National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week April 8-14, 2012

Eagleville, PA (April 9, 2012) – Each year, the second week of April is designated as National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week to honor our true first first-responders for the critical, and often under-appreciated, work that they do.

In the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center, shifts of 25 men and women work around the clock, seven days a week, 365 days a year to respond to emergency calls, dispatch police, fire, and EMS, and provide life-saving assistance to callers.

On an average day, they process 2,500 911 calls, manage 1,700 emergency incidents, and maintain constant contact with nearly 700 police, fire, and EMS units across the 483 square miles of Montgomery County.

The week of April 8-14th is dedicated to honoring these professionals, also known as dispatchers or 911 operators, who serve as the heroes behind the scenes. In cases involving medical emergencies, they are trained to coach callers on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), techniques to control bleeding, and even child birth instructions.

They work long 12-hour shifts saving lives, helping apprehend criminals and reassure callers and they maintain a cool professional demeanor while doing it.

Here are some tips for ways you can help these professionals get you the help that you need as quickly as possible:

• Stay calm and speak clearly.
• When calling from a wireless device, tell the 911 call taker the specific location of the emergency (municipality, address, street intersection, landmarks, highway mile marker), your cell phone number, the nature of the emergency, and the type of assistance needed.
• Stay on the line until the 911 call taker has obtained all of the information that is needed.
• If the signal is lost and you are disconnected, call back right away.
• If you are in a moving vehicle when calling 911 from a cell phone, be sure to stop the vehicle in a safe place. It is difficult to obtain all of the information needed if you are getting further from the emergency.
• If you dial 911 by mistake, STAY ON THE LINE. If you hang up, they will have to call you back and an officer will have to confirm that you are alright. Unfounded calls waste not only the time of the telecommunicator, but also patrol officers.
• Don’t throw away old cell phones. Even phones with no service contract are required by the FCC to be able to dial
911. Keep your phone charged and in a safe place so you can call 911 even if your other phones are lost, stolen, or damaged, or donate your phone to a domestic violence organization. For that same reason, never let a child play with a cell phone without first removing the battery.