



APCO

MEMBER CHAPTER SERVICES Committee



November *newsletter*

GRATITUDE IN DISPATCH

In the fast-paced world of public safety, it's easy to focus on the next call, the next challenge, or the next shift. But this season is a reminder to pause and reflect on what we're grateful for—our teammates who support us, the communities we serve, and the unseen moments of calm we help create every day. Gratitude strengthens our resilience, deepens our connection to one another, and reminds us why we do what we do. This month, let's take a moment to appreciate the heart behind the headset and the difference gratitude makes in every shift.

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Membership *momentum*

Membership Type	Previous Year 10/01/2024	This Year 10/01/2025
Associate Members	2,274	1,883
Full Members	4,182	3,770
Full Group Members	9,913	10,190
Online Group Members	24,158	25,158
Commercial Members	445	430
Commercial Group Members	357	398
Student/Educator Members	30	30
Total Number of Members	41,359	41,859
Total Number of Group Agencies	1,736	1,763
Commercial Groups	52	57

Public Service Message

Reflecting on October: A Month of Awareness & Action

By Sabrina Morgan

October was a month that shined a spotlight on many important issues. While Breast Cancer Awareness often takes center stage, it was also Domestic Violence Awareness Month—a time to recognize the devastating impact of abuse and the critical role we all play in ending it.

For Public Safety Telecommunicators, this issue is never abstract. Call takers and dispatchers are often the first lifeline for victims seeking help. The calm, steady voice on the other end of the line can offer hope in the darkest of moments and connect individuals to the resources they need to find safety. Every call answered is an opportunity to break the cycle of violence and provide compassion, safety, and support.

To learn more about Domestic Violence Awareness Month, visit:
<https://www.dvawareness.org/>



Straight from the CAC

You don't find 9-1-1, 9-1-1 finds you.

By Jim Hansen

"You don't find 9-1-1, 9-1-1 finds you."

In my 10 years in the public safety industry, I've heard this phrase many times. Mostly, from a single person. In the digital age of instant this and automatic that, I thought that I would use some artificial intelligence to check the meaning of that phrase. I wanted to see what AI thinks that phrase means. Using several platforms, the consensus synopsis was this:



"You don't find 9-1-1, 9-1-1 finds you" means that when you need emergency services, you don't have to actively search for them; instead, they will automatically be alerted and come to you when you dial 9-1-1, signifying that the emergency response system is always ready to assist you wherever you are.

Key Points

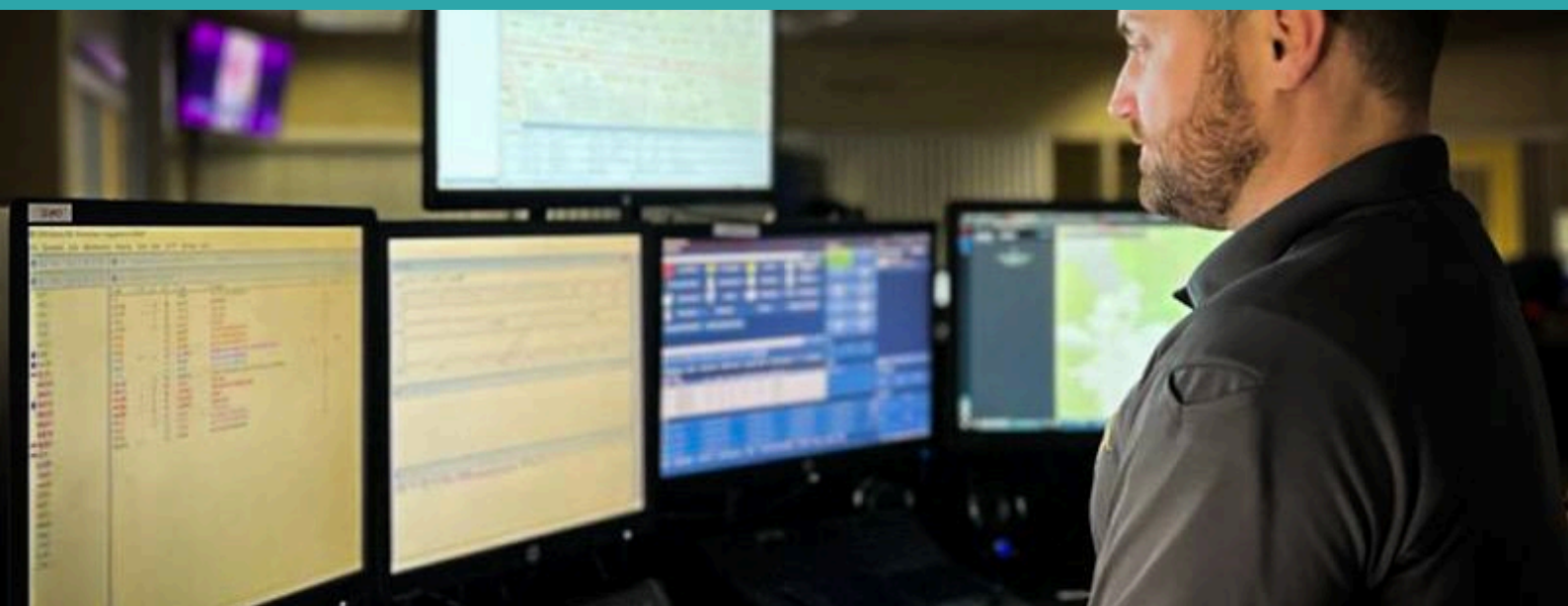
Accessibility:

The phrase emphasizes that emergency services are readily available and will reach you when you need them, no matter where you are or what situation you're in.

Proactive nature:

It highlights that 9-1-1 is designed to be proactive, meaning it will initiate action as soon as you dial the number, not requiring you to actively locate help.

How clever. The literal sense and meaning. However, the meaning for me is much deeper and personal. That phrase means something different entirely than what the greatest artificial minds can come up with. It means something that only a human can understand right now. My friend and colleague, Stephanie Lehman, whom I have known for my 10 years in this industry, is the one that I have heard this phrase from over and over again. Stephanie has served in nearly every role in 9-1-1 that someone can serve in, and is currently the Director at Barry County Central Dispatch in Michigan. She speaks at various events, meetings, trainings and committees and often repeats this phrase.



To me, "you don't find 9-1-1, 9-1-1 finds you" refers to the calling that we all feel in this industry, in this public safety family. There is something about it that captivates you, intrigues you, calls to you, pulls you in, seizes you, grabs a hold of you, and doesn't let go.

There is a passion to help, a mission to serve, a duty to protect. It's infectious. It's motivating. It's fulfilling. It's noble. It's worthy.

I grew up in a family of public safety. My father started his career as a patrolman and dispatcher and ended his career as chief of police and 9-1-1 director. My brother took the same path. I took a different route initially serving as an educator and coach, but eventually an opportunity was presented to me to be a part of the public safety family once again.

During my 10 years I've served on various committees and boards, for both NENA and APCO. I've chaired Vendor committees and Conference committees. I'm now the CCAM for Indiana and I also found my way onto the Commercial Advisory Council for APCO International in 2020. Another great friend of mine Jason Bernard told me I should, that I would be a great fit, that I would learn a lot, that it would be another opportunity to serve and be of service. Four years later, I am the current Vice Chair of the CAC.

I'm honored and humbled to be a part of the APCO CAC family, the greater 9-1-1 family, and to be of service to all of public safety. To anyone that reads this, get involved. Don't ignore that voice, that whisper, those butterflies, that feeling in your heart, your soul, your gut. Get involved in 9-1-1, as a dispatcher, CTO, supervisor, QA manager, RPL, ENP, director. Find employment at a company that serves the industry. Become a part of the family. Be someone that 9-1-1 found, not because you called 9-1-1, but because 9-1-1 called you.

Jim Hansen is the CEO of WSI Technologies, Inc. and serves as the Vice Chair for the Commercial Advisory Council.

CYBER INTEL Corner

The Digital Siege: How AI Targets Emergency Communications

By Stephanie Reed

Every second counts when lives hang in the balance

Emergency Communications Centers face an unprecedented challenge. Cybercriminals weaponize artificial intelligence (AI) to target the very systems that save lives. Recent data shows 88% of emergency centers reported at least one outage in the past year, while 9% experienced cyberattacks.

AI-powered attacks blend seamlessly into normal operations. Synthetic voices generate hundreds of simultaneous fake emergency calls to overwhelm public safety telecommunicators during critical response windows. Modern AI creates convincing voices with background noise and emotional inflection that fool experienced telecommunicators.

Data integrity attacks pose an equally insidious threat. Artificial intelligence gradually corrupts Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems by introducing subtle errors into location data or call priority rankings. When a medical call for a heart attack routes incorrectly to a unit 15 minutes away instead of three minutes closer, the AI attack succeeds without anyone realizing it occurred.

Defense Strategies

Emergency communications protection requires layering technical controls with human awareness. Zero-trust architecture — treating every user and device as potentially dangerous until proven safe — requires multi-factor authentication (entering a code from your phone along with your password) for all system access and continuous monitoring.

ECCs should be providing training to staff to question and recognize AI-generated content. Telecommunicators must identify subtle signs of synthetic calls, such as unusually perfect audio quality during emergencies or callers who provide scripted responses. When external requests involve system access, it is critical to always verify through the proper channels.

CYBER INTEL

Corner

Manual backup procedures must remain current, ensuring dispatch operations continue if automated systems fail. Network segmentation — keeping critical systems separate — contains attacks when they occur.

Trust Your Instincts

Experienced telecommunicators possess an intuitive understanding of normal emergency patterns that no artificial intelligence can replicate. When something feels wrong, that human instinct often provides the first warning of an ongoing attack.

Administrators should create a culture where staff feel comfortable questioning suspicious activity. AI cyberattacks on emergency communications will grow more sophisticated. Success requires balancing rapid response capabilities with robust security practices and remembering that saving lives must drive every security decision.



Stephanie Reed is the Web Specialist for the Metro Nashville Department of Emergency Communications.

Sources:

Department of Homeland Security Emergency Service Sector Assessment, ABC News, April 2024

Domestic Preparedness, "AI and 911 Call Systems: A New Ally or a Hidden Risk?" May 2025

National Center for Biotechnology Information, "Hacking 911: Infrastructure Vulnerabilities and Attack Vectors," PMC Journal

Health & Wellness

The Importance of Social Support

Connecting with Peers for Emotional Support

By Alicia Williams, MA, RPL



In the fast-paced world of public safety communications, we're trained to manage chaos - to keep calm, stay focused, and be the steady voice that guides others through emergencies. But while we're taking care of everyone else, it's easy to forget that we also need care and connection ourselves.

That's where social support - especially from peers who truly understand the job - becomes vital. For dispatchers and call-takers, connecting with peers can be a powerful buffer against stress. No one understands the mental and emotional toll of back-to-back emergencies, long shifts, or that one unforgettable call quite like someone who's been there too. Sometimes, it's not about finding a solution - it's about being heard by someone who gets it. A quick check-in after a tough call, a few shared laughs between shifts, or a text from a coworker saying, "Rough night?" can remind us that we're not alone in this work.

Research backs this up - social support among coworkers improves resilience, lowers burnout risk, and boosts overall job satisfaction (Golding, Horsfield, Davies, & Ferguson, 2017; NENA, 2021). Even small, consistent interactions can make a meaningful difference in how we cope with daily stressors.

Making time for these connections isn't a luxury; it's an important part of staying healthy and grounded in a demanding profession.



For supervisors and leaders, fostering social support is just as critical. A supportive environment doesn't happen by accident - it grows from intentional effort. Encourage your team to check in with one another, normalize conversations about stress, and model openness yourself. When leaders share their own experiences and make it safe for others to do the same, it helps break down stigma and build trust across the team.

Consider creating opportunities for connection that go beyond the console - brief team huddles, group lunches, recognition moments, or structured peer support programs. Even something as simple as celebrating small wins or acknowledging a tough week can help your team feel seen and supported. A record of successful CPR saves and baby deliveries is an easy way to get started.

At the heart of it, social support is about community - the understanding that we are stronger together than we are alone. Whether you're the one answering the call or leading the team, taking the time to connect with your peers is more than an act of kindness; it's an investment in your collective well-being.

Alicia Williams, MA, RPL is a supervisor at the Phoenix Fire Department Regional Dispatch Center.

References

Golding, S. E., Horsfield, C., Davies, A., & Ferguson, E. (2017). Exploring the psychological health of emergency dispatchers: A systematic review. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 32(2), 134–142.

National Emergency Number Association (NENA). (2021). *Supporting 911 Professionals: A Guide to Peer Support and Mental Wellness*.

Dispatches of History

A Brief History of Emergency Medical Response

By The APCO Historical Committee



Red Cross Service Ambulance in 1910, photo courtesy of Vintage Portland

The earliest recorded hospital-based ambulance service was initiated at Commercial Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio (now Cincinnati General) in 1865. This innovation was subsequently adopted by other institutions, including the Bellevue Hospital service in New York, which commenced in 1869.

During this period, hospital interns transported patients using horse-drawn carriages specifically designed for medical use, outfitted with equipment such as splints, stomach pumps, morphine, and brandy, reflecting contemporary medical practices. Notably, New York City advertised a response time of 30 seconds and included both an Ambulance Surgeon and a quart of brandy for patient care. The genesis of Emergency Medical Services evolved from the "You call, we haul" or "Snatch 'em and patch 'em" approach to today's systematic response. The evolution of emergency medical services reflects a shift from basic transport models to highly organized, systematic responses.

The modern emergency medical services (EMS) system began taking shape in the 1950s, drawing on resources from various sectors including towing companies, medical equipment providers, funeral homes, hospitals, law enforcement and fire departments. Historically, funeral homes played a significant role in patient transport and constituted nearly half of all ambulance services in the United States during that era.

In 1960, President John F. Kennedy highlighted the significance of traffic accidents as a critical public health issue. In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson, along with the President's Commission on Highway Safety and the National Academy of Sciences, identified this issue as "the neglected disease of modern society." The late 1960s saw Dr. R Adams Cowley contribute significantly to the establishment of Maryland's statewide EMS program—the first of its kind in the nation. A pivotal development for EMS was the 1966 publication of "Accidental Death and Disability: The Neglected Disease of Modern Society," commonly referred to as The White Paper.

This report served as a catalyst for the design and implementation of federally qualified ambulance services and personnel. It also recommended the establishment of a national certification body to standardize training and examination protocols for emergency responders. In response, the American Medical Association's Commission on EMS formed a Task Force, led by Oscar P. Hampton, Jr., M.D.—a pioneer in trauma care with the American College of Surgeons—to explore the feasibility of a National Registry for EMTs. This initiative culminated in the creation of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) in 1970.

Legislative advancements continued with the enactment of the EMS Systems Act in 1973. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare established 300 EMS systems across the country, while the Department of Transportation developed curriculum standards for EMTs, EMT-Ps, and first responders. Public Law 93-154 introduced updated guidelines for EMS radio communications, and the General Services Administration set new specifications for ambulances.



1970 Ambulance photo courtesy of the National EMS Museum.

In 1996, the EMS Agenda for the Future was published, further integrating EMS into the broader medical profession. That same year, the EMS Education Agenda for the Future provided recommendations regarding core content, scope of practice, and certification requirements for EMS professionals.

While popular media, such as the television show "Emergency," dramatized the field, real-world EMS professionals faced unpredictable scenarios and made substantial contributions to community health. Their consistent dedication has enhanced their status within the medical community, leading to measurable reductions in death and disability rates, and widespread appreciation from the public.



The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, NREMT, among other organizations, has played a crucial role in developing, implementing, and maintaining uniform standards for the certification and recertification of emergency medical technicians. It has also contributed to numerous national initiatives and participates actively on key committees dedicated to the ongoing improvement of emergency medical services standards.

References

APCO International Historical Collection, <https://apcohistory.org/>
National Registry of Emergency Technicians, <https://www.nremt.org/>

Teammates *in Action*

Ana Moreno

North Las Vegas Police Department

On February 4, 2025, the North Las Vegas Police Department faced one of its darkest days. Officer Jason Roscow was killed in the line of duty during a confrontation with an armed suspect, following reports of a man threatening residents with a firearm in a quiet neighborhood.

As officers responded to the rapidly escalating scene near Lone Mountain Road and Camino Al Norte, Police Communications Dispatcher Ana Moreno was the calm and steady voice guiding them through the chaos. From the initial 911 calls to the final, heartbreaking radio transmissions, Ana's presence behind the mic was a source of clarity, coordination, and critical support.



Throughout the incident, Ana demonstrated exceptional professionalism and composure. She maintained calm, clear communication under extreme pressure—relaying vital tactical information, ensuring officers had real-time situational awareness, and supporting her team through a highly volatile and emotionally devastating event.

Even as the tragic loss of Officer Roscow became clear, Ana never wavered. She continued to coordinate resources and communicate with precision, embodying the strength and resilience of the dispatch community in the face of crisis.

For her unwavering dedication and exemplary performance, Ana Moreno has been nominated for APCO International's Teammates in Action Award. This recognition honors public safety professionals who go above and beyond in critical moments—and Ana's actions on that day exemplify what it means to stand strong for one's team and community.

We are proud to recognize Ana for her courage, skill, and steadfast commitment to the mission of public safety communications. She is a true teammate in every sense of the word.

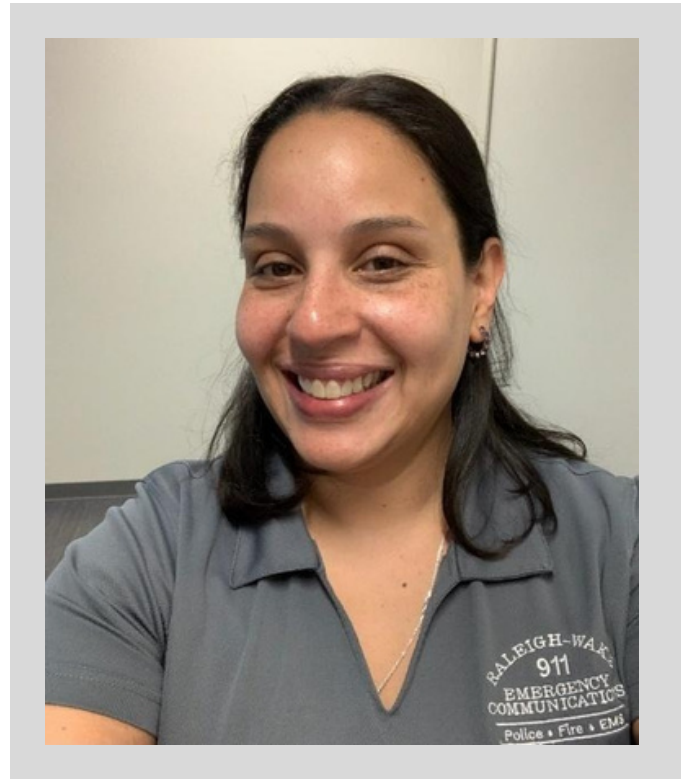
Guanica Collazo

Raleigh Wake Emergency Communications Center

Guanica Collazo is a Supervisor for the Raleigh Wake Emergency Communications Center. She is receiving this nomination from Telecommunicator Heather Hager. Guanica is being recognized for her actions within her dispatcher center and the care she takes of all her Telecommunicators. Guanica organized and cooked French toast for her staff.

The simple act made everyone look forward to coming into work and most importantly feel appreciated. Guanica is a pleasure to work with and always keeps people laughing, which is essential in this line of work.

Please join me in congratulating Supervisor Guanica Collazo, who goes above and beyond daily for her team, by presenting her the "Teammates in Action Award."



Thank you, Guanica Collazo for all you do for the Raleigh Wake Emergency Communication's Center!

Teammates in Action Shine a Light on Your 911 Heroes!

Every 911 center has those teammates who make a difference - whether they handle a tough call with composure, jump in to help a coworker during a hectic shift, or show steady leadership when it's needed most. Now's your chance to recognize them! Nominate a dispatcher, call taker, supervisor, or manager who embodies teamwork and excellence for APCO International's Teammates in Action spotlight. Sharing these stories not only celebrates their dedication but also boosts morale, strengthens team pride, and reminds everyone that their work truly matters. Submit your Teammates in Action nomination today and help us honor the best in our 911 community!

<https://www.apcointl.org/membership/awards-recognition/teammates-in-action/>

Upcoming *Events*



APCO 2026 Call for Speakers Is Now Open!

We are looking for innovative, engaging, inspiring and informative individuals to speak at APCO 2026, taking place August 2-5 in San Antonio, Texas. Submit your application for a one-hour presentation in one of our 11 professional development tracks:

- Communications Center Management
- Cybersecurity for Public Safety Communications
- Emergency Preparedness, Response & Situational Awareness
- Federal Partners (formerly Cutting Edge & FirstNet)
- Frontline Telecommunicator
- Leadership Development
- Mastering Media & Public Engagement
- NG911 and Emerging Technologies
- Radio and Wireless Communications Technologies
- Training Essentials
- Wellness in the Emergency Communications Center

If selected, you will receive a full complimentary registration to the conference. Visit the FAQs page to learn more, or contact Whitney Chong.

Submit your proposal by December 8 at 11:59 p.m. ET.



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