergency radio traffic to field officers; and must know large geographical areas, telecommunication systems and a Computer Aided Dispatch Program. They are accountable for the status of officers from all DPS divisions, Attorney General, Nevada Transportation Authority, and Youth Parole. In addition to dispatching calls, they manage all Amber Alerts, Silver Alerts, and are the point of contact for requests for the Division of Emergency Management and State Fire Marshal Division responses,” Stewart explained.

Patricia Anderson started a recognition program at the Contra Costa County (Ca.) Sheriff’s Office in 1981, which was only observed at that agency for three years. Members of the Virginia and North Carolina chapters of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) became involved in the mid-1980s.

By the early 1990s, the national APCO Organization convinced Congress of the need for a formal proclamation. Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) introduced what became H.J. Res. 284 to create "National Public Safety Tele-communicator Week." According to Congressional procedure, it was introduced twice more in 1993 and 1994, and then became permanent, without the need for yearly introduction.

The official name of the week when originally introduced in Congress in 1991 was "National Public Safety Tele-communicators Week." In the intervening years, it has become known by several other names, including "National Public-Safety Telecommunications Week" and "International Public Safety Tele-communicator's Week." The Congressional resolution also stated there were more than "500,000 telecommunications specialists" assisting first responders across the county.

The State of Nevada has been recognizing Public Safety Tele-Communicators (Dispatchers) for their service since the early 1990's.

"The Department is extremely proud of its dispatchers for their personal commitment to public safety and their unwavering role as the "first" first responders," said Julie Butler Administrator for DPS's General Services Division.

"It is with great pride that we take time this week to honor and thank each of our Public Safety Dispatchers for the job they do. Our dedicated team of dispatchers are on the frontlines of public safety serving as the true first responders," said Jackie Muth Deputy Director of DPS.

If you know a Tele-Communicator, take the time to write a commendation or simply thank them for all they do to help keep the citizens of Nevada safe.

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