2020 Telecommunicator and Trainee of the Year Announced

Congratulations to 2020 Telecommunicator of the Year Amanda Brady and 2020 Telecommunicator Trainee of the Year Michael Lento!

Amanda, pictured to the right with Interim Director of Public Safety Michael Vest and Assistant Director for Operations Jennifer Cass, was described by her coworkers who nominated her as “a hard worker” and as “diligent, professional, and courteous, the kind of person who does the right thing even when no one is looking.” She treats 9-1-1 callers and her coworkers with “dignity and the utmost respect”, is “very knowledgeable”, and “works well independently as well as with a team.” A fellow telecommunicator noted that “if I ever need assistance, I feel 100% confident asking Amanda for help.”

Michael, pictured below with Interim Director Vest and Assistant Director for Professional Standards Marvin Watkins, was described by his colleagues as “professional, courteous with good radio etiquette” and as someone who is “willing to stay late/come in early for additional training.” They said that he “excelled in class” and is “always reliable and flexible.” Michael “always listened and applied what his trainer... suggested to improve his skills.”

Way to go Amanda and Michael!

Interested in joining our 9-1-1 team and becoming the next Michael or Amanda? Good news - we are now hiring! Be sure to apply before May 17, 2021 for a class to start training in mid-July. For additional information, visit our recruiting website at www.mcdps.org or read the full job description and apply online at www.montcopa.org/jobs (scroll down to Public Safety).

Editor’s Note: the Department of Public Safety employees pictured here briefly removed their masks for the award presentation and photographs.
National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week: Thank You!

The Department of Public Safety would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the following organizations, each of which donated food, money, or gifts to support our 9-1-1 staff on National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Donors include (listed alphabetically):
- Cheltenham Township Emergency Medical Services
- Chick-fil-A Audubon
- Fire Department of Montgomery Township
- Franconia Township Police Department and Police Benevolent Association
- Horsham Fire Company
- Limerick Township Police Department
- Montgomery County Ambulance Association
- Montgomery County District Attorney's Office - Detective Bureau
- Montgomery County Fire Chiefs' Association
- Montgomery County FOP Lodge #14
- Montgomery County Municipal Fire Officers' Association
- Montgomery Township Police Department
- Norristown Fire Department
- Souderton Borough Police Department
- Towamencin Township Police Department
- Tower Health
- Upper Merion Township Fire & EMS
- Upper Moreland Township Police Department and Police Benevolent Association
- Upper Perk Police Department
- Upper Providence Township Police Department
- Wheels of Justice
- Whitpain Township Police Department
- Willow Grove Volunteer Fire Company
- 9-ONE-1 Marketing

Thank you to all!
Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

Sarah Canale, Lauren Nolan, Elyce Rivera, Timothy Trate, and Reese Yeager (left to right) recently became the Department of Public Safety’s newest 9-1-1 telecommunicator trainees.

Over the next 8-12 weeks, the members of Class 100 will undergo rigorous classroom training in emergency calltaking and dispatch, before starting several more weeks of on-the-job training in the Emergency Communications Center. Congratulations and welcome to our newest employees!

Lauren Butler is the Department of Public Safety’s new Public Safety GIS Analyst, providing some relief to Amy Hrvatin who, up until now, has carried it all on her own! Lauren grew up in the Poconos and graduated from Temple University with a Bachelor’s in Environmental Studies. She got her Master’s in GIS from Ulster University, Ireland (but never got to go in person, thanks COVID). Before getting her Master’s, she spent three years with the National Park Service as a Law Enforcement Intern (and an EMT on the side), patrolling Independence Hall National Historical Park and Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park in Charleston, SC.

lbutler@montcopa.org
(610) 631-6500
Emergency Operations Center

Edward O’Hanlon, Jr. is the new Professional Standards Coordinator at the Montgomery County Fire Academy. Ed is responsible for providing access to professional certification by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) and International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) at various levels of competency for firefighters, fire officers, hazardous materials responders, and industry professionals. Ed will serve as the Test Site Coordinator for the Delegation of Authority testing site at the Montgomery County Fire Academy under the Voluntary Certification Program, Office of the State Fire Commissioner in accordance with Act 61 of 1995, the State Fire Commissioner Act. Prior to his current position, Ed served as the Fire Training Coordinator for the Montgomery County Fire Academy. He has a bachelor’s degree from La Salle University.

eohanlon@montcopa.org
(610) 278-6608 (please note change from Ed’s previous role)
Public Safety Training Campus
**Louis Collins** is excited to be stepping into the role of Technology Systems Specialist, after serving as a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator since February 2018. Louis came to Montgomery County with 15 years of restaurant experience, nine of them spent in a technology management role. During this time, he would install, troubleshoot, deploy, and train on everything technology-related in the restaurants. At the end of his time in the restaurant industry, Louis was overseeing the technology programs for nine different locations. From his early teenage years, Louis started building his own computers from spare computer parts and researching component compatibility to ensure his builds would be successful and functional. His most recent build, which he completed earlier this year, controls much of his home automation. Louis has an Associate’s Degree in Business Administration from Purdue Global University.

lcollins@montcopa.org
(610) 631-3085
Emergency Operations Center

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**Firefighters Complete Entry-Level Training**

Class 2003 completed their final day of entry-level fire training at the Montgomery County Fire Academy on Saturday, April 17th. Their eight-hour day started with a live demonstration of thermal dynamics in the burn building. Next, the instructors provided several challenging controlled live-fire scenarios that provided the students with the opportunity to develop their hose advancement skills and search and rescue skills.

After lunch, training continued and performance improved. To the delight of their instructors, the teams of students applied what they were taught and quickly advanced hoselines in both the residential and commercial buildings. Congratulations to Class 2003!

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Editor’s Note: the members of Class 2003 pictured here briefly removed their masks for a socially distanced class picture.
On April 15th, Deputy Director Dave Brown celebrated his 30-year anniversary of working for MCDPS! Setting aside Dave’s countless accomplishments over the past 3 decades, he has been instrumental in getting literally thousands of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine into the arms of both first responders and the County’s most vulnerable residents. Thanks for everything, Dave!

Congratulations to 9-1-1 Telecommunicator Craig Tinneny, who on April 15th was presented with a Letter of Commendation from the Upper Providence Township Police Department. In the early morning hours of March 19th, Craig assisted over the radio with the delivery of a baby in a vehicle at Route 422 and Collegeville Road in Upper Providence Township. Way to go, Craig! Great work!

On Saturday, April 17th, the members of Montgomery County Fire Academy Class 2003 completed their required live-fire evolutions at the Academy’s structural burn building. Pictured here, an instructor (left, yellow helmet) demonstrates proper water stream placement for fire suppression and temperature reduction.
US&R Team Completes Heavy Equipment Training

On April 22nd, the members of the Montgomery County Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team were hard at work improving their skills in heavy equipment rigging. The rescue technicians performed a crane inspection, developed a rigging action plan, calculated weights of objects being lifted, and then executed the rigging of those objects.

The US&R Team, which has 10 members certified as FEMA Heavy Equipment and Rigging Specialists (HERS), is available to assist on any technical or specialized rescue in Montgomery County. Services provided can range from an in-person or phone consult with a team officer to a full team deployment.

To speed up response, numerous fire agencies have added US&R to be automatically dispatched on any FRT (technical rescue) in their jurisdictions. Any agencies interested in learning more about the benefits of this service can contact the Emergency Communications Center or email publicsafety@montcopa.org.

Emergency Management Certifications Awarded

Over the past few months, several of our municipal partners were presented with their Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency certifications. Individuals involved in municipal or county emergency management in the Commonwealth can achieve certifications at three levels: basic, advanced, and professional. Each level requires the applicant to complete numerous training classes, as well as attend Department of Public Safety monthly meetings.

While appointed municipal Emergency Management Coordinators are required by Commonwealth law to obtain basic and advanced certifications, all levels are voluntary for other staff members. Despite this, many of our municipalities have gone above and beyond the requirements, certifying their Coordinators at the professional level and other staff at basic, advanced, or professional.

Anyone involved in municipal emergency management in Montgomery County who is interested in obtaining their PEMA certifications can contact Heather Stem at hstem@montcopa.org for additional information.

Individuals receiving their certifications this month include:

**PEMA Professional Level**
William O’Connell, Lower Salford Twp.

**PEMA Basic Level**
Andrew Rathfon, Upper Dublin Township
Jason Van Dame, Lansdale Borough
Cody Whitfield, Douglass Township

**PEMA Advanced Level**
Brendan Brazunas, Upper Merion Township
Nate DiDonato, Worcester Township
Timothy Dunigan, MCDPS
Blaine Leis, Upper Merion Township
Kevin Lynch, Jenkintown Borough
Christopher Melville, Schwenksville Borough
William O’Connell, Lower Salford Township
Z. Raymond Sokolowski, Conshohocken Boro.
**Fire Police Association Updating Countywide Contact Information**

The Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Police Association (MCVFPA) is updating their contact information for fire police agencies throughout the County. This will help with day-to-day communication between the MCVFPA and County agencies as well as with future planned event coordination.

Agencies are asked to send current names, emails, and phone numbers for fire chiefs, fire police captains, police chiefs, and, if applicable, municipal coordinators for fire police help requests to MCVFPA Commissioner Carroll Davis at cdavisjr@aol.com.

**Preparations Underway for Limerick Generating Station Exercise**

The time has come to prepare for this year’s Limerick Generating Station (LGS) drill, which is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 16, 2021**. In advance of the exercise, Emergency Management Coordinators (EMC) within the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) are required to perform a review of their Radiological Emergency Response Plan (RERP). As the review deadline of **Friday, May 14th** is less than a month away, EMCs are encouraged to start this process immediately.

In addition, police, fire, EMS, and municipal emergency management personnel whose agencies are located within the EPZ should complete Radiological Emergency Response Training by **Friday, October 1st**. Training will be supplied according to your scheduling needs but will be delivered on a first come, first served basis. Due to COVID-19, training will be offered in a virtual format in addition to normal in-person delivery. Please contact Emergency Preparedness Specialist Jake Frye at jfrye@montcopa.org to schedule your RERP review and training as soon as possible.

**Windows 7 End-of-Life for MDCs Quickly Approaching**

The Department of Public Safety recently completed a Pennsylvania State Police CLEAN (Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network) Technical Audit. To maintain CLEAN and CJIS (Criminal Justice Information Services) Compliance, as of July 1, 2021, Windows 7 based Mobile Data Computers (MDCs) will no longer be permitted to connect to the Public Safety network for CAD or MPS (Mobile for Public Safety). All MDCs (police, fire, and EMS) must be upgraded to Windows 10 Pro prior to this date.

If you are still using Windows 7 after June 30, 2021, your computer will be blocked from the network. If your hardware is aging, now is the time to start planning for replacements.

If your agency needs assistance with hardware specifications or upgrade assistance, please email DPSCADHelp@montcopa.org and Department of Public Safety – Technology Division staff will be happy to assist where possible.
Cradlepoint Modem Deployment Continues for EMS Agencies

The Department of Public Safety is ready to move to the next phase of deploying modems and antennas, acquired through the Homeland Security Grant Program, for emergency responder vehicles. Department staff have so far deployed a total of about 450 modems to about 45 police departments. We are now ready to begin deploying equipment to all EMS agencies throughout Montgomery County.

In order to receive the new modems, EMS agencies should email the following information to DPSCADHelp@montcopa.org:

- Agency name
- Agency contact(s) who are authorized to sign for and pick up equipment for the agency
- Vehicle list with identification numbers of vehicles currently equipped with Sierra Wireless modems

All responder agencies are required to switch to these new modems as the Sierra Wireless modems are end-of-life and are no longer being repaired by the manufacturer.

The modems and antennas are being provided free of charge in a 1-for-1 swap for the old Sierra Wireless modems. Agencies are responsible for installation charges and carrier data plans. These new modems and antennas provide better speed and coverage as they capable of accessing all 4G frequencies, many of which had not been deployed by the cell carriers during initial Sierra Wireless implementation.

These new devices, along with upgrades made to our servers, now allow us to be carrier agnostic, meaning if another wireless carrier has better coverage in your response area, you are now able to utilize them. Agencies MUST advise the Department of Public Safety before any carrier changes are made and you MUST have a Cradlepoint installed before doing so. The Sierra Wireless modems are tied to Verizon and cannot be switched.

Radio Reprogramming Effort Underway

The Department of Public Safety has begun removing the old radio system from mobile and portable radios in the field. Department staff are reaching out to individual agencies to schedule this programming. There is no need to reach out to MCDPS regarding this initiative. Once we are ready for your agency, we will contact you.

As a reminder, on the day of your re-programming appointment, please ensure:

- The portable and mobile radios are easily accessible
- All accessories (speaker mics, cases, etc.) are removed from the radios
- The side programming/accessory port cover is removed from all portable radios
- All portable radios batteries are charged

Each portable radio will take approximately five (5) minutes to fully program and each mobile will take approximately 20 minutes. During programming, any favorites stored in the ‘Favorites’ bank of each radio will be cleared out and will need to be re-programmed by your agency personnel (an instruction sheet will be provided to assist).

Thank you in advance for your flexibility and willingness to work with the Department of Public Safety on this project.
Fire Police Task Force Modifies Dispatch Procedure

The Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Police Association has been working with the Department of Public Safety to develop a modified dispatch procedure for alerting large numbers of fire police officers to major incidents or for instances when personnel are needed more quickly and efficiently.

Fire agencies are asked to contact the Montgomery County Fire Police Task Force Coordinator Carroll Davis at cdavisjr@aol.com for details on pager programming and to obtain a copy of the program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Key Information for First Responders

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Department of Public Safety continues to fulfill critical need resource requests for first responder agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic. As normal supply chains continue to come back online, please utilize your local procurement procedures prior to submitting resource requests. If you do have a critical PPE need, please submit all resource requests to EOCLogistics@montcopa.org.

Exposure Reporting Process

If you are a first responder (law enforcement, fire, EMS, or emergency management) and believe you were exposed to COVID-19 in the course of your duties, follow these steps:

1) Immediately notify your supervisor or agency infection control officer.

2) Avoid contact with others, maintain social distance (at least 6 feet), and self-monitor for symptoms (check temperature twice a day and watch for fever, cough, or shortness of breath). You will receive formal instructions to quarantine, if necessary, from the Montgomery County Office of Public Health.

3) Complete the First Responder Self-Report Form: http://episurvey.mcad911.com/EpiInfWebSurvey/Home/a85581e8-ef39-478d-ad2c-76bbf1d4b50. This form is used to formally document the impact of COVID-19 on the community as well as document the source of a potential exposure.

4) Register to be tested. You can receive a test at any one of the 6 County-run test sites (https://www.montcopa.org/3744/COVID-19-Testing), through your Primary Care Physician, or at a commercial lab.

First responders with exposure-related questions may contact EMS Field Specialist Ed Martin, Jr. (emartin@montcopa.org) or Chief Medical Officer and Regional EMS Medical Director Dr. Alvin Wang (awang@montcopa.org). With immediate concerns, call (610) 631-6500.

COVID-19 Vaccines

If you are a Montgomery County first responder (police, fire, or EMS), have not yet received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and are interested in receiving it, please email Public Affairs Coordinator Todd Stieritz at tstierit@montcopa.org for additional information.