



May 2006

# The Responder

Chester County Department of Emergency Services  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 12, West Chester, PA 19380

An informational source for the  
Emergency Responders of Chester County

## Commissioners Recognize National Telecommunicators' Week

On Thursday, April 6, 2006, the Chester County Board of Commissioners proclaimed the week of April 9 – 15, 2006 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators' Week.

Along with the Department of Emergency Services, the Commissioners honored the men and women who serve as public safety call takers and dispatchers. Accepting the proclamation was 9-1-1 Dispatcher Jessica Bell and Deputy Director for 9-1-1 Operations, John Haynes.

Every day, the citizens of Chester County depend on the skill, expertise and commitment of the men and women who are our call takers and dispatchers. The 9-

1-1 Center staffs 80 full time and 8 part time Telecommunicators' who are ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a

week – including weekends, holidays and birthdays – to be the first link in the chain to help citizens with an emergency.



*From Left to Right: Commissioner Donald Mancini, Deputy Director John Haynes, Commissioner Carole Aichele, Telecommunicator Jessica Bell, Commissioner Andy Dinniman*

Introduced to Congress in 1991 by the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International, National Public Safety Telecommunicators' Week is celebrated each year during the second week of April.

In 2005, the 9-1-1 Center handled 297,451 telephone calls for emergency assistance. This is an average of about 800 calls per day and an average of about 33 calls per hour.

## Equipment Update

In the last two months, the Emergency Management Division has distributed/delivered approximately \$ 715,000 of equipment to Chester County agencies/organizations. Orders have been submitted to PEMA for agencies/organizations that have not received their requested equipment.

As of this date, PEMA has not begun to process purchase orders from Chester County's

2005 ODP fund allocations. Once they do, we expect the vendors to deliver the ordered equipment in approximately 4 weeks.

We are asking Motorola and their sub-contractor to catch up with the \$5 million Mobile Data Computer (MDC) installations. Some fire and police departments have been contacted recently and others will be contacted in the next few weeks. Please ensure that your vehicle or facility is available on the date and time sched-

uled for the MDC installation.

Installations have to be completed by the first week of August. If you delay/postpone the installation date, your department/agency will be placed at the end of the line.

Beyond the first week of August, funding for MDC installations will not be available and MDC units not installed will have to rely on local funding for installation.

## DES Monthly Update

**9-1-1 Operations:** The 9-1-1 Operations Center processed 24,281 calls in March. This is about 750 per day. There were 1,043 Fire Dispatches and 2,850 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Dispatches. The average Fire/EMS dispatch time was 1 minute and 31 seconds. There were 24,868 police responses for the month of March. The average police dispatch time was 1 minute and 41 seconds. We conducted 250 formal quality reviews for telephone, radio and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD). The combined weighted average of 96% remains well above the Department objective of 90%. We participated in 10 Public Education events in March where about 600 people were contacted. So far this year we have contacted about 800 people and talked to them about what we do in Emergency Services.

**Emergency Management:** There were two HazMat Staff responses in March. For the year there have been six Team responses and seven Staff responses. Last month the Emergency Management Division reviewed the emergency plans for two Day Care facilities, one dam and one municipality. Work continued on the county plan for national Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance.

**Fire Services:** In cooperation with local fire marshals, the County Fire Marshals con-

ducted 33 investigations in March. So far this year the County Fire Marshals have conducted 99 investigations. There were 449 fire inspections last month. So far this year there have been 690 inspections. There were 13 Fire Training Classes with 213 graduates. So far this year there have been 333 graduates.

**Field Services:** The Spring Emergency Medical Technician Class is in progress with 19 students. There were two Train the Trainer classes for about 100 instructors for the Smart Triage System that is now being used by the five counties in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Region. About 20 EMS responders attended a Town Meeting hosted by the Director of the Bureau of EMS to discuss the proposed revisions to the EMS Act.

## GETTING TO KNOW...

*Steve LeStrange*

Steve LeStrange joins DES as the Equipment Manager provided by Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Terrorism Task Force. Mr. LeStrange organizes and distributes the equipment received through Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) monies. Steve was a training specialist with Tetra Tech EMI where he served as a Weapons Of Mass Destruction (WMD) instructor and an assistant hazardous technician course instructor. Prior to Tetra Tech Steve was a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defense Specialist with the US Marine Corps. Some of his training includes:

Radiological Emergency Team Operations, Command and Staff Radiological Response, Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Defense School, Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Defense Advanced Training, Toxic Agent, live agent training as well as several WMD counter terrorism courses and seminars.

Please join us in welcoming Steve to the Department!

## DES Installs New Alerting System

The Department is transitioning to a new administrative alerting system. Currently, Alpha pagers are used for many administrative notifications. While the current system works very well the department is transitioning to keep pace with anticipated future needs. The new system, the Roam Secure Alert Network (RSAN) will provide the department with additional paging abilities as well as some uses for responders. The new system allows for pre-programming text messages and provides a means of sending messages to pager, phone and email. These messages can be the same or because each type of device has different capabilities; the messages can be slightly different. For example, you can receive a page or text message saying "Severe weather warning for Northern Chester County Until 1000" and the same message to your email may say "Severe weather warning for Northern Chester County Until 1000. The NWS has issued this warning due to a low pressure front which will move through the northern parts of the county beginning around 1000."

All users who are currently alpha paged by DES will continue being paged and will be able to have additional benefits.

## Summer Grilling Tips

With the warmer weather approaching, outdoor cooking will increase. Charcoal and gas fueled grills cause almost 1,000 structure fires a year and an additional 3,500 related outside fires. Gas grills have a higher fire risk than charcoal grills. Leaks and breaks in the gas cylinder or hose are the leading causes and account for nearly half of the gas grill fires. Combustibles too close to heat and unattended cooking are the two leading causes for charcoal grill home structure fires. Half of all gas grill and charcoal grill home structure fires start on an exterior balcony or unenclosed porch. It is important to remember to grill outside and well away from your home.

- Gas and charcoal BBQ grills must be used outdoors. If used indoors, or in any enclosed spaces, such as tents or garages, they pose fire hazard and possible asphyxiation and Carbon Monoxide poisoning.



- Keep the grill well away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

- Keep children and pets away from grilling area as well as traffic areas.

- Remove all grease buildup.

### Charcoal Grills

- Purchase the proper starter fluid and store the container out of reach of children and away from heat sources.

- Never add charcoal starter fluid when the coals have already been ignited. Never use any flammable or combustible liquid other than Charcoal lighter fluid.

### Gas Grills

Check the gas cylinder hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will quickly reveal escaping propane

by releasing bubbles. (This must be done while the tank is on). If you determine your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the presence of bubbles during the test and there is no flame:

- Turn off the gas tank and grill
- If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.

- If the leak does not stop, call "9-1-1".

- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call "9-1-1". Do not attempt to move the grill.

- All gas cylinders manufactured after April 2002 must have overfill protection devices (OPD). Their triangular shaped hand wheel identifies these.

- Use only UL listed equipment.

- Never store propane gas cylinders in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside at any time, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.



## Congratulations to the following men and women for their completion of the Spring Essentials of fire fighting course.

David Bednar, Wagontown, Brian Brown, Union, Jeffrey Cole, Minquas, John J. Collins, East Brandywine, Allie Ellzey, Minquas, Charles Foy, Jr., West Grove, Robert Fraser, Union, Chris Galle, Union, Matt Groseclos, Union, Jeffrey Hadfield, Fame, Mike McLaughlin, First West Chester, Lauren McLennan, Po-Mar-Lin, David Miller, West Whiteland, Corey Mortzfield, East Brandywine, Stephen Nuse, Po-Mar-Lin, John O'Brien, First West Chester, Edgar Ranck, East Brandywine, Grant Rounds, Minquas, Dan Saunders, Fame, Erich Snyder, First West Chester, Themis Speis, Union, Chris Steindl, Po-Mar-Lin, Simon Summers, Goshen, Harry B. Taylor, First West Chester, William Tessmer, West Grove, Joseph A. Torrance, First West Chester, Angel L. Tucker, First West Chester, Mark J. Vitanza, West Whiteland, Grant W. Warren, Ludwigs Corner, Bill Wohl, Jr., West Grove.

---

---

## **Governor and Legislature Honor Katrina Responders**

On April 24, 2006 Governor Rendell and the House of Representatives honored the Pennsylvania EMS responders who participated in the hurricane Katrina relief efforts in Louisiana in 2005. Responders were honored during ceremonies at the PA Farm Show Complex and on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Malvern, Uwchlan, and West End of Phoenixville sent ambulances, staffed by 2 EMT's and 2 Paramedics to aid in disaster relief for 2 weeks in October of 2005. Between the 4 vehicles that went, there were about 1,000 patient contacts. These contacts included triaging patients, immunizing evacuees, transporting patients to hospitals outside the disaster area, and transporting patients back home from hospitals and relief centers.

The ceremonies included the Governor's recognition held at the Farm Show Complex in the morning, tours of the capitol, a display of EMS vehicles used in the Katrina responses, recognition of the participants on the floor of the House of Representatives, group photos in the Capitol Rotunda, and a short get together back at the Farm Show complex. During the three activations to Louisiana, a total of 59 Pennsylvania EMS units made the long trip, each manned by 4 personnel, with 10 support vehicles, an incident commander per trip and 4 staff members from the Bureau of EMS. All included, 264 Pennsylvania providers spent up to 2 weeks providing services to the hurricane victims.

---

---

## **Training Opportunities**

*Please visit the department website for the most current information or contact the appropriate division*

---

### **Fire Training**

- |         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| May 6   | Basic Vehicle Rescue     |
| May 13  | Emergency Vehicle Rescue |
| June 24 | Junior Firefighting      |

### **EMS Training**

- |        |                 |
|--------|-----------------|
| May 10 | Basic First Aid |
| May 17 | CPR with AED    |
| May 19 | EMT Refresher   |
| May 20 | PEPP – BLS      |

### **Con-Ed Training**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| May 15  | Injuries to Head and Spine<br>Contact Bob Horton |
| June 14 | ACLS<br>Contact John Applegate                   |
| June 19 | Infants and Children<br>Contact Bob Horton       |