



APCO

MEMBER CHAPTER SERVICES Committee

January newsletter

2026 IS HERE!

Hello APCO members!

New year, same mission - just a little more coffee and a lot more purpose. Here's to showing up, supporting one another, and continuing the work that matters most. Thank you for the dedication, compassion, and professionalism you bring every day - this community is stronger because of you.

Happy New Year

Inside This Issue

- 2 Membership Momentum
- 3 Straight from the CAC
- 5 Cyber Intel Corner
- 7 Health & Welfare
- 11 Remember Our Past
- 12 Inside the Committees
- 17 Teammates In Action
- 19 Upcoming Events
- 20 MCSC Members



Membership *momentum*

Membership Type	Previous Year 12/01/2024	This Year 12/01/2025
Associate Members	2,384	2,144
Full Members	4,294	3,829
Full Group Members	10,113	10,326
Online Group Members	24,361	25,373
Commercial Members	465	447
Commercial Group Members	350	390
Student/Educator Members	34	47
Total Number of Members	42,001	42,556
Total Number of Group Agencies	1,770	1,778
Commercial Groups	54	58

Straight from the CAC

Jack Daniel in the Words of Larry Weber

By Joe Jackson

The APCO 2026 Conference will be here before we know it. When a nominee exemplifies the leadership, service, and impact that define the Jack Daniel Award of Distinction, the honor is presented to recognize that exceptional contribution. As we look ahead to APCO 2026, we are once again reflecting on the legacy of Jack Daniel and why this award was established in his name. For this month's issue, Joe Jackson of The Spectrum Firm sat down with Larry Weber, President of The Sales Group, to share additional insight into who Jack Daniel was and how his actions and commitment left a lasting impact on APCO.

Joe: Tell us about Jack Daniel.

Larry: Jack was an expert in his field [radio communications], mentoring others, and encouraging them to become more active in CPRA (California Public Safety Radio Association), including turning me on to eventually becoming a CCAM. He held strong principles and beliefs, was loyal, and an overall great guy. His wife, Pat, went everywhere with him and he was a good stepfather to his kids. He was the type that no one ever knew about his troubles, he went about his business without complaining. He was successful in everything that he took on.

Joe: What impact did Jack have on APCO?

Larry: Jack was extremely passionate about CPRA, and never wanted the name of the chapter to change. He had a signature statement of saying, "I could be wrong," after laying out a plan to the committee, only to have the plan accepted by the group later.

Jack is most known for his work in establishing in-building radio communications standards, which are still in place today. He also lobbied APCO on behalf of the state chapters to change the national oversight and allow the chapters to have more autonomy.



Julie Heimkes, 2024 Jack Daniel Award of Distinction Recipient

Joe: What is your favorite memory of Jack?

Larry: It's hard to have a favorite memory of Jack. The last time I saw him at IWCE, he looked like a million bucks! He talked about life and enjoying each other's company. There were ten manufacturer representatives in Southern California. We would often get together for lunch, put on multi-city events, and drive to Arizona and San Diego over the course of three days, sometimes going to Honolulu as well. Also, I loved it when Jack threw me into things I wasn't ready for! When a life ends, it is good when people can say, "There was a good person." That was and is Jack.

Jack's contributions to the public safety communications commercial industry were extensive, positively changing the relationship between APCO's commercial members and public sector members. The CAC strives to continue his work by working closely with APCO to provide guidance and support, solicit new corporate sponsors, and promote commercial membership, among other initiatives.

If you would like to nominate someone who has made a great impact on the commercial side of APCO nationally or internationally, please send an email for more information to: Tina Jackson at tina.jackson@thespectrumfirm.com

CCAM Nominations Are Now Open!

APCO is proud to launch the new Chapter Commercial Advisory Member (CCAM) Excellence Award, created to spotlight and celebrate the outstanding impact of an exceptional CCAM. This prestigious honor will be presented on the APCO 2026 stage in San Antonio, Texas, August 2 -5, recognizing a leader who goes above and beyond in service, collaboration, and commitment.

Know someone who deserves the spotlight? Or are you ready to raise your own hand? Submit an [online nomination](#) or email your completed nomination materials to cacnominations@apcointl.org by **January 15, 2026**. Don't miss the chance to recognize excellence!

CYBER INTEL

Corner

Shielding The Lifeline: Part 2

By Matt Dean

Security for Public Safety Land Mobile Radio Systems

Security risks are not purely technical; operational and physical controls are equally vital:

- **Physical Infrastructure Compromise:** The geographically distributed nature of LMR infrastructure (tower sites, repeaters, and dispatch centers) makes it vulnerable to physical intrusion, vandalism, or environmental damage. An attack on a single repeater site can eliminate coverage for a vast geographic area.
- **Poor Cyber Hygiene and Configuration:** Agencies often suffer from a "false sense of security," failing to implement basic IT security practices. This includes relying on vendor-supplied default passwords, using unpatched software, and failing to enforce strong device policies for lost or stolen radios.
- **Encryption Key Management Lapses:** Encryption is only as strong as its key management. Poor key handling - such as using easily guessable keys, failing to regularly rekey, or insecurely loading keys into radios - is a critical vulnerability. If an encryption key is compromised, every conversation secured by that key becomes accessible to the adversary.

Securing LMR systems requires a holistic approach that combines advanced P25 features with robust organizational and physical controls. The P25 standard defines the framework for modern LMR security, providing essential tools to protect confidentiality and ensure integrity:

- **End-to-End Encryption (E2EE):** E2EE is the cornerstone of protecting voice and data traffic from eavesdropping. P25 systems commonly use the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) with a key length of 256 bits, which is FIPS-certified and considered virtually unbreakable by current means. Encryption must be consistently applied across all sensitive talk groups, and agencies must implement a clear policy to prevent personnel from inadvertently transmitting sensitive information "in the clear."

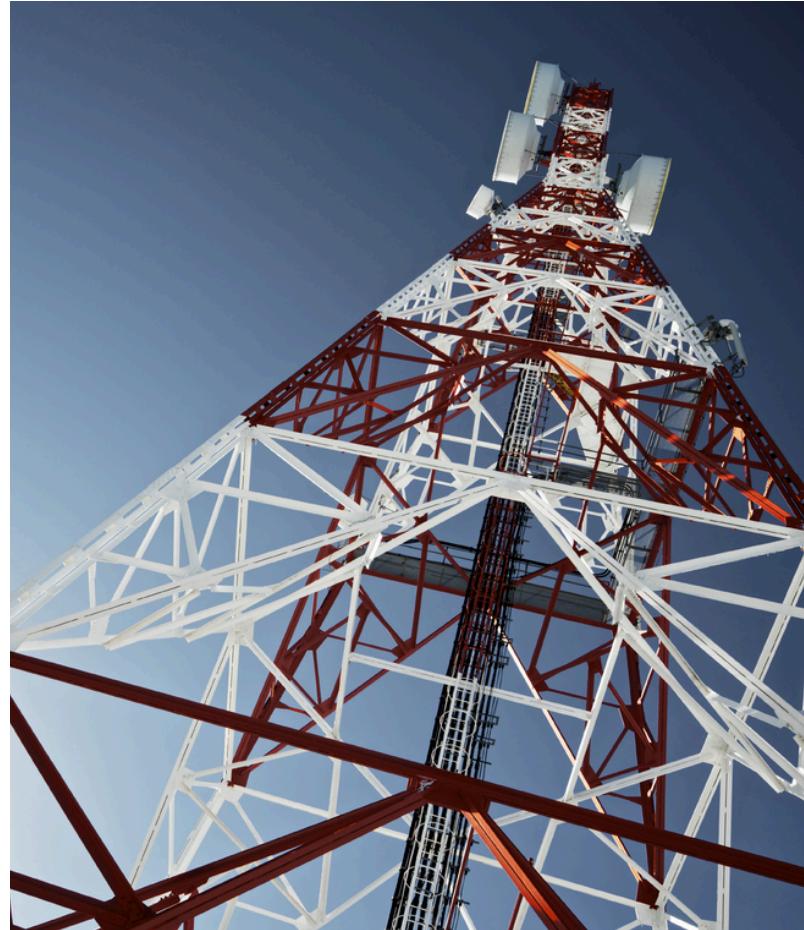


Photo courtesy of Motorola Solutions

- **Link Layer Authentication (LLA):** LLA is a critical feature that verifies the identity of the subscriber radio before it is allowed to register and access the network. This mechanism prevents radio cloning and the use of illegally programmed or unauthorized devices, thus protecting the system's integrity from inside threats.
- **Over-The-Air Rekeying (OTAR):** OTAR is the best practice for managing encryption keys. It allows system administrators to generate, distribute, and update keys across all radios remotely. This eliminates the need for manual key loading via a Key Variable Loader (KVL), which is slow, prone to error, and exposes the physical keys to risk. Secure, automated rekeying is essential for maintaining cryptographic agility.
- **Radio Unit Inhibit/Kill:** In the event a radio is lost or stolen, system managers must be able to remotely disable or "kill" the device, rendering it incapable of transmitting or receiving. This is a crucial component of device policy to mitigate risks associated with lost assets.

Operational and Physical Security Best Practices

Technical features alone are insufficient. Agencies must adhere to a comprehensive cybersecurity framework, such as the one recommended by CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency):

- **Cyber Incident Response and Testing:** Agencies must develop and regularly test an Incident Response Plan that specifically addresses threats to LMR operational technology. This plan must cover how to detect, contain, and recover from events like network intrusions, jamming, and encryption key compromises.
- **Secure Infrastructure and Redundancy:** Physical access control to all repeater sites and dispatch centers is paramount. Sites should be secured with adequate barriers, surveillance, and access logging. Furthermore, systems should be designed with geographically diverse redundancy (e.g., duplicated control centers and backhaul network routing) to ensure system availability even in the face of a physical disaster or a targeted attack.
- **Regular Security Audits and Patching:** The network infrastructure, including zone controllers, dispatch consoles, and core servers, must be treated as a high-value target. This mandates regular vulnerability scanning, penetration testing, and the prompt application of security patches and firmware updates to address known weaknesses.
- **Personnel Training and Policy:** Human factors are often the weakest link. Comprehensive training is necessary to educate personnel on the risks of social engineering (e.g., spearphishing), proper handling of sensitive information, and the correct operation of secure-mode radios. Strong policies must govern password management, remote access, and the disposal of obsolete radio equipment.

The security of public safety LMR systems is a continuous operational requirement, not a one-time project. As communication networks increasingly converge, the defense must evolve from simply securing the radio airwaves to securing the entire ecosystem - from the mobile handset to the deepest network controller - ensuring that the public safety lifeline remains robust, confidential, and available during the moments that matter most.

Matt Dean serves as a member of the Cybersecurity Committee. He is in the Information and Communications Technology Services field and is also a volunteer with the Watchung Rescue Squad in Watchung, New Jersey.

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Health & Wellness

Peer Support Beyond the Call

By Jessica Tresch, ENP, RPL



Let's start with a personal story from years ago when I was still call taking. I was working a graveyard shift and was extremely burned out, lonely, and exhausted. My family and friends were all on normal schedules and I wasn't close with the peers I was on shift with. Towards the end of my night, a call I'll never forget dropped in. The father-to-be sounded calm but tense, because his wife was having contractions but was only a few months along. As the call progressed, it became clear she was having a stillbirth. As my heart broke for them, I continued the protocols and tried to pour every ounce of compassion I could into my voice. As help arrived, I asked for the patient's name, "Jessica" ... and I felt my final piece of composure snap. What that couple will never know is that I was also suffering my own tragedy that night, having just miscarried my first of several pregnancies. She and I shared more than a first name, we shared a very intimate loss that people are terrified to talk about.

I am telling my personal story because so often this type of grief is so uncomfortable to people that they ignore it. Those suffering are left to do so alone. My center had peer support, but on that night it failed me. I was breaking alone, right there in the middle of the operations floor. I was surrounded by people but was somehow completely isolated. I needed someone, anyone, to recognize that I needed help. Eventually, I went outside and sobbed until I couldn't anymore. But no one noticed I was gone. That experience left a mark on me for a long time – and was a huge influence on why I would go on to become the coordinator for our Peer Support team. For years, I kept this story to myself and only my very close inner circle had any idea of my struggles with multiple miscarriages. Each time, I continued to work through the physical and mental anguish, and each time I withdrew further into myself.

Now let's get down to the point- life is hard. Sad, scary, awful things happen to people all the time, and we are not immune to that truth. We try so hard to be resistant to the struggles of everyday life because we must "be strong" and invulnerable to the same things our callers are facing. This gives us an unfair complex in which we believe if we show any perceived weakness, it means we're not cut out for this career that we love so dearly. **I call BS.** I've done the suffer-in-silence and hope, and I can tell you it takes so much courage to talk about the things that hurt us.



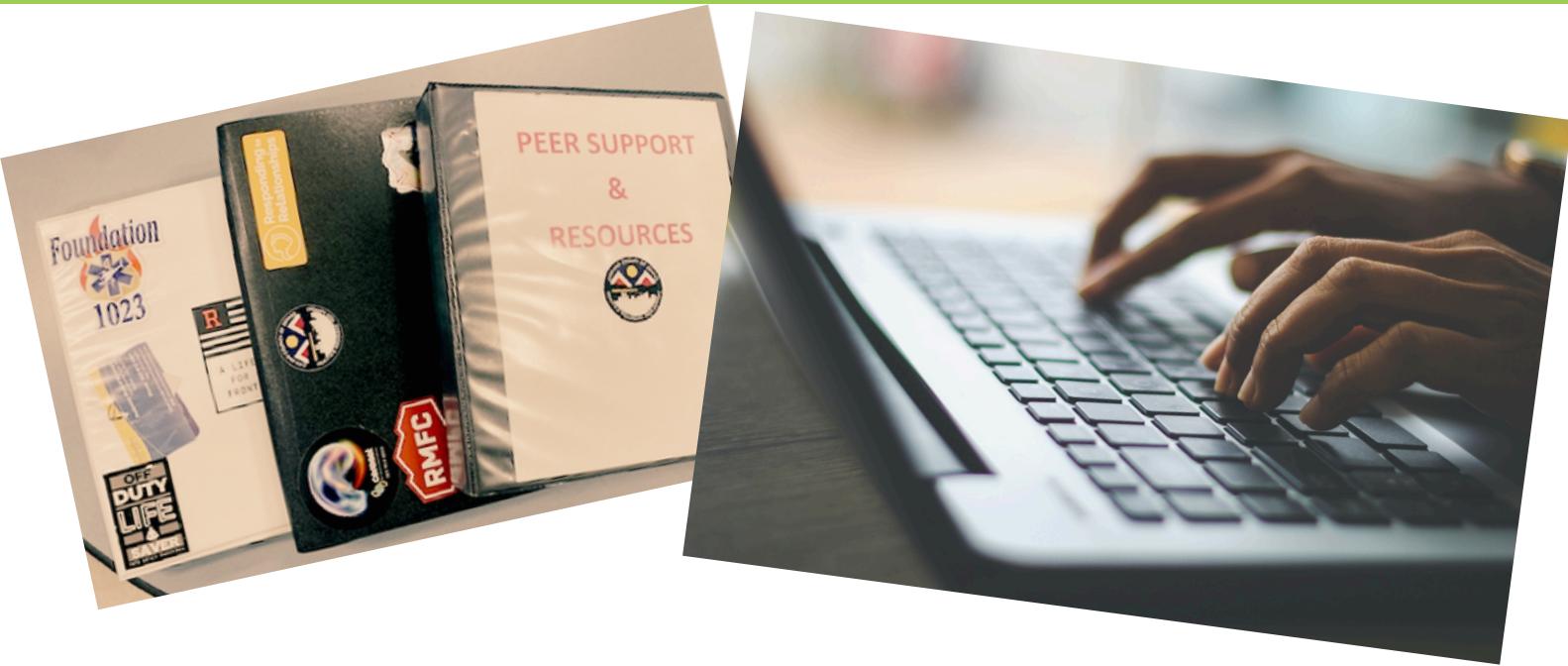
Using this philosophy my peer support team changed how we approach our outreach – in short we are determined to be present, proactive, and actively engaged in culture change. In this approach, we focus on what my co-coordinator calls MACE – Make A Contact Everyday. The theory (and now fact in my experience) is that if you constantly make peer support an everyday interaction, the stigma begins to naturally break down. Your teams will know exactly who is on peer support, and are comfortable going to them during the worst moments because it isn't the first time they've interacted. They see peer support regularly checking in on people – and it is no longer odd in my center to see someone ask a peer supporter to go chat and take a walk around the parking lot. It is not a clandestine meeting, it's part of our every day culture. This took years of intentional change and pushing interactions, it didn't happen in a vacuum.

Our team spent years establishing the trust and consistency it takes to have a truly reliable peer support that can last through the challenges every center faces. While I will not claim to have the perfect team with all the right answers, I am proud of what we have built. We deeply value proactivity on the team, and each member agrees to be an agent of culture change to continue our mission. Remember back to when I mentioned no one even noticed that I'd left the operations floor? Today that scenario IS noticed because our team knows the value of looking out for each other. When, not if, someone takes a call that affects them, we're paying attention. Not just the peer support team, but the whole staff.



Sharing our personal lives and difficult calls with our teams has brought us closer to the public safety “family” that we all profess to be a part of. While I don't advocate for everyone to share all their personal business, I do believe peer support should know the triggers of our staff as much as possible. Furthermore, our team shares privately with each other what experiences we have in life that we are willing to discuss – such as addiction, mental health, divorce, financial struggle, child loss, suicidality, etc. We know who on our team can speak to these experiences and can connect them with peers who need support in those areas. By having this knowledge, we can be aware of calls that may impact a person more deeply because of what has happened in their lives.

We all know this career is difficult to say the least. If we can make it easier for our peers by providing that deeper connection and support, we have an obligation to do so. Our mission as a peer support is to be there for all of it – whether work related or not. We cannot magically walk through the ops door and leave all our baggage outside; you cannot convince me the brain works that way. We are some of the only people in the realm of public safety that understand what this career does to the heart and soul, and we are in a unique place to help each other through. I genuinely hope we can be done with the days of “tough it out” and instead learn to show the same compassion to our peers that we show our callers.



Peer Support Librarians

Building a Resource Network

By Jessica Tresch, ENP, RPL

One of the profound barriers to mental health in 9-1-1 is a lack of resources. Available data, research, and support is often reserved for our sworn partners, and civilians do not qualify or are under-served. Thankfully that seems to be changing, and as states begin to classify 9-1-1 professionals as first responders, this reality may slowly begin to right itself. In lieu of these State or Federal resources, peer support can help bridge the gap. These teams should become experts in what resources are available to them – specifically those that are local and culturally competent.

The Resource Gap in 9-1-1 Mental Health

Colorado is inundated with support, and for that we are very lucky. In Denver, we are even more fortunate to be in a metro area that not only has resources, but resource competitors so we have access to high-quality care. Denver 9-1-1's Peer Support team was established back in 2001, and as such we've had decades to build our "library". For many years, the team had a binder full of brochures and pamphlets dedicated towards connecting our team with the resources they could need. One problem became clear though, the team collected this information, but we didn't necessarily know much about them.

As part of our effort to become truly proactive, we began to network intensely and often. We went to every event we could and began simply meeting people. As this became more common place, we became connected to more and more individuals with a heart to help first responders. It became clear that our binder of brochures was woefully outdated – so our peer support team became resource librarians. Together, the team collected as many potential resources as we could, doing many hours of research and outreach. Then we began to meticulously work our way through and connect personally to each one, reaching out to intentionally vet each potential connection. We visited inpatient and outpatient facilities, arranged meetings with metro 9-1-1 peer support leaders, connected to mental health clinicians, discussed benefits with our wellness directors, set up monthly on-site visits from a nurse practitioner, hosted a wellness screening, even held a retreat at a ranch.



From Brochures to a Living Library

This was not a quick or easy task. It took approximately two years of dedication by our team to build out a sufficient library, and then we had to promote it and make it available. This led us to creating an intranet page for 9-1-1, something our partners in police and fire had done years before us. We began to add dozens of resources to our page, covering everything from tactical nutrition to financial assistance, to sleep, to mental health crisis support and beyond. This list is continually reviewed and updated by our team and has proven to be extremely useful to peer support as they navigate contacts both personal and career related.

The good news is much of this was completely free. We began the endeavor at a paid mental health conference for responders, where vendors were available. We stopped at each booth and talked with the providers. We obtained contact information and then followed up in the weeks after. While many of these resources were marketed to police or fire, we quickly found the simplest answer was to just ask if they would also serve 9-1-1. Many of the vendors and providers in the local area were eager to incorporate telecommunicators into their repertoire, and worked with us to determine if they could serve our needs.

“We didn’t just collect resources—we built relationships.”

I would encourage peer support teams to become librarians for their centers. This is not an easy task but is a very necessary one. Make the phone calls, ask providers if they can host a lunch and learn for your team, reach out on the webpages and simply start the process of vetting your resources. Importantly, if they are not culturally competent, remove them from your list unless you have no other options. We have learned that this is a major selling point when we introduce the resource to a peer support contact, they are more likely to partake in the assistance offered if it is presented as being designed for first responders.

Finally, don’t be afraid to do what my co-coordinator calls CASE – Copy And Steal Everything! Ok fine, please give credit where it is due, but there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Some of our biggest successes have come from other communications center peer support teams sharing their methods with us, and us with them. As communications professionals, we can communicate and share more between our sister agencies. Good luck with your libraries!

Jessica Tresch is an Operations Supervisor and Wellness Director with Denver 9-1-1 in Colorado.

Remembering Our Past

A Legacy of Service Above Self

By JaCorey R. Glaude, ENP, RPL, CCSM



Honoring the Life, Leadership, and Lasting Impact of Mr. Nate McClure

Though I never had the opportunity to meet Nate McClure in person, his impact still reached me through his work, his reputation, and the way others spoke about him with such respect and admiration. Even while in the hospital, he graciously agreed to an interview, a testament to his selfless spirit and unwavering dedication. Regrettably, we never got that moment. Fortunately I was able to interview his incredible wife Mrs. Donna McClure, and daughter Megan. By sharing his story, we honor his legacy and help ensure the light he brought to this profession continues to shine within APCO International and especially among our Industry Partner Community.

A Life Defined by Service Above Self

In the world of public safety, few individuals leave a mark as lasting and influential as Nate McClure. Nate McClure was more than a name in public safety, he was a pillar of leadership, innovation, and compassion. Through decades of service, he left an indelible mark on APCO and the broader public safety community, not just through the positions he held or the projects he led, but in how he made people feel seen, supported, and inspired. His was a life of “service above self”, a principle he didn’t just speak about, but lived daily, even in his final days.

His journey into 9-1-1 was not one of planning, but providence. From the moment he first sat at a radio console, an unexpected yet deeply impactful career took root. “He was a deputy sheriff for Winnebago County and was also going to school to get his bachelor’s degree,” shared Mrs. McClure, “One of the ways that he could study was to work the night shift, and sometimes they would pull him in to work the radio. They got to like him working the radio... but he didn’t like it. He wanted to be out in the field. But the sheriff said, ‘You will volunteer to do the radio.’” Those shifts both literally and figuratively would begin a decades-long dedication to public safety communications.

Not long after Nate and his wife Donna married, the sheriff suggested they attend a conference hosted by an organization called APCO. “So off to APCO we went in Palm Springs, California,” Donna recalled. “It was August, about 600 people at one motel... It was extremely hot... We met Bud McCullum, and because it was Nate’s first conference, Bud said, ‘I’ll take you under my wing if your wife will take the kids under her wing. Bud taught Nate the right way to do a conference.’” That spirit of mentorship became foundational to Nate’s approach to APCO and his commitment to helping others. “He tried to make sure first-time attendees got off on the right foot... that it’s not playtime or touring time. It’s time for work.”

Passing the Torch: Leadership, Mentorship, and Legacy

Over the span of 55 APCO conferences - 53 of them consecutive, Nate never lost that focus or fervor. Mrs. McClure recalls spending most of their wedding anniversaries at the annual APCO International Conference. He served in numerous leadership and committee roles and was never one to shy away from a challenge. Nate served as APCO International President from 1978-1979 and also president of the Illinois chapter. "It's hard to say what he was most proud of," Mrs. McClure said. "He loved all aspects of it. He was committed to growing and learning. He passed the torch. And he didn't want that torch to go out."

Nate's belief in "service above self" guided his every move. That value, nurtured through his involvement in Rotary Club and instilled by his father, shaped how he led. "He was always looking out for somebody else," Mrs. McClure said. As a servant leader, he embodied humility, connection, and an unwavering dedication to improving the lives of others, especially those in the field relying on communications to keep them safe. "He wanted the safest and best communication possible for the people who were out on two-way radios," Mrs. McClure explained.

Nate's work with APCO International and his broader involvement in public safety included serving on the APCO International Commercial Advisor Council, CALEA board, and many more - became a deep part of his identity. From deputy sheriff to 9-1-1 director to public safety technology consultant, he became a vibrant and trusted voice. "He went full circle and was fully 100% immersed in that field," Megan shared. "He was always willing to do what was needed to bring things together for others. He would never turn down a phone call or email from somebody. Even the week before he passed away, he was helping someone."

Among his many recognitions, Nate was especially honored to receive the Jack Daniel Award, which held special significance as he was instrumental in establishing the award after Jack's passing. "It was a great honor," Mrs. McClure shared. "He was honored and humbled by it, and he was very proud of it."

There were countless moments when his impact was unmistakable. "Just mention his name," Megan said. "When he switched over to the CAC side [and became an industry partner], one person at a conference said, 'I had heard of him, but I didn't realize how many people would come to the booth to see him. We had never had that many people before.'" Megan shared, "Everyone knew my dad and looked forward to seeing him at the conference."

Nate's legacy is not only one of longevity and leadership - it's one of heart. "He lived APCO," Megan said. And in doing so, he shaped the public safety profession, inspired his family, and served as a quiet, steadfast force of good.

A Message Carried Forward

To the next generation of public safety professionals:

Commit to growth. Honor your calling. Pass the torch—and never let it go out.

To the industry partners supporting this mission:

Lead with humility, serve with purpose, and never forget that real impact happens when people know you care.

What a legacy - not just measured by titles or achievements, but etched into the hearts of those he served, echoing through every life he touched. Enduring, extraordinary, and deeply human, Nate McClure's legacy will continue to guide, inspire, and elevate the very fabric of public safety.

APCO International proudly honors his memory, and the APCO International CAC remains committed to carrying forward the important work he was so passionate about.

JaCorey R. Glaude, Training & Technology Consultant with Omni Public Safety Group and 911 Education Manager at GovWorx, has over a decade in public safety communications. He serves on APCO's Commercial Advisory Council and passionately advocates for the industry.

Inside the Committees

Recognizing Excellence in Your ECC

By Brandie Ball

Who in your center has done outstanding work this year? Whether they did an amazing job on a particular call/project or are a consistently stellar employee in your center, get ready to recognize their efforts by nominating them for an APCO International ECC Award. The APCO International Awards Committee is gearing up for another exciting award season recognizing the outstanding work done by telecommunicators and technologists throughout the country.

Nomination Categories Include:

- **Telecommunicator of the Year:** Honoring exceptional telecommunicators who consistently provide top-quality service and support to first responders and the public.
- **Communications Center Director of the Year:** Recognizing visionary leaders who drive innovation and excellence in public safety communications centers.
- **Line Supervisor of the Year:** Celebrating supervisors who inspire and motivate their teams to achieve exceptional results.
- **Trainer of the Year:** Honoring dedicated trainers who empower telecommunicators with the knowledge and skills to excel in their roles.
- **Team of the Year:** Recognizing outstanding teams that collaborate effectively to deliver exceptional public safety services.
- **Radio Frequency Technologist of the Year:** Honoring technologists who ensure reliable and efficient radio communications for first responders.
- **Information Technologist of the Year:** Recognizing IT professionals who drive innovation and support critical public safety systems.
- **Technology Leadership - Small Agency:** Celebrating small agencies that demonstrate exceptional leadership and innovation in technology adoption.
- **Technology Leadership - Large Agency:** Recognizing large agencies that have successfully implemented advanced technologies to enhance public safety services.
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Anyone can nominate a deserving colleague, supervisor, manager/director, team, or technologist for an APCO International ECC Award. Recognition for outstanding work is always valued. It makes no difference if it's from a large center or small center, urban city or rural county. The awards committee is committed to recognizing the most exceptional individuals and teams in the industry. So, start preparing now. **Nominations will be accepted January 15, 2026, through April 1, 2026.**

Brandie Ball is an Emergency Communications Supervisor at the St. Petersburg Police Department.
She also serves as the Chair for the APCO International Awards Committee.



Why It Is Critical for APCO to Partner With PSAPs Nationwide in Hiring Veterans!

By Paul Jokerst

Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) across the nation are facing unprecedented challenges—rising call volumes, increasingly complex incidents, heightened expectations for real-time intelligence, and a workforce that is harder than ever to recruit and retain. In this landscape, one of the most underutilized, yet highly qualified, talent pipelines sits right in front of us: the nation's military veterans.

For decades, APCO International has served as the leading voice for public safety communications. Today, APCO has a unique opportunity—and responsibility—to work hand-in-hand with PSAPs across the country to champion veteran recruitment. By strengthening this partnership, the industry can tap into an extraordinarily skilled workforce while simultaneously supporting those who have already served our nation with honor.

Veterans Bring Mission-Critical Skills We Need

PSAPs rely on individuals who can think clearly, perform under pressure, multitask, and adapt instantly. These traits are foundational to military service.

Veterans bring:

- **Calm under intense stress**, often forged in environments far more demanding than a 911 center.
- **Disciplined decision-making**, essential when seconds matter.
- **Team-based mindset**, crucial for the collaborative nature of ECC/PSAP operations.
- **Technical proficiency**, including radios, data systems, and real-time communications tools.
- **Strong sense of duty and service**, aligning perfectly with the purpose-driven work of emergency communications.

Simply put, the skills our industry struggles to teach after hiring are skills veterans already possess on day one.

The National Staffing Crisis Requires National Solutions

Nearly every PSAP in America is struggling with recruitment and retention. Traditional candidate pools are shrinking, and modern job seekers often prefer remote or flexible roles that public safety centers cannot offer.

Veterans, however, represent:

- A large, diverse, nationwide talent pool.
- Individuals actively seeking meaningful civilian careers.
- A workforce with proven reliability and commitment.

APCO, as a national organization, is uniquely positioned to bridge the gap by:

- Helping PSAPs understand how to translate military experience into ECC skill sets.
- Developing standardized veteran-friendly hiring guidance.
- Advocating at the federal level for funding, incentives, and transitional programs.
- Partnering with military bases to create direct hiring pipelines.

Local centers cannot do this alone - national coordination is essential.

Hiring Veterans Strengthens Organizational Culture

In an era where PSAPs are experiencing rapid change - from NextGen 911 to RTIC integration, analytics, AI-assisted QA/QI, DFR programs, and new technology every year - having employees who embrace structure, adaptability, and continuous improvement is invaluable.

Veterans:

- Model professionalism and leadership.
- Contribute to a strong, cohesive team culture.
- Understand chain of command without sacrificing initiative.
- Elevate expectations for excellence among their peers.

Their presence reinforces the high standards our profession needs to uphold as PSAPs become more technologically advanced and operationally vital to the broader public safety ecosystem.

It Honors Their Service by Offering Purposeful Careers

Many veterans struggle after leaving the military, not due to lack of skill, but because they miss the sense of mission and belonging. Emergency communications offers both - while also benefiting from their tremendous strengths. A veteran who becomes a 911 dispatcher or RTIC specialist does not just get a job - they get a new way to serve.

APCO can play a transformative role by:

- Advocating for national recognition of emergency communications as a viable post-military career path.
- Partnering with VA programs, transition offices, and non-profits.
- Ensuring PSAPs understand how to welcome and support veterans throughout hiring, onboarding, and ongoing wellness initiatives.

This is an opportunity to both support veterans and strengthen the profession they join.

APCO Is the Voice That Can Drive National Change

Because APCO represents thousands of PSAPs, trainers, supervisors, technologists, and leaders across the public safety landscape, it has the credibility and platform to lead a coordinated movement.

By prioritizing veteran recruitment as a national initiative, APCO can:

- Standardize best practices.
- Educate agencies.
- Build partnerships with the Department of Defense and VA.
- Advocate for funding and national policy support.
- Help modernize hiring models to better match veteran skillsets.

This is not merely beneficial - it is an essential step in ensuring the long-term strength, resilience, and professionalism of the public safety communications workforce.

Conclusion

Hiring veterans is not simply a staffing strategy - it is a strategic advantage. Veterans bring unparalleled skills, dedication, and leadership that match perfectly with the mission of 911 and emergency communications. But to fully realize this potential, PSAPs need national coordination, guidance, and advocacy. APCO is uniquely positioned to lead this effort.

By working collaboratively with PSAPs across the nation, APCO can help build a veteran-inclusive workforce that strengthens our centers, enriches our culture, and honors the service of those who have already given so much to our country.



MILITARY HIRING EVENTS

**THE MILITARY EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE WANTS TO
SHARE SOME EVENTS YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN TO
SEEK AND HIRE MILITARY MEMBERS AND SPOUSES.**

- SKILLBRIDGE FELLOWSHIP INFORMATION SESSION JANUARY 13TH, 2026
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- JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO MILITARY SPOUSE HIRING EVENT- JANUARY 21-22
- CAMP FOSTER CAREER SUMMIT- FEB 2ND-3RD
- CAMP PENDLETON CAREER SUMMIT-FEBRUARY 10TH
- MIRAMAR CAREER SUMMIT- FEBRUARY 12TH
- DYESS AIR FORCE BASE CAREER SUMMIT- FEBRUARY 19TH
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Teammates in Action



Christina Loewen

Shawnee Communications Center

In the year that Ms. Loewen has been employed with the Shawnee Communication Center, I cannot determine just one incident that stands out for her. There are too many that come to mind. While she has handled several traumatic calls exceptionally well, and has been a calm voice in the chaos for many. I am nominating her based on the actions she takes every single shift that she works. Despite some unfortunate personal health setbacks in the fall of 2024 that included extended leave from work, Ms. Loewen maintained communication with her supervisors. Upon her return, she jumped right back in to complete her training and become an asset to our team. Ms. Loewen arrives for shift with a kind word for her partners and a pleasant, positive attitude. Ms. Loewen maintains her exceptionally positive attitude in her interactions both with citizens and her peers, even during some of the hardest of situations or calls, she has been able to connect with her peers and offer support.

Ms. Loewen is an excellent example of persistence and gratitude in our Communications Center. She is well known for her excellent customer service and can-do positive attitude with her peers. Ms. Loewen came into the center during a time of exceptionally low morale, poor interpersonal communication issues, and turmoil, during which there were many opportunities that she could have chosen to leave or to withdraw her involvement in additional tasks or activities. Instead, Ms. Loewen stood on her personal ethics and conviction, choosing to vocalize and bring awareness to the toxic cycle that her peers were being drug into. With her help, supervisors were able to support both Ms. Loewen and other communications employees through this time of turmoil and work towards ushering in a more peaceful and productive environment.

While some interpersonal issues persisted, Ms. Loewen saw a need and chose to jump right into improving and building better morale opportunities for her peers.

She has been an integral member of our morale committee, helping select monthly decorating themes and activities that encourage engagement throughout the center. In May 2025, as part of the center's Fiesta theme, Ms. Loewen organized a Cinco de Mayo - inspired scavenger hunt featuring culturally relevant items and local landmarks meaningful to our city. Despite having no budget for these initiatives, Ms. Loewen personally funded the activity and hand-crafted several decorations for the Communications Center.

Ms. Loewen volunteers her own time and money to ensure that her partners are recognized for both professional and personal milestones like work anniversaries and birthdays. She has curated personal gifts for her peers that speak to her knowledge and involvement in getting to know them on a deeper level, this speaks to her keen observations and attention to detail.

The morale committee activities that she has volunteered for are also completed in addition to her daily operations responsibilities to expertly process and dispatch emergency and non-emergency calls. Ms. Loewen is also currently assisting as part of our training team to assist in training and retaining new telecommunicators. Her ability to connect with her peers and calm demeanor have been integral in assisting new telecommunicators in starting their training journey.

Overall, Ms. Loewen is a shining example for her peers of getting involved and choosing to do the next right thing, regardless of the situation or how others may perceive her actions. She has absolutely jumped into this career with the primary goals of wanting to genuinely help her community, being part of a resilient team and building trust between herself and the responders that she dispatches for. Ms. Loewen is the embodiment of a Teammate in Action!

Elizabeth Sullivan

Edmond Dispatch



On July 11, 2025, Edmond Dispatch received what initially appeared to be a routine call on our non-emergency line from a supervisor at our local public transportation bus hub. Elizabeth has interacted with this gentleman numerous times in the past, and this call began much like any other. There was a subject on the property causing an issue, and police response was requested.

However, during Elizabeth's calm and professional intake of the necessary information, the situation escalated drastically and tragically - the caller was stabbed while still on the line with Elizabeth.

Throughout this harrowing exchange, Elizabeth remained composed and reassuring. I personally heard her calmly and repeatedly assure the caller that she would stay on the phone with him until help arrived. She was there in his darkest hour as a beacon of hope and help. Simultaneously, she efficiently aided efforts in the background - getting the information needed so coworkers could assist and initiate a medical response and ensuring that information was available verbally and in call notes so responding officers were fully informed with a detailed suspect description and his general whereabouts.

Elizabeth's actions that day are a powerful demonstration of three of the City of Edmond's core values: Professionalism, Integrity, and Teamwork. Her steady demeanor, clear questioning, and soothing voice likely brought the caller a measure of comfort during an unimaginably traumatic moment. Her ability to multitask under extreme stress and still provide exceptional support and vital information showcases exactly what we strive to be as the first of first responders. Elizabeth not only did her job - she embodied the very best of who we are. With all this in mind, I proudly and wholeheartedly nominate Elizabeth Sullivan for recognition. Her performance today was nothing short of extraordinary.



Bridgette Veronese

Northeast Regional Communications Center

Bridgette Veronese is a Telecommunicator at Northeast Regional Communications Center located in McHenry Illinois. She is receiving this nomination from her fellow Telecommunicator, Kaitlin Durband. Bridgette is being recognized for her actions on July 20, 2025, at 14:47 when a tractor overturned into a body of water within the Harvard Fire Protection District. Bridgette was the call taker and the radio dispatcher for the incident. The location of the patient was one that required Bridgette to utilize her active listening skills from the information provided by the caller and her mapping system in order to obtain the best access point to the patient. Access to the scene was extremely limited, with rough terrain and no paved roadway. Together with the Command unit on scene they were able to organize assistance from several surrounding agencies, make the appropriate notifications and complete a complex rescue incident. The patient was believed to be trapped for over three hours and was airlifted from the scene to local hospital in Rockford.



Please join me in congratulating Telecommunicator Bridgette Veronese, who goes above and beyond daily for her team, by presenting her the "Teammates in Action Award." Thank you, Bridgette for all you do for the Northeast Regional Communication Center.

Upcoming Events



INTRODUCTION TO PEER SUPPORT: STARTUP, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES

presented by APCO Intl's Health & Wellness Committee

SPEAKERS:

SCOTT BOLEN
RAYMOND SHUTE
MELISSA STROH
OF THE IDAHO STATE POLICE

 **THURSDAY**
01 | 29 | 26

 **1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST**

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APCO 2026
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WORKGROUP ABBREVIATIONS

CWG - Chapter Leader's Reference Guide & Chapter Officer Toolkit Working Group
LMC - Life Member Content Working Group
NWG - Newsletter Working Group

PWG - Polls Working Group
TIA - Teammates in Action Working Group
WEB - Webinars Working Group