



For Immediate Release: 07.28.08

From: David Powers
Communications Director
708.358.5781

Contact: Tom Barwin
Village Manager
708.358.5770

Dispatch center chief to retire; search for successor to begin

With word of an impending retirement now official, the villages of Elmwood Park, Oak Park and River Forest are poised to begin the search for a new executive to oversee the operations of the emergency services dispatch center shared by the three communities.

Gregory T. Riddle, who has been the executive director of the West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center (WSCDC) since it was established in May 2002, will retire effective September 5.

"This is not an easy decision, but one that I feel is the right one," Riddle said in a letter announcing his retirement to Elmwood Park Village Manager John J. Dalicandro, who chairs the WSCDC board of directors. The board consists of the chief administrators of each of the three participating communities.

Officials say the search for Riddle's replacement likely will focus on identifying an individual with the extensive technical and community relations skills necessary to manage a fast-paced, technology based communications center that handles thousands of 9-1-1 calls for the three communities.

The WSCDC uses the latest computer-based radio consoles and control equipment available for 9-1-1 communications systems. The WSCDC's more than two dozen telecommunicators dispatch ambulances, fire fighting equipment and police for all three communities, as well as provide emergency medical assistance while help is en route.

"Filling Gregg's shoes will not be an easy task," said Oak Park Village Manger Tom Barwin. "He had more than 30 years of public safety experience when he came to the job and essentially created the emergency dispatch operation we have today. His predecessor will have every tool necessary to take the operation to the next level of service to our communities."

Officials say the search likely will include putting the word out nationally through telecommunications industry outlets and networking resources. Details of the search process will be determined at the WSCDC's board meeting in August.

- more -

WSCDC
2-2-2

In addition to the technical skills critical to managing the center, they say the ideal candidate also will have experience managing highly trained, specialty personnel and working with the citizens who rely on the 9-1-1 center during life-and-death situations.

Riddle told the WSCDC board he was retiring to dedicate more time to the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International. Riddle is a candidate for its board and his selection would require extensive travel.

In addition to Barwin and Dalicandro, the three-person WSCDC governing board includes River Forest Village Administrator Steve Gutierrez.

If no replacement for Riddle is named before his departure, the WSCDC board likely will ask Assistant Director Ron Gross to assume the role in the interim while the search for a permanent replacement is conducted.

###