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Dispatch Center Staffer Earns Illinois Telecommunicator of the Year Honors

Amy Kosinsky, a two-year employee of the West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center (WSCDC), has been chosen *Telecommunicator of the Year* by the Illinois chapter of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO), the world's oldest and largest professional organization dedicated to enhancing public safety communications.

To qualify for this honor a recipient must excel in the professional standards set by APCO, address professional issues and provide education, products and services for people who manage, operate, maintain and supply the communications systems used by police, fire and emergency medical dispatch agencies. Kosinsky's attitude and success at work, as well as her public service extracurricular activities outside the office, also were key factors in the selection, according to an APCO statement.

"I cannot think of a more deserving person of this recognition," said WSCDC Supervisor Ron Gross who nominated Kosinsky for the honor. "Her professionalism, her positive attitude and her willingness to help others beyond the role of telecommunicator are a credit to the organization and the communities we serve. This award represents a broader recognition of her value to us all."

Kosinsky serves as lead telecommunicator, spokesperson for the Center's Employee Morale Committee and is a member of the Critical Incident Stress Management/Peer Counseling Team that reaches out to telecommunicators in other communities who may be having difficulty coping with a call or situation.

She also regularly attends conferences and reviews trade publications to increase her knowledge, sharing the information with coworkers and making sure system updates are completed in a timely matter.

Described by her coworkers as "professional, thoughtful and kind," Kosinsky also was selected by her coworkers as WSCDC's 2004 Telecommunicator of the Year, Gross said.

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Telecommunicator of the Year

Beyond the workplace, Kosinsky volunteers as a rape aggression defense instructor, teaching women self defense techniques. She also teaches a modified version of the class to children, educating them on ways to prevent abductions, deal with strangers and self-defense. She incorporates 9-1-1 public education information into the classes as well.

The West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center was created in 2002 to provide emergency dispatch services to 9-1-1 callers in Oak Park and River Forest. Elmwood Park is scheduled to join the center. Consolidation provides enhanced services and faster response, as well as reduced operating costs to each community through shared facilities and equipment.

“Employees such as Ms. Kosinsky play key roles in making our emergency response system so effective,” said Village Manager Carl Swenson, who serves as chairman of the WSCDC’s intergovernmental board of directors. “She represents a work ethic and sense of responsibility that is essential to providing vital support to those in need. We are fortunate to have someone of her caliber on the team and are very pleased that her skills have been acknowledged within her profession.”

Kosinsky and her peers at the WSCDC do much more than dispatch emergency response vehicles. WSCDC telecommunicators have been extensively trained to provide Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) assistance while help is en route.

The EMD instructions telecommunicators provide may range from common sense guidelines, such as turning on a porch light and unlocking the door, to more specific medical instructions in situations such as stroke, cardiac arrest, breathing problems, bleeding, loss of consciousness or childbirth. The questions the telecommunicators ask also provide valuable information for the paramedics prior to their arrival on the scene.

Located in the River Forest Municipal Complex, 400 Park Ave., the WSCDC uses the latest computer-based radio consoles and control equipment available for 9-1-1-communications systems. Operations are overseen by an executive director who is managed by a board of directors. Swenson is joined on the WSCDC board by River Forest Village Manager Chuck Biondo. Elmwood Park Village Manager Jay Delacondro will soon join the board as well.

For more information on the WSCDC, call 708.771.9110.

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