

Erie County Public Safety Newsletter

Special Interest Articles:

- 911 Dispatch Fundamentals
- Fairview Firemen's Relief Association
- Autism Group of Corry

Erie County Department of Public Safety

Barry Grossman,
County Executive

Jerry Mifsud,
Director of
Administration

Todd Geers,
Director of Public Safety

John Grappy,
911 Coordinator

Dale Robinson,
EMA Coordinator

Abdul Osman,
Chief Info. Officer

2880 Flower Road
Erie, PA 16509

814.451.7920

814.451.7930 /F

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www.ecdops.org

County Executive Barry Grossman Brokers Deal with LECOM

As County Executive, it is my responsibility to look out for the best interest of the citizens of Erie County. The Administration was extremely pleased to announce a monumental agreement, brokered in my office, between the County of Erie and the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM). This agreement will benefit every person in Erie County at one point or another in their lives. This agreement provides \$500,000 in funding for two important projects for Erie County. Approximately \$370,000 of this funding will be used towards Public Safety to purchase and install mobile data terminals in 40 fire vehicles and 63 ambulances for agencies throughout the entire county. Agencies will have instant access to pertinent information needed to respond to emergencies. The Administration can't emphasize enough how invaluable this project will be to Erie County residents. This agreement is subject to County Council approval. We would like to thank Dr. John Ferretti, President and CEO of LECOM, Dr. Silvia Ferretti, Provost and Senior Vice President of LECOM, as well as Michael Visnosky, Esq., Chairman, Board of Trustees - LECOM, for their commitment to the community, along with their collaboration and willingness to shoulder a critical part of public responsibility of protecting lives and expanding learning opportunities. These programs were in keeping with LECOM's mission while at the same time providing the County with a tremendous opportunity to enhance the services afforded to the community.

The Administration is pleased to continue our promised communication and share with you the 12th edition of the Public Safety newsletter. Inside you will find valuable information about the Safety community, who continue to do a fantastic job serving the citizens of Erie County on a daily basis. On behalf of the Administration and the 911 Public Safety Center, we would like to wish all of you a safe and healthy summer.



Letter from Public Safety Director, Todd Geers

Hello Erie County! I am proud to present the latest Public Safety Newsletter with its polished and professional formatting. Kudos and thanks to Deneé Breter, County Executive's Administrative Officer, for creating this new look.

We all feel the impact to our budgets caused by the current economic slump, yet the need to improve operations, to replace equipment, or to press ahead persists. So when "free" money comes along, unexpectedly and beneficially, we should give thanks and praise. On behalf of the public safety community, a sincere thanks to County Executive Barry Grossman and Administrative staff for securing the LECOM grant money to benefit fire and EMS agencies!!

The mobile data terminal system (MDT) to be purchased for the fire and EMS community offers wonderful benefits to first responders, dispatch, and the public in terms of improved situational awareness, enhanced incident management, proximity dispatching of nearest available units, and mapping and routing to incident location, to name a few of the many features. The generous LECOM gift will outfit every ambulance in Erie County with an MDT system and at least one fire truck at every fire department. County-wide MDT deployment is scheduled for completion late this summer.

Numerous public safety initiatives are in-work or were completed over the past few months, and I wish to give a hearty thanks to all members of the Public Safety team for their unceasing commitment and dedication to our mission.

JOB WELL DONE!

**BEST CALL-
TAKING TIMES**
April/May 2012

Police Incident
25 Seconds:
Elizabeth
Hermann

Fire/EMS
Incident
37 Seconds:
Sean Haley

**BEST
DISPATCHING
TIMES**
April/May 2012

Police Incident
19 Seconds:
Robert Glenn

Fire/EMS
Incident
9 Seconds:
Amy Flook

911: Dispatch 101 – The Fundamentals

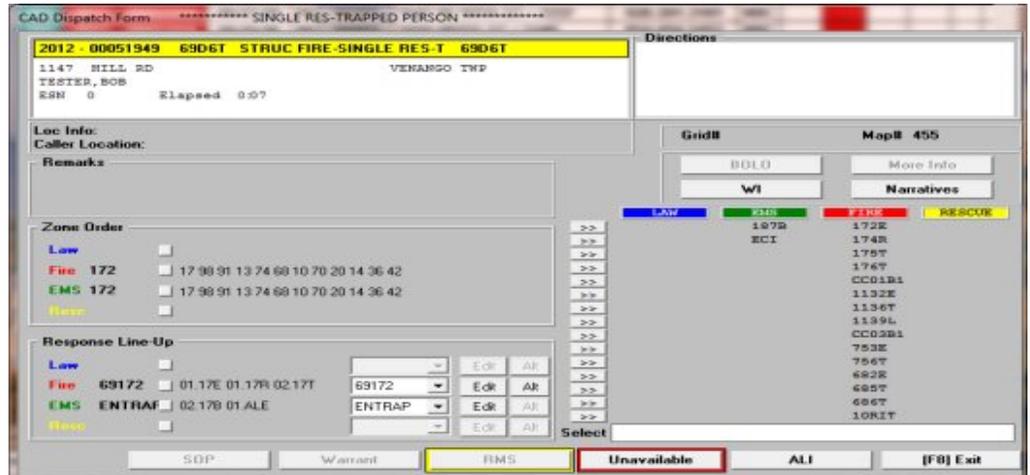
Submitted by John Grappy, 911 Coordinator

In the last issue of our public safety newsletter, I wrote an article discussing the 9-1-1 call taking process. This issue we will continue our discussion, focusing on dispatch 101. One misunderstanding amongst the public and user agencies is, "Why are we delaying the dispatch of police, fire or EMS by asking so many questions? Please just send me help!" I hope to be able to answer this question by explaining our 9-1-1 dispatch procedures.

Our dispatch protocols are a nationally-recognized system and have been widely adopted across the United States. This protocol system, commonly referred to as *ProQA* call interrogation software, is interfaced with our CAD (computer-aided dispatch) system. Based on a series of questions and answers, the appropriate response determinate is automatically selected and the CAD incident is sent to the respective dispatch position. At this point, while the 9-1-1 call taker continues with call interrogation to obtain amplifying information, the dispatcher is in receipt of the CAD call-for-service record and has dispatched the appropriate resources to the incident location.

Our dispatch protocols are a nationally-recognized system and have been widely adopted across the United States.

Upon receipt of the CAD call-for-service record at the respective dispatch position, the dispatcher will receive an audio and visual indication in RED stating "Immediate Dispatch Required." The designated dispatcher (pre-determined by geographical area) will select the pending incident and will review the incident details and corresponding first alarm assignment. As an example, for fire-related responses, this protocol system provides versatility to the fire chief to specify a specific response on an incident type. A structure fire may be a single-family residential, but then again, may be a multi-residential apartment building. The fire chief can specify through response recommendations, what mutual aid department(s) are to respond and what equipment on either a first, second, or third alarm assignment.



The dispatcher will select the appropriate tower (radio transmitter) site location (pre-determined coverage area), and transmit the emergency call over the radio on the agencies designated dispatch frequency. The designated dispatcher utilizes a dispatch script, approved by our Radio Advisory Committee, providing an initial announcement, activating alert tones to notify the emergency responders via pager and/or siren, and two subsequent announcements of the call details to include call type (medical or fire), priority level (basic or advanced life support), nature (i.e., chest pain or structure fire), and incident location (i.e., 1234 Main Street). As an example, there are ten primary low-band tower (radio transmitter) site locations for the county volunteer fire departments.



Our call-taking and dispatch time standards are in accordance with the Pennsylvania Performance Review and Quality Assurance Standards.

Our call-taking and dispatch time standards are in accordance with the Pennsylvania Performance Review and Quality Assurance Standards: 9-1-1 calls-for-service will be processed within 60 seconds of the receipt of the call 90% of the time, and upon receipt of the CAD call-for-service record, the call will be dispatched within 30 seconds. I hope this article provides a better understanding of our 9-1-1 dispatch procedures. If you have any questions or would like to comment, please do not hesitate to contact us by calling our office at 814-451-7920.

Fairview Firemen's Relief Association

Submitted by Brian Messaros, EMA Asst. Coordinator

Our department will assist any department in the county with rope rescues that consist of anything from rigging and haul systems to high-angle rescue.

The volunteer fire service of Fairview Township has a proud history. In 1931, after the installation of hydrants in the Borough of Fairview, a volunteer fire department was organized in the Borough to operate a fire hose that could be connected to the Borough water system. This group was incorporated as the Fairview Firemen's Relief Association. At that time, the organization had two locations. The first was a garage on Pfeffer Avenue and the second was a brick structure on Main Street built in 1941. This is now the home of the Tri-Boro Senior Center. The first apparatus the department had was a 1934 Chevrolet customized by members of the department and served many years for the department. Currently, that truck is housed at Station 53 in hopes that someday it will get a complete restoration.



In 1981, Station No. 1 (now Station #52) was built at 7190 West Ridge Road. Station No. 2 (now Station #53) is located at 7040 West Lake Road. In April of 1998, to provide a quicker response to the needs of the community, (in cooperation with the West County Paramedic Association) a full time paramedic was assigned to our Station No. 2.

The number of calls per year averages between 800-900. The volunteers respond to calls consisting of ambulance (emergency medical) calls, vehicle accidents, structure/vehicle/grass fires, fire or carbon monoxide alarms, hazardous material responses, and miscellaneous calls. The department owns seven vehicles, including one ambulance, two pumpers, one rescue truck, one grass fire truck, one tanker and a Fire Police vehicle. The department also responds to requests for mutual aid from nearby fire departments as well.

Our department is in the process of working on the specs for a new ambulance. This will replace our current 2003 Ford ambulance. We are also looking to remove from service our 1986 Volvo/White Engine. This would be replaced with a new Pumper/Tanker. We are hopeful that these will be ordered by the first of the year.

Every fire department is expected to respond to fires, wrecks and/or medical calls. But what makes each fire department unique is the niche in services they provide. Fairview is noted for the Ropes Rescue Team. Our department will assist any department in the county with rope rescues that consist of anything from rigging and haul systems to high-angle rescue.

The organization conducts an annual direct mail fund drive to raise money for its operations. The campaign kick-off begins with a letter mailed during the third week of February with follow-up as needed. In addition to needing funds to continue to provide quality service, the organization is always looking for volunteers to assist with the program, in particular, people who can respond to calls during daytime working hours.

We are very thankful to the Township Supervisors for all their help and support with projects the department has been able to complete. Without their help, these projects would not have come to fruition as quickly as they did. Some projects worth noting include the upgrade of radios in our apparatus and working toward consolidated dispatch with Erie County.

A Closer Look: The Autism Group of Corry

Submitted by Christine Benchek, Spokesperson - AGOC

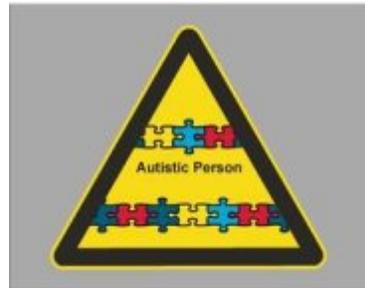
The Autism Group of Corry (AGOC) was formed in 2011 to train local first responders on how to interact with an autistic child or adult during an emergency situation.

It's a Tuesday night around 7:00 pm and your pager has just gone off dispatching you to a motor vehicle accident. When you arrive on the scene, you find that the driver is unresponsive and there is a child curled up in a ball on the floor of the vehicle. He is not hurt but he won't respond to your verbal commands nor will he let you physically remove him from the back seat. What would you do?

This could be the scenario you encounter when the child in the back seat is autistic. The diagnosis of Autism is used to name a neuro-developmental disorder, which impairs the growth and development of the central nervous system. This disability affects the person's brain function in controlling emotion, learning and memory. It can also affect a person's ability to interact socially and to communicate. Autism may also be called Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD) or Asperger's Syndrome. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) have a varying degree of severity and no two people could have all of the same behaviors.

The Autism Group of Corry (AGOC) was formed in 2011 to train local first responders on how to interact with an autistic child or adult during an emergency situation. Last month a decal was introduced by AGOC that families in the Corry area, who have an autistic family member, will display on the back window of their vehicles. Had the vehicle in our scenario displayed the decal an emergency responder would look in the glove compartment to find a medicine vial which contains an Autism Emergency Contact Form. This form gives important information about that autistic individual. It includes information about whether the individual is verbal or non-verbal or if they have any other disabilities. It also states what, if any, medication the autistic individual takes and which medical professionals can be contacted for help when treating the autistic individual.

The Autism Group of Corry is in communication with the Erie, Warren and Crawford County 911 Centers to find a process autistic individuals so the would be available to may be called to respond to residence. Until that process responder may see the same window of the home. If a emergency responder will Autism Emergency Contact cabinet or the refrigerator.



to "tag" home addresses of same emergency information emergency personnel who an emergency at a is complete, an emergency decal displayed on a door or decal is present, the find a medicine vial with the Form in either the medicine

Currently, the decal pictured is only being used by families in the Corry Area School District, but there is a possibility that more communities in northwestern Pennsylvania will adopt the same decal and begin training their local first responders in the near future.

If you have any questions regarding the autism emergency decal or the training that AGOC provides, please contact the Autism Group of Corry at their email address autismgroupofcorry@gmail.com.

Autism is a disability that has a very wide range of behaviors and communication issues that are as unique as the autistic individual. Remember, if you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism.

Erie County CERT Class of Spring 2012 Graduates

Submitted by Dale Robinson, Emergency Management Coordinator

CERT training includes fire safety, disaster preparedness, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, CERT organization, disaster psychology and terrorism awareness.



The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates people to prepare for hazards in their area by training them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations. With the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also assist Erie County Emergency Management with damage reporting, assisting in the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and helping to provide logistical support.

On Sunday, May 20, 2012, the newest CERT members finished their 20.5 hours of CERT Basic Training and completed their CERT graduation field exercise. The CERT training includes fire safety, disaster preparedness, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, CERT organization, disaster psychology and terrorism awareness. Twenty-six people graduated and became the newest teams members in an expanding and diversified team.

Erie County EMA Offers Local Emergency Management Coordinator Training

Submitted by Dale Robinson, Emergency Management Coordinator

For the first time, emergency management participated in three exercises in two days.

One of the many responsibilities of emergency management is helping to ensure that local disaster response forces are trained. Five months into 2012 and Erie County EMA has already conducted several trainings, including Knowledge Center awareness level training, initial damage reporting and local emergency management coordinator (LEMC) training. In May, the first annual LEMC training weekend was held. The LEMC training weekend provided local coordinators with information on several different subjects related to disaster planning and management. Sessions were offered by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) on damage reporting and Public Assistance and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security provided a briefing on their Protective Security services. Through the Northwest PA Emergency Response Group (NW PA ERG), Erie County also hosted a 3-day Wide Area Search course taught by Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and a Hazardous Materials Technician refresher course.

Besides training, exercises have also been conducted this year. For the first time, emergency management participated in three exercises in two days. The first exercise, in the morning of

March 28, 2012, was a regional multi-agency coordination center exercise (MAC), testing the region's ability to coordinate support to two member counties. Then, in the evening of March 28, 2012, several municipalities tested their Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) in a severe weather exercise. The scenario and damages from the severe weather evening exercise were then used in the final exercise on the morning of March 29, 2012, to test the county's ability to transition into the recovery phase of disaster.

Below are remaining trainings opportunities in 2012. The training is open to all public safety personnel, but we ask that you RSVP so that the appropriate logistical support can be arranged.

Erie County Emergency Management has the following training remaining this year:

TRAINING	DATE/TIME
Ethanol Response Class*	Sunday July 15 th 8 am to 5 pm
Knowledge Center User Awareness Level Training	Wednesday August 8 th at 6:30 pm
Air Monitoring**	August 25 th and 26 th 8 am to 5 pm
Initial Damage Assessment/Reporting	Monday October 1st at 6:30 pm
Knowledge Center User Awareness Level Training	Thursday October 16 th at 6:30 pm
Local Emergency Management Coordinator Training	Thursday November 15 th at 6:30 pm
Tabletop Exercise – MCI scenario	Monday December 10 th at 9:30 am
Tabletop Exercise – MCI scenario	Monday December 10 th at 6:30 pm
TENTATIVE TRAINING	
ICS/EOC Interface Course – FEMA G-191	Saturday August 18th 8 am to 5 pm
ICS 300***	Fall 2012
ICS 400****	Fall 2012

To RSVP for this training contact Nicole Dorman at
451-7921
or email at ndorman@ecdops.org

* You must complete a Pennsylvania Fire Academy Application for this course
** Participants must have HazMat Operations level training
*** Must have ICS 100 and 200
**** Must have ICDS 100, 200 and 300

911 Employees Receive ENP Certification



Submitted by Kale Asp, Assistant 911 Coordinator



“NENA tests competencies which are benchmarks of performance that will signify a broad-based competence in the 911 field.”The Autism Group

Emergency Number Professional (ENP) certification is a mark of a professional association from NENA, or the National Emergency Number Association. In providing the ENP certification, NENA tests competencies which are benchmarks of performance that will signify a broad-based competence in the 911 field. By successfully completing the ENP certification program, Erie County's four employees are recognized as demonstrating mastery of the comprehensive knowledge base required for 9-1-1 professionals. These four public safety professionals confirm their commitment to the residents of Erie County by demonstrating professionalism and leadership in public safety. As of press time, there were 1033 Emergency Number Professionals registered through NENA.

ENP testing is held four times annually for a two-week period each winter, spring, summer, and fall.

ENP testing is held four times annually for a two-week period each winter, spring, summer, and fall. To be eligible to apply to sit for the exam, all applicants must have three years' experience in Emergency Communications.

Erie County's candidates utilized study groups to great benefit in preparation for the examination. Groups were hosted by Mission Critical Partners - a consulting group from State College, PA. They provided teleconferencing and email groups to help our candidates prepare for the test.

Topics covered within the study groups were items such as management of employees, management of organizations, 911 information systems, telecommunications operations, radio infrastructure, and next generation 911.

The study group process took about three months - enough time to prepare for the test in March, 2012. There was additional required studying for each candidate, also.

Congratulations to the newest, growing family of Erie County Department of Public Safety Emergency Number Professionals, shown from left to right:



Pictured from left to right:
Matthew Exley, Training Coordinator
James Toennies, Shift Commander
John Durlin, Shift Commander
Kale Asp, Assistant 911 Coordinator

Photography by ASC Jennifer Waxham

Longtime Employee Retires After 27 Years of Service

On June 22, 2012, Erie County extends a heartfelt goodbye and sincere best wishes to Gayle Whitmeyer. Having served 27 years of dedicated service to the public safety community of which 19 years were served with Erie County, Gayle retires to begin a new chapter in life.

On March 1, 1993, Gayle was hired by the County of Erie as a 9-1-1 Call-taker, one of 12 inaugural hires to spearhead the County's new 9-1-1 effort. Initial duty for Gayle and the other new Call-takers was to verify all the addresses in Erie County, making daily phone calls to residences, inquiring as to the physical address and the municipality they lived in. This information was then put into a database, which eventually became enhanced 9-1-1. Gayle humorously remembers calling residents to determine their address and having some of the older folks balk at the need to add numerics to their house, saying, "But the fire department knows where I live!" On May 6, 1993, after months of verify addresses, making sure everyone in the County had a physical address, not just a rural route or box number, enhanced 9-1-1 went live.

In February, 2005, Gayle applied for an administrative position, working as the EMA Secretary and Account Clerk, remaining in that position until October, 2006, when she transferred into her current position, Public Safety Executive Secretary.

Her constant attention to detail and enthusiastic involvement in all facets of operations and administration will be sorely missed. Gayle served the county and the public safety community diligently, faithfully, and honorably. Gayle's actions brought great credit upon herself and upheld the highest values of the Department of Public Safety. Congratulations on your retirement and thank you for a job well done.

