



# APCO

## MEMBER CHAPTER SERVICES Committee

### Member & Chapter Services



*he Irish be with  
YOU*

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## Membership Information

Member Type	11/1/2023	10/1/2024
Associate Members	2,402	2,346
Full Members	4,306	4,234
Full Group Members	9,353	9,998
Online Group Members	24,030	24,169
Commercial Members	482	461
Commercial Group Members	351	354
Student/Educator Members	0	33
<b>Total Number of Members</b>	<b>40,902</b>	<b>41,595</b>
Total Number of Group Agencies	1,657	1,753
Commercial Groups	51	53

## APCO Membership Renewal

Your membership will expire on **December 31st**. If you have not renewed, log into [myapcointl.org](https://myapcointl.org), click on My Invoices, to print or pay your invoice.



## Commercial Advisory Committee

### **Best Practices for Commercial Advisory Members in Tennessee APCO Chapter**

As a Commercial Advisory Member for the Tennessee APCO Chapter since April 2022, I have focused on expanding commercial membership as well as supporting the growth and development of our chapter. I have collaborated with fellow CCAMs across the United States and, through strategic Initiatives, we have set goals, implemented best practices, and driven positive change to benefit our chapter.

### **Setting Goals and Achieving Milestones**

Since 2022, our focus has been on achieving specific milestones to enhance the reach and impact of our chapter. One of our major accomplishments was the development and launch of a professional website in May 2024. The website serves as a valuable resource for members, commercial partners, and the public- providing information on our initiatives, events, training, and how to get involved. Another significant goal we have set is obtaining our 503C6 tax status, which will allow us to receive sponsorship funds from industry partners. While this process is currently in progress, we are optimistic about the opportunities it will bring to support the growth and sustainability of our chapter.

### **Supporting 9-1-1 Centers and Recognizing Excellence**

Looking ahead to the future, we are excited to launch our "Tubs of Love" initiative later this fall. The program's goal will be to provide support to 9-1-1 centers during times of crisis, ensuring that frontline dispatchers have additional resources to successfully begin the recovery process.

In addition to this initiative, we will be introducing a quarterly "Dispatcher of the Quarter" recognition program. This program will highlight the hard work and dedication of dispatchers across Tennessee, showcasing their contributions to public safety and community well-being.

### **Overcoming Challenges and Building Connections**

One of the biggest challenges I faced when accepting the role of CCAM was gaining a full understanding of the responsibilities and opportunities it entailed. However, through collaboration with other CCAMs and participation in the APCO International Commercial Advisory Council, I have been able to expand my knowledge, network with industry professionals, and identify best practices for our chapter.

By leveraging the Commercial Advisory Council's resources and connections, I was able to identify new growth and collaboration opportunities, ultimately strengthening our chapter and enhancing our service to members and communities.

## Commercial Advisory Committee (continued)

In conclusion, serving as the Commercial Advisory Member for the Tennessee APCO Chapter has been a rewarding and enriching experience. By setting goals, achieving milestones, supporting 9-1-1 centers, recognizing excellence, and building connections, we have been able to drive positive change and make a meaningful impact on public safety in our state.

**Submitted by:** Kelly Sanders-Kelley, National Director  
Virtual Academy



## Historical Committee

### What is Your Footprint Going to Be?

On October 21 I ended up in the Emergency Room and then the hospital for a week and then a TCU for two weeks. This experience left me with lots of time to ponder if it was my time, what I had accomplished in the lifetime I was given. Yes, there is my family, children, and grandchildren. My career and years of service as a volunteer firefighter, a Lion, a Scout leader, and my years of dedication to our trade organization both at the state and national level. I wonder how many lives I have impacted.

My mantra has always been "Service is the rent we pay for the privilege to live on this planet"  
Shirley Chisolm. (1973)

I believe that each of you are where you are for a reason. How many lives are you going to touch in the brief lifetime you are given? What footprints are you going to leave behind?

**Submitted by:** Charles Venske RPL-ENP

## Cybersecurity Committee

As cyber threats to emergency response systems grow, Emergency Communications Centers (ECCs) should take time to assess if cybersecurity insurance is right for them. This can be a part of your normal budgetary process, or emergency management process. Either way, understanding how cybersecurity insurance can provide essential financial support and expert resources after an attack is one of the first components involved in successfully choosing a strategy and an insurance policy that fits your agency's needs, coverage limitations, and cost factors.

Cyberattacks on ECCs, such as ransomware or denial of service (DoS), are increasing, potentially interrupting vital services. Lower costs for launching attacks and financial incentives make ECCs attractive targets. One of the most critical factors in lowering costs regardless of insurance coverage is to utilize strong cyber defenses, but more importantly agencies who do so often face lower insurance costs, as insurers consider them less risky.

Mitigation strategies for ECCs fall into three areas: prevention, detection, and reaction. Prevention strategies include ongoing training, policy updates, and basic security practices (e.g., multifactor authentication, data encryption) reduce risk and lower insurance costs. Detection strategies include monitoring tools or services that can identify attacks early, though costs can be high. Vendors may offer affordable monitoring solutions depending on your agency's needs and capabilities. Reacting effectively means that an ECC's response plan enables quick, effective recovery. Considering cybersecurity insurance can support immediate recovery, particularly if costs for experts and repairs outpace an agency's immediate budgetary capabilities.

To get a policy quote, insurers typically require an "attestation," a document detailing your current cybersecurity practices. Based on this, they determine policy costs and conditions. Common coverage types include:

- First-Party: Covers internal losses like data theft, business interruption, ransomware payments, and data restoration.
- Third-Party: Covers legal liabilities, such as fines, lawsuits, breach notifications, and crisis management.

Cybersecurity insurance often doesn't cover:

- Bodily harm, property damage, or intentional acts.
- Inadequate security practices, like lack of email security or backups.
- Pre-existing vulnerabilities or certain human errors.

There are several other factors to consider when outlining your agency's needs and preferences. Consider the following pros and cons:



## Cybersecurity Committee (continued)

### Pros:

- Provides funding and resources after an attack.
- May include resources for incident response and risk assessment.
- Can aid in regulatory compliance and crisis management.

### Cons:

- Policy limitations may impose restrictions or additional security requirements.
- Coverage may not include all damages (e.g., PR fallout, intellectual property loss).
- Insurance does not replace a strong, in-house cybersecurity program.

Keep in mind, there are many federal, state, and local grants available which may support cybersecurity improvements, potentially lowering costs for adopting security measures. Monitor available funding opportunities that align with your ECC's needs. Information about funding and other considerations are available via industry publications at APCO, CISA, and NENA websites.

Cybersecurity insurance can be a helpful part of your overall risk strategy. It provides peace of mind and financial support in a cyber crisis, but a strong cybersecurity foundation is essential. Implementing good practices will not only help in securing insurance but also in minimizing threats to your ECC.

Please check out an upcoming Webinar on this topic that the Cybersecurity Committee is working on as it will be released in December 2024. Find it here:

<https://www.apcointl.org/training/continuing-dispatch-education/webinars/>

### Sources/Resources:

<https://www.apcointl.org/technology/cybersecurity/cybersecurity-resources/> Cyber Insurance White Paper for Public Safety Agencies

<https://www.cisa.gov/911-cybersecurity-resource-hub> CISA Cybersecurity Resource Hub

### Submitted by:

Lindsay Stambaugh  
Emergency Communications Supervisor  
Metropolitan Airports Commission, Minneapolis MN

## Health & Wellness Committee

### **Be Intentional: Prioritizing Mental Health and Relationships in Emergency Communications Centers**

Emergency communications centers (ECCs) are high-stress environments where call-takers and dispatchers face constant pressure to manage critical incidents. To maintain performance and well-being, intentional behavior—mindful actions taken with purpose—can help foster mental health and positive relationships.

#### **Mental Health in ECCs**

ECC personnel experience burnout, compassion fatigue, and even PTSD due to their exposure to crises. Intentional behaviors can help:

- **Acknowledge Mental Health Needs:** Encourage a culture where mental well-being is openly discussed, and promote resources like employee assistance programs (EAPs) and peer support.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Techniques like deep breathing and mental health breaks can reduce stress.
- **Set Boundaries:** Balancing work with personal life is essential to avoid burnout. Leadership should advocate for clear work-life boundaries.

#### **Building Positive Workplace Relationships**

Strong workplace relationships are key to successful ECC operations:

- **Open Communication:** Regular check-ins and an open-door policy encourage team members to share concerns.
- **Build Trust:** Support colleagues and recognize each other's contributions to create a collaborative environment.
- **Celebrate Successes:** Acknowledging accomplishments, even small ones, boosts morale and fosters a positive culture.

#### **Fostering Personal Connections**

ECC personnel must also nurture relationships outside of work for balance and resilience:

- **Nurture Personal Relationships:** Regularly connect with loved ones and engage in activities that bring joy.
- **Engage with the Community:** Participate in outreach and community events to reinforce a sense of purpose.

## Health & Wellness Committee *(continued)*

- Practice Self-Care: Prioritize physical, emotional, and mental well-being through exercise, rest, and hobbies.

### Conclusion

Intentional behavior is key to maintaining mental health and building relationships within ECCs. By fostering a supportive, balanced environment, leadership can help ensure the long-term success and well-being of their teams.

**Submitted by:** Rebecca Green-Murfreesboro Emergency Communications

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## Moral Injury Series

APCO's Health and Wellness Committee is excited to present a series of articles exploring moral injury through the perspective of 911 dispatchers. Over the next few months, we'll delve into the definition of moral injury, examine its impact in the aftermath of natural disasters, and share a dispatcher's firsthand account of the struggle between duty and conscience. As telecommunications, we often find ourselves caught in a whirlwind of emotions and decisions that can feel at odds with each other. How can we support ourselves and each other while adhering to the protocols and policies of our agencies?

### **Moral Injury in the Wake of Natural Disasters Part 1**

With the recent devastation seen in the United States, stories of pain, loss, grief, struggle, fear and abject helplessness and hopelessness have come to the forefront due to the coverage on the news, and various social media platforms. The challenges have been immeasurable and the images and stories coming out of them, heartbreaking.

While there is much to address in terms of the mental and emotional toll that these natural disasters take on those that are the first point of contact, there is another toll that many are unaware of. That of moral injury.

### **What is moral injury?**

Moral injury is a term that describes the psychological, emotional, and spiritual distress that arises when a person feels they have violated their moral or ethical beliefs. Often leading to feelings of guilt, shame, or betrayal. Many people mistakenly believe that this means that a dispatcher would only experience a moral injury when they cross an ethical or moral line, such as breaking a rule, policy or law that could potentially lead to injury, death or prosecution. This misconception often leads to moral injury being overlooked as something that needs just as much

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## Health & Wellness Committee (continued)

time, care, attention and, often, therapy, as any other stress or trauma injury.

### What does moral injury look like in the wake of natural disasters?

For 911 dispatchers, especially during natural disasters, several factors can contribute to moral injury:

1. **Feeling Helpless to Save Lives:** In natural disasters, 911 dispatchers often receive desperate calls from people in life-threatening situations that they can't physically help, such as being trapped in floods, fires, or collapsing buildings. Even though the dispatcher may be doing everything within their power, they may feel a deep sense of helplessness when they are unable to save the callers.
2. **Overwhelming Call Volumes:** Natural disasters create an overwhelming volume of emergency calls. Dispatchers may be forced to make difficult decisions about prioritizing certain calls over others. When they can't respond to everyone in need, they may feel morally distressed, fearing they have abandoned people in dire situations.
3. **Witnessing Human Suffering:** Although dispatchers are not physically present, they are on the front lines of hearing the panic, fear, and sometimes the final moments of people's lives. This can lead to feelings of guilt or sorrow when they feel powerless to change the outcome, especially when they hear children or vulnerable individuals.
4. **Systemic Failures:** During large-scale disasters, dispatchers may encounter system failures, such as overwhelmed emergency services, lack of available first responders, or power and communication outages. They may feel betrayed by the system if they believe it is failing the people they are trying to help, leading to a sense of moral injury.
5. **Ethical Dilemmas:** Dispatchers may also face ethical dilemmas when they cannot provide help to everyone in need. In some cases, they may have to tell callers that there is no immediate help available, or they may be unable to answer calls from people in distress due to capacity limits. This can lead to feelings of moral conflict and self-blame.

Understanding moral injury in this context emphasizes the critical need for both organizational and emotional support for 911 dispatchers, especially during crises. Providing education and resources on this issue greatly improves the chances of positive outcomes for those who serve as the steady presence in the chaos of both literal and figurative storms. In Part 2, we will explore specific strategies to create a sense of safety, calm, and care for dispatchers dealing with moral injury after a natural disaster.

**Submitted by:** Shannon Polito ENP RPL



## Teammates in Action



On the morning of May 31, 2024, Shift Supervisor Megan Bristow demonstrated exceptional professionalism and composure during a critical emergency call that showcased her ability to manage a high-pressure situation with remarkable skill. At 9:30 AM, she received a phone call from a local doctor's office regarding a patient who was in labor.

Megan answered a 911 call from a frantic receptionist from a local doctor's office in Laurinburg. The receptionist, using a landline, was unable to reach the room where the patient was located. Understanding the urgency, Megan instructed the receptionist to call back using a cell phone to maintain mobility. Upon reaching the patient's room, the receptionist reported that the patient's contractions had intensified, reducing from three minutes apart to just two minutes. The patient, in labor with her seventh child at 38 weeks, was audibly in severe pain.

Amidst the chaotic environment, Megan efficiently gathered crucial information. Despite the background noise of screams and palpable panic, she learned that the patient was 5 centimeters dilated at her last appointment. The midwife and doctor present were insistent that EMS respond immediately.

Megan's ability to extract and relay essential information under such duress was commendable. She ensured that EMS personnel received all necessary details and directed them straight to the patient's room upon arrival. Her swift and precise actions enabled EMS to arrive on the scene within three minutes of being en route, perfectly timed to assist the patient in critical need.

Throughout the call, Megan maintained an admirable level of calmness and professionalism. Even while she occasionally muted herself to express her excitement and joy to her colleagues, she never lost her focus on the task at hand. Her calm demeanor and effective communication were pivotal in managing the situation successfully.

Megan Bristow's actions on this day are a testament to her dedication and skill as a public safety telecommunicator. Her ability to stay composed under pressure and facilitate a rapid, effective response undoubtedly made a significant difference in a very tense and critical situation. Megan's performance exemplifies the everyday heroism of telecommunicators, and her actions deserve to be recognized and celebrated.

Thank you, Megan, for being a great Teammate in Action and representing the North Carolina APCO Chapter.

**Be sure to nominate your  
Teammates in Action**



<https://www.apcointl.org/membership/awards-recognition/teammates-in-action/>

## Washington State Chapter Highlights

### Washington State APCO-NENA Public Safety Communications Conference 2024



A little over 130 people traveled to Spokane, Washington for a spook-tacular time at our annual conference. With a primary focus on public safety employee health, we titled our conference “Stressbusters” and themed it after the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movie Ghostbusters.



We kicked it off with a pre-conference PSAP Directors meeting and TERT training, followed by our Chapter Meeting where we elected our new officers, Secretary Esther Click, and Westside Ambassador, Alyson Everbeck. This was followed by a Chapter Dinner, and walking ghost tour, where we visited some of the famous haunts of downtown Spokane. Good times!



Day one we had a great welcome back breakfast and enjoyed the musings of comedian Mel Austin who reminded us of why we do the work we do and got our blood moving by having us do a little dancing. Each day of conference we had a 50/50 raffle drawing and were able to boost our Sunshine Fund with the Chapter's split. We also held our PSAP Basket silent auction where we raised over \$2,000 for our Sunshine Fund!



We could not do what we do at conference without the help of our partner Vendors and Conference Sponsors. They help to make our conference amazing! We had great success on the vendor floor with attendees spending quality time there during the Vendor floor opening & reception, dedicated vendor time and lunch served on the floor.



We had a dedicated room during our breakout sessions for reflection and meditation time provided by somatic healing center Anam Cara of Spokane. They offered guided meditation sessions throughout the conference and kept the room open for attendees to stop in whenever for a bit of self-care.

The culmination of the week's activities is our annual awards banquet. Honoring the work our Public Safety professionals do day in, and day out is truly the highlight of our conference. Award winners receive complementary conference tickets and hotel rooms so they can attend conference and receive their much-deserved awards in person. This year we had the privilege of having both APCO President Stephen Martini and NENA President Melanie Jones in attendance at our banquet.

All of our Chapter activities are made possible by our committee volunteers and Chapter leadership.

**Movir**

## Michigan State Chapter Highlights

On October 24, Michigan APCO held their swearing in of officers ceremony at the World Famous Zehnder's of Frankenmuth. Michigan APCO, (APCO Chapter 5) Celebrated its 80th anniversary as a chapter. Our yearly awards and dinner meeting was sponsored by Motorola, a partnership in place for 70 years.

We were honored to have Michigan alum, APCO CEO Executive Director Mel Maier and his wife Karen join us and conduct the swearing in process.



From Left to Right

2024-2025 Chapter Officers:

- President: David Plumb
- 1st Vice President: Dave Rapacz
- 2nd Vice President: Robert Stahelin
- Sergeant at Arms: Kelley Cunningham
- Secretary: Cynthia Fell
- Treasurer: Phyllis Fuller (Absent)
- Executive Council: Kim Ostin
- Immediate Past President: Christine Collom

### 2024 Chapter Awards:



#### Information Technologist of the Year:

Presented by Francis D'Huyvetter to  
Jonathan Merrick (Eaton County)



#### Supervisor of the Year:

Presented by Barb Davidson to Danielle  
Harris (Ingham County 9-1-1)



#### Trainer of the Year:

Presented by Liz Bagas to Barbara Rose  
(Macomb County 9-1-1)



#### Director of the Year:

Presented by Kristina Nevins to Stephanie  
Lehman (Barry County 9-1-1)

## Michigan Chapter Highlights (continued)



**Telecommunicator of the Year:**  
Presented by Barb Davidson to Chris Thompson



**Senior Membership Recognition:**  
Presented by Mel Maier to Past President Christine Collom



**Team of the Year:**  
Presented by Kelley Cunningham & Christine Collom to Clinton County 9-1-1 & Eaton County 9-1-1

**Team Members:**  
Angelia Beeals, Cale Felker, Chelsea Hoppes, Jessica Nunham, Samantha Neirink, Alissa Thorne, Madison Heuer

**Submitted by: David Plumb, President**



## News from Virginia

### When Emotional Support Animals Meet 911 Dispatch: A Game-Changer for Mental Health and Wellness!

On October 21st, 2024, the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) was in for a treat! It wasn't your typical day at the dispatch center. No, this day featured a very special guest—Dispatcher 42-PU Nugget, a 4-year-old domesticated skunk, who, alongside Heather Blaney, a Certified Training Officer (CTO) and Social Media Director from Knox County 9-1-1, brought an exciting and interactive training session that left everyone in awe!

Heather's workshop was all about the incredible benefits of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) and Pets in the Workplace programs. And let us tell you, it was more than just a presentation—it was a full-on heartwarming experience. Heather shared how these programs not only boost employee recruitment and retention but also make a huge impact on community education and, most importantly, the mental health and wellness of those working in high-stress environments like 911 centers. It's not just about pets—it's about providing comfort, support, and calm to those who need it most.

And of course, Nugget—the social skunk—was the star of the show! Nugget, who came from an Indiana skunk rescue, may not have your typical four-legged therapy dog vibe, but trust us, this little skunk has a big role to play in the dispatch world. With his scent glands removed, Nugget is as friendly as they come. He's a cuddle pro, and he melted into the arms of everyone who held him, spreading a contagious calm throughout the ECC. It didn't take long for Nugget to win over hearts and create an atmosphere of relaxation that had everyone smiling.

Heather explained that Nugget's main job in the dispatch center is to offer emotional support and comfort during and after those tough, stressful calls. The magic happens with something as simple as letting dispatchers pet Nugget—his presence is enough to bring a sense of calm and grounding. And that's just one example of how Emotional Support Animals are transforming the way we approach mental health in high-stress workplaces.

But here's the kicker—Emotional Support Animals aren't just dogs and cats! Nope, there are a whole variety of animals that can bring comfort and joy to the workplace. Along with Nugget the skunk, Heather introduced us to the idea of birds, fish, rabbits, guinea pigs, hedgehogs, miniature horses, and of course, the classic ESA heroes like dogs and cats. You name it, there's an ESA for it!

The benefits of having an ESA around go far beyond companionship. Research has shown that their presence can significantly **lower blood pressure, reduce stress, and even boost serotonin**



## News from Virginia (continued)

and dopamine levels—the brain’s happy chemicals! Imagine a quick cuddle with Nugget after a tough call—it’s a recipe for mental wellness that can help dispatchers recharge and stay sharp.

But wait—there’s more! Heather didn’t just leave us with the feel-good stuff—she also shared practical advice on how to bring pets into the workplace. If you’re wondering how to make it happen in your 911 center, Heather has you covered. She offered resources on what documentation, policies, and approvals might be needed to launch a successful ESA program, and she even shared tips on how to convince leadership that pets in the workplace aren’t just a luxury—they’re a powerful tool for improving overall well-being. Want to learn more? Check out all the resources she shared at [Better Cities for Pets – Pets at Work](#).

In conclusion, Heather and Nugget have become champions of a new wave of support for 911 centers across the country—one where animals, beyond traditional therapy dogs, are playing a major role in mental health care for dispatchers. Whether it’s a furry, feathered, or scaly friend, these animals are proving to be a vital part of helping our emergency communications heroes stay strong, stay resilient, and keep doing the incredible work they do under pressure.

So, what are you waiting for? Let’s bring more pets into the workplace and boost morale, one tail wag (or skunk cuddle) at a time!



**Submitted by:** Celeste Baldino, Deputy Director - Operations  
Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center (ECC)

## Humor Under the Headset



We need your funny stories!!!!

## Upcoming Webinar

### Defending Your ECC: The Power of Cyber Insurance

Fri, Dec 6, 2024 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Join the APCO Cybersecurity Committee for an insightful webinar on Cyber Insurance! Learn how cyber insurance can protect your agency from digital threats, understand key policy features and agency needs, and conducting needs assessments for your center. Don't miss this chance to stay ahead in safeguarding your ECC!

MCSC/Cybersecurity webinar. <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/>



## Upcoming Conferences



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**  
FOR  
**2025 APCO WESTERN REGIONAL**  
PORTLAND CONVENTION CENTER  
■ MARCH 3-6, 2025 ■



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM RATES**

HYATT REGENCY PORTLAND AT THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER

## Chapter Member Services Committee Members

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