



COUNTY OF ERIE  
OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Barry Grossman**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Public Safety Newsletter**  
**August 2010**

I am very proud to put forth this administration's 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Safety Newsletter. The 911/ Public Safety Center demonstrate just how valuable they are to Erie County with 112,632 calls entered into the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system last year. The services they provide are fundamental to the Erie area and to strengthening the community and I thank them for their continued dedication and commitment.

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Brian Mesaros receives Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency's Basic Certification**



Barry Grossman  
*County Executive*

Jerry Mifsud  
*Director of Administration*

Todd Geers  
*Director of Public Safety*

Dale Robinson  
*Emergency Management Coordinator*

John Grappy  
*911 Coordinator*

Abdul Osman  
*Chief Information Officer*

## **Employee Profile**

Erie County Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator, Brian Mesaros, was presented his Basic Certification for Emergency Managers on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010. This certification is the first of three certifications that the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency has established for emergency managers in the Commonwealth.

Brian, employed since November of 2006 at his current position, has been an integral part of emergency management for the County. He is responsible for Tier II collections for hazardous chemicals stored in the County, working on grants for the County's Hazmat team, and coordinating with the Information Technology and 911 Operations Sections for the implementation and use of the Reverse 911 software.

He is also working on updating the County's Hazard Mitigation plan, which is required

to be approved by FEMA, and a user of Knowledge Center, is an online incident management tool the County uses as part of the regional task force.

Brian is a 1993 graduate of Sharpsville Area High School and a 1997 graduate from Penn State University with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Accounting. Currently, he is Chief and Treasurer of the Fairview Fire Department and an 11 year member of the Erie County Hazardous Materials Team as a Technician.

Along with his Basic Emergency Management Certification, Brian is also certified in Hazmat Awareness and Operations, Fire Instructor 1, General Rescue Principals, and Vehicle and Machinery Rescue. Brian has had extensive fire, Hazmat and emergency management training throughout the years.



## **ECDOPS Collaborates with Erie Water Authority**

The Department of Public Safety has been working with the Erie Water Authority to develop policy and procedure for the use of the Reverse 911 System to notify Erie Water customers of any emergency water alerts.

This system has been used on a limited basis in the past to notify water customers in other areas of the County when there was a problem with the public water supply. The Reverse 911 System is still being configured, and will eventually be available to send emergency messages to phone subscribers based on geographic locations.

For instance, if a Hazmat incident requires the evacuation of a neighborhood, the

Reverse 911 system can be programmed in a short period of time with a brief recorded message. That message can be sent to all the landline subscribers in that neighborhood.

### **IT Modems**

The IT Department has purchased additional modems to improve the SMS/Text messaging of Fire and EMS calls to our volunteer fire departments. These additional modems will allow emergency dispatches to go out more quickly. We will continue to seek improvement to our notification systems in an effort to provide the best service possible to our community.

### **ECDOPS Thanks Chief Tom Nelson**



Our Law Enforcement Radio Advisory Committee would like to thank Chief Tom Nelson of the Edinboro University

Police Department for his tenure as their Chairman. Tom, who has had a long and very successful career in law enforcement with the Erie Police Department and the Edinboro University Police Department, recently retired.

Taking Chief Nelson's place as committee chair will be Captain Scott Heidt of the Millcreek Township Police Department.

### **Goals of ECDOPS**



Our committee is currently working with the staff at Erie County Public Safety to revise the Standard Operating Procedures pertaining to Police Dispatch. One of the long-term goals of the Department of Public Safety is to become an Accredited Communications Center. A comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures manual is one key to obtaining accreditation. With the help and input from ALL Erie County

Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS Agencies, we hope to create a manual that will help us reach that goal.

### **Automatic Gain Control Helps Radio System**

One of our vendors, Catalyst Communications, has been working with our Communications Specialists on an Automatic Gain Control (AGC) for the radio consoles. We have been testing the AGC recently, and it seems to work well. Automatic Gain Control helps to improve the audio on the radio system, eliminating the need for a dispatcher to continually monitor their audio levels.

### **Welcome Jim Chaffee**



Many of the West County agencies know our newest Staff member. Jim Chaffee, a volunteer with Platea VFD, joined the Department

in late June, 2010 as a Communications Specialist. Jim has many years of experience in the radio repair industry, and has already contributed greatly to our mission at ECDOPS.

### IT Department Update



The Information Technology section of ECDOPS has been hard at work collecting, processing and inputting data into the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system. We still need to collect response data from a number of agencies, particularly those agencies not yet dispatched by Erie County. This process involves meeting with fire chiefs and reviewing each of the emergency service zones in their jurisdiction.

Each zone must be 'built out' to detail the specific department(s) and units that are to

be dispatched for each type of call handled by the agency. This information will then give the dispatcher the ability to send the appropriate response to a call for service.



### Public Safety's GIS Personnel

**Yvonne Costelloe** has been the 911 GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Coordinator since 2001. She was recognized as a certified GISP (Geographic Information Systems Professional) in 2008 by the GIS Certification Institute.

The Institute required her to fulfill three components: (1) Educational Achievement – A Bachelor Degree (Summa Cum Laude) in Computer Science and continued education in GIS-related courses and conferences; (2) Professional Experience – Nine years in GIS

application and development; and (3) Contributions to the Profession – Chair of Regional GIS Committee, member of professional associations, conference participation, and workshop instructor.

**Sheryl Hoetzel** joined the GIS division in 2009 as the GIS Technician. Her background in Call Taking along with completing several GIS courses including a Geospatial Technology program certificate from Penn State has helped her successfully transition into her new position.

### How GIS Assist the First Responders



Yvonne Costelloe says it is all about location. "No emergency first response can be sent until the location of the 911 caller is known." GIS involves all the data that is critical to determining

location – x-y coordinates, latitude and longitude, Global Position Systems, and geospatial data for roads, streams, addressable structures, ESZs (Emergency Service Zones), and hydrants. In fact, any geospatial data is valuable as it will assist the Telecommunicators and First Responders to respond as quickly as possible to an emergency with the appropriate personnel and equipment to save the lives and property of the people of Erie County.

The core of the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system is the GIS and MSAG (Master Street Address Guide) databases. Sustained and substantial effort and costs have been invested in the mapping and MSAG databases. Ensuring the integrity of continuous data accuracy is paramount to a timely and precise emergency response.

The mapping data is constantly changing with new development of subdivisions, plazas, streets, ESZs,

and other community growth initiatives. The GIS Division travels the roads of Erie County with a mobile GPS unit and laptop GIS software to regularly update and maintain accurate map data. This process ensures that map data utilized at the dispatch center will accurately locate calls, and provide the Telecommunicators and First Responders with all relevant information to assist with a speedy dispatch.

The MSAG is a tabular database derived from the GIS database that provides pertinent location information to the CAD. The records must be matched one-for-one in order to ensure consistency between the two databases as well as provide a “checks and balances” system. A methodical and detailed system for performing these comparisons on a regular basis is critical to the reliability of the 9-1-1 system.

The GIS division has stewardship for the County road centerlines,

addressable points and ESZs, and this geospatial data is shared with other County Departments. The GIS division also coordinates with 39 municipalities and 33 fire departments by exchanging data and providing atlas and wall maps.



**Contributors:**

**Harry Love**

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**Yvonne Costelloe**

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**Brian Mesaros**