



the **NHEDA Broadcaster**

A Monthly Journal of Information For New Hampshire's Emergency Telecommunicators
A publication of the New Hampshire Emergency Dispatcher Association PO Box 664 Berlin, NH 03570

Vol. 10, Issue 11

November 2017

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Photo By: Greg Putnam, Derry Fire Dept.

Networking – A Value in Relationships

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Networking can be defined as a socioeconomic business activity by which business people and entrepreneurs meet to form business relationships and to recognize, create, or act upon business opportunities, share information and seek potential partners for ventures. In laymen's terms, networking is connecting with people in your profession.

Networking is one of the benefits to NHEDA, as it provides a forum to get to know people from other communications centers and staff. Dispatchers, Fire Alarm Operators, and Supervisory staff all coming together to train, promote, and network with the intent of moving our field further, and defining our roles in the public safety communications industry.

For example, perhaps a city dispatch center has a more defined policy on how to handle an active shooter situation, which could be scaled or modified to work in a more rural jurisdiction. Additionally, police dispatching varies significantly from fire/ems dispatching and vice versa, however, learning and training for both sides gives everyone involved exposure to other agencies practices. Networking allows us as professionals to collectively brainstorm procedures, responses, and standard operating guidelines. In addition, as a new Dispatcher, networking allows you to have a sounding board that is impartial if a situation arises where you need some advice. Dispatchers know the lifestyle, struggles and culture of our industry and it is nice to have the support of your peers outside of your agency.

The value in networking goes beyond creating professional relationships; it creates relationships between agencies as well. This forum creates a dialogue which is helpful to define mutual aid responses and inter agency operability for incidents that require such a response. Having a relationship with agencies that border your jurisdiction makes a dispatcher that much more familiar with the border agency's procedure and how they operate, and in turn, allowing the dispatcher to anticipate needs, albeit staffing or apparatus, in case of escalating events. The direct benefit of this is efficiency, streamlining of processes, and that efficiency eventually provides a cost savings to your agency.

Networking is an integral part of our role as a dispatcher. As you continue to challenge yourself to be better, continue your professional education, cultivate the relationships with other dispatch centers near your agency. Visit these bordering communications centers and ask for a tour. Put a name to a face of someone you converse with on the phone, but have never met before. Do this with the intent to streamline, become more efficient, and in turn create real added value for your agency. Just as we trust our coworkers in the field, it is imperative to grow that trust with our nearby communications centers.



Scenery Photo Credits: Joanne McKenzie, Conway Police Dept.

*Some of our NHEDA
Members & Friends
attended and had a
great time at the
APCO Atlantic
Chapter Conference at
the Samoset Resort in
Rockland Maine.*

2017 APCO Atlantic Chapter Conference Awards



From L to R: Tom Andross, GCSO, NH—Director of the Year; Kathy Bragdon, Lincoln Cty 911 Comms Center, ME—Supervisor of the Year; Erin Hannafin and Paul Steele, LRMFA, NH—Team of the Year; John Ruggiero, MA State Police—RF Tech of the Year; Eugene Jopeck, Glastonbury CT PD—Dispatcher of the Year; Anita Danny, Rochester NY Emergency Comms—Trainer of the Year.



Jon Goldman, Phil Tirrell, and Tom Andross were all awarded with Senior Member Status.

The APCO Atlantic Chapter held its annual training conference and awards ceremony on October 22-25 at the Samoset Resort in Rockland Maine. The conference was filled with great training, networking, and a great tradeshow/vendor area. We were fortunate this year to have the entire APCO International Executive Board with us for the conference. They participated in APCO Town Hall meetings, trainings, and socializing. NHEDA, again was well represented, and should continue to be proud of our accomplishments within APCO. Pete Denuette, Tom Andross, and Phil Tirrell are all past Presidents of the APCO Atlantic Chapter. Our own Rob Cole chaired the Atlantic Chapter awards committee this year, and Jon Goldman served the Atlantic Chapter Executive Board as a Member At Large. Jon will continue to serve during the 2017-2018 board year as well.

On Tuesday evening October 24 the Atlantic Chapter held its annual banquet and awards ceremony. The Atlantic Chapter awards mirror the APCO International awards such as RF/IT Technologist of the year, Dispatcher of the Year, Director of the Year etc. APCO International President Martha Carter was on hand to provide some remarks and make the awards presentations alongside the Chapter Leadership. Lt. Paul Steele and Dispatcher Erin Hannafin of Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid were honored with the APCO Atlantic Chapter as the “Team of the Year” for their dedication and commitment to serving the residents and visitors of NH’s Lakes Region as a cohesive unit. Although they on occasion fight like a husband and wife, and were asked several times during the conference if they were married, they do work together as a high performing team. This was a great personal honor for Paul and Erin, as well as for Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid.

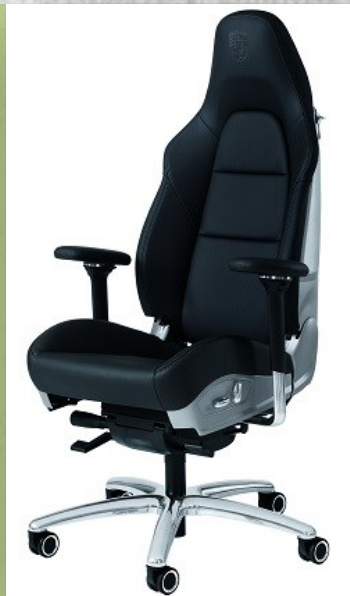
Director Tom Andross of the Grafton County Sher-

iff’s Office was honored as the APCO Atlantic Chapter “Director of the Year.” Dir. Andross was honored for his commitment to public safety, and public safety communications. It was mentioned in his nomination packet that he is a resource for not only the north country of NH, but for Communications Supervisors, Directors, and Dispatchers throughout the State of NH. Amongst other tasks, Director Andross serves on the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee, National Joint TERT Initiative, chairs many sub-committees and is the current NHEDA President. Director Andross is all things “emergency dispatching” in NH.

APCO has always honored its members who have made significant contributions to APCO International, the Atlantic Chapter, and Public Safety Communications by elevating their membership status to SENIOR Member. Above senior member, they present LIFE membership status after even more work and contributions. Director Tom Andross, Chief Philip Tirrell of the Southwestern NH District Fire Mutual Aid, and Chief Jon Goldman of Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid were all awarded SENIOR MEMBER status within APCO at the awards ceremony. There are only 40 members of the APCO Atlantic Chapter who have contributed to the work of emergency communications in such a significant manner to be named SENIOR MEMBER, and even fewer to have been named LIFE MEMBER out of the chapters 5,000 members.

The NH Emergency Dispatchers Association ought to be extremely proud of the caliber of Dispatchers we have in this state. All of the awardees from NH who were honored have had their careers intertwined over the years, and many of these successes can be attributed directly back to the network of Dispatchers and Public Safety Communications Professionals that NHEDA has developed over its 20+ years.

The Chair: Dispatching is Simple ... It's Just Not Easy!



Among the fundamentals of emergency telecommunication is the ability to understand the basic elements inherent in each type of call. Just as there are similarities that exist in any diverse collection of activities, emergency and non-emergency calls can be categorized, classified and organized. It's a mathematical certainty that things will occur in virtually the same predictable pattern within each of them. Doing the next most-logical thing makes a dispatcher indispensable; knowing what comes next is what makes that dispatcher a true professional.

Sometimes it helps to think of dispatching as though you're playing a board game. In a game you need to know how each piece moves in order to be any good at it. Also, like a game, knowing what comes next can often be the key to keeping the play orderly and organized. Experience in *The Chair* is the most common technique for acquiring such understanding in dispatching, and it is certainly a tried-and-true method of acquiring knowledge. It can also be the most demanding, dangerous and heart-breaking way of learning the ropes. Difficult and complex dispatching situations confront all dispatchers, even those with limited training and experience. How can they obtain the savvy to handle those calls without risk? Simply stated; they can't.

One age-old way of learning is known as the *Socratic Method*; self-learning through exploration, trial and error. Law schools and medical schools use this method all the time. Individuals who aspire to the demands of dispatch, and who eventually excel at it, are those who take the time and energy to learn the intricate elements of the job outside of a formal training setting. From learning the topography of their jurisdiction to unraveling the jargon of field personnel, emergency dispatching calls for a dedication to learning that reaches far beyond any classroom.

Handling any call is more than a reaction to a given stimulus. It means that the initial assessment of that call is the key to the eventual outcome of it. Dispatchers must conduct an assessment, evaluate the information available, know in advance the controlling policies and protocols, employ common sense based upon training and experience, and dispatch the call accordingly. Certainly this isn't too much to ask, is it? But, given the time constraints and the very nature of emergency calls, this is where the skill of the person in *The Chair* makes the difference.

Dispatching is certainly simple enough; dispatchers take information from one source and give it to another—simple! But anyone who has ever endured the rigors of a mutual-aid structure fire, an armed robbery in progress, or had to handle pre-arrival instructions of a full cardiac and respiratory arrest while simultaneously having to direct police, fire and ambulance personnel to the victim's location, is painfully aware that there is nothing easy about it.

While field personnel concentrate their training on their specific calling, constantly narrowing their focus, emergency telecommunicators must broaden their training efforts to include anything that they might encounter on their watch. In simple terms it means dispatchers must grow into being the true

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The Chair: Dispatching is Simple ... It's Just Not Easy!

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generalists of our society, becoming all things to all people – a lofty goal, if not an impossible one. While telecommunicators might not need to know how to treat a sucking chest wound, they should know that it's a life threatening condition and that the most probable cause was a bullet from a gun. This means that a threat in the form of a sniper may exist to the medics being sent to such a call, so maybe it would be judicious to send along a contingent of police officers; say half the department including the SWAT unit!

All the classroom training available within the entire field of emergency telecommunications cannot adequately prepare an individual for the rigors of a single shift in *The Chair*. Seated at a console, working with a telephone, or handling a radio is like enduring a hangover; you can explain to others until you're blue in the face what it's like, but until they've experienced a hangover for themselves they have no idea what you're talking about. But the shock and awe that accompanies that first solo shift in *The Chair* can be minimized by proper training and by exposing the newbie to the more common things they might expect to encounter.

We've all listened to commercial radio since as far back as we can remember. But a radio that talks back – that is interactive, so to speak – that takes time to get used to. Talking back to units in the field is easy; saying the right thing at the right time is something else. Fortunately most dispatch centers don't toss fledglings into the deep end of the shark-infested pool until it's determined they at least possess the ability to swim.

Formal training provides emergency telecommunicators with the basic tools of our profession. And let's be clear; dispatching has quickly grown to be a true profession. A profession is defined as an endeavor where an ever-changing and ever-widening body of information, policies and procedures must be absorbed and employed by the practitioner toward the accomplishment of the stated objectives of that profession. Just like doctors and lawyers, who must read and absorb constantly in order to practice their professions, dispatchers must do the same. The array of topics to be studied includes every aspect of the human experience. There isn't anything that man has done, can do, or will do, that isn't germane, and the more a dispatcher knows the more likely they will understand and handle each call in such a way that the outcome will benefit all involved.

Even if dispatching remains just another job in the minds of those outside of it, for those on the inside it is truly a profession. Because this is so, the practitioners have an obligation to engage in the age-old methods of raising their own standards in order to serve the demands of their profession. Taking training classes, reading, riding along with field units, and learning as much as possible about the people and businesses to be served are all methods with which to improve. Because the tasks of the profession are simple, the perception is that it is easy. Those who have been seated in *The Chair* know otherwise.

Upcoming Meetings & Trainings

Wednesday, November 15, 2017 at 10:00am – Monthly meeting and training at the IPOC, Smokey Bear Blvd, Concord. Training will be WebEOC. Stay tuned for registration details.

December— NHEDA and TERT Governing Body Annual Joint Meeting. Date & Location to Be Determined



Welcome to NHEDA's Newest Member

Andy Lubrano—New London Police Dept
Chip Brisk—Hollis Communications
Shawn Haggart—Derry Fire
Chuck Tinkham—Derry Fire
John Letson—NH911
Esther DiCarlo—Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid

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Any NHEDA member can contribute to the newsletter. Submit articles, photos, training announcements and your ideas for articles. Send material to newsletter@nheda.org

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NHEDA 2018



Full Conference Registrations:

NHEDA Active Member
On or before March 1st, 2018
\$99.00

Associate Member, Non-Member, Spouse/Guest

And NHEDA Active Members after 3/1/18
\$125.00
Includes all conference activities

Day Pass Registration—Any One Day

Includes Breakfast and Lunch
\$50.00

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APRIL 9 - 11

**JOIN NHEDA FOR QUALITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES,
NETWORKING, AND OUR VENDOR EXPO!**

MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2018

Opening Ceremony, Classes & Vendor Expo

TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2018

Classes & Afternoon Super Session
NHEDA Annual Meeting, Dinner & Awards Ceremony

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2018

Classes & Closing Ceremony

Visit www.NHEDA.org for more information

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