

Member & Chapter Services Poll

This month's poll will be focused on Chapter Leadership Engagement with Members. We request a member from each Agency to PLEASE participate in answering our poll questions. It will only take a few minutes and the results will be shown in next month's newsletter.

Chapter Leadership Engagement with Members Poll

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Membership Information

Member Type	03/1/2024	03/1/2025
Associate Members	1,702	1,579
Full Members	3,401	3,242
Full Group Members	9,248	9,586
Online Group Members	21,555	23,375
Commercial Members	364	365
Commercial Group Members	139	180
Student/Educator Members	9	21
Total Number of Members	36,418	38,348
Total Number of Group Agencies	1,578	1,643
Commercial Groups	39	41

APCO Staffing Taskforce

The APCO Staffing Taskforce, formed in 2023, has finalized its work and we are deeply grateful to the taskforce members for their dedication and contributions over the past two years. Their efforts have been instrumental in developing the 2022 and 2024 9-1-1 Staffing Crisis Summits, as well as producing valuable committee reports on critical topics such as training needs for veteran telecommunicators and exploring innovative workforce management strategies to improve retention in ECCs. We recognize that many agencies still face staffing challenges and APCO remains committed to providing support through resources like the Student Recruitment Toolkit and the Career Instructor Program, as well as future initiatives.

Submitted by: Lisa Inkley, CAE Director of Marketing & Communications APCO International

Awards Committee

"You and Them"

We all know that you are an awesome public safety communications person! You work hard, you are compassionate when dealing with your fellow employees, and you have a passion for providing high quality service to your customers, be it the public or others within your agency. Thank YOU for what YOU do!! That can't be said enough.

But...look around and you will find other incredible people, too. They may be your subordinates; they may be colleagues working at the same level as you are. Or they may be your supervisor....or your supervisor's boss. These people are doing great things, also.

Our industry has always been a tad lackadaisical about recognizing people for their good work. We've gotten better over the years, but we can also do better in the future. If you know a superb person doing amazing things in their public safety communications role, then why don't you take a couple of minutes and "write them up"! Nominate them for an APCO Award!

The APCO Awards Committee has been around for decades. We used to only recognize telecommunicators, but now there are numerous categories that will fit the circumstances of your outstanding nominee...from director and line supervisor to radio technician, information technology professional, and trainer. There is even a category for a team of folks who have come together and overcome a challenge.

The Awards season opens January 15th and closes April 1st. There is no limit to the number of nominations that you can submit.

So, think about it. There has got to be one person that you know that is deserving of recognition... they don't have to walk on water, they just need to have handled a call, resolved a situation, came up with a new idea, or championed a team. If you know a worthy person, why don't YOU step up and honor THEM with a 2025 APCO Awards nomination!

Submitted by:

Brent Finster, APCO Awards RF Technologist Working Group Chair

Cybersecurity Committee

<u>SAFECOM in Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence – Initiatives and Tools</u>

Effective communication remains the backbone of public safety operations. As a result of the attacks of September 11, 2001, SAFECOM was established under the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to enhance emergency communication capabilities across jurisdictions and disciplines. Throughout that time the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) has remained an active participant and partner in SAFECOM initiatives and working groups. Today, SAFECOM plays a critical role in integrating cybersecurity measures and artificial intelligence (AI) as part of its overarching mission to improve public safety communications operability, interoperability, and security.

SAFECOM in Cybersecurity

Cyber threats targeting emergency communication systems have become more sophisticated, necessitating equally sophisticated defense mechanisms. SAFECOM actively collaborates with public safety agencies and associations to strengthen cybersecurity resilience and response. One of its key initiatives is the <u>911 Cybersecurity Resource Hub</u>, developed in partnership with the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC). This hub serves as a centralized platform that provides emergency communication centers (ECCs) with essential resources, including:

- Incident Reporting Tools: Clear guidelines for reporting and managing cyber incidents.
- **Case Studies**: Real-world examples to help ECCs understand vulnerabilities and mitigation strategies.
- **Cybersecurity Training and Education**: Access to training programs that enhance ECC personnel's cybersecurity skills.

Best Practices: Frameworks for identifying and protecting networks from cyber threats. Additionally, SAFECOM has released several key cybersecurity publications, such as *Cyber Risks to Land Mobile Radio (LMR)* and *First 48: What to Expect When a Cyber Incident Occurs*. These resources provide valuable insights for public safety agencies to proactively defend against cyber threats.

SAFECOM in Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is transforming emergency communication systems by improving threat detection, automating responses, and analyzing vast datasets in real time. During the Spring SAFECOM Bi -Annual Meeting in June 2024, a dedicated session explored Al's role in enhancing public safety communications. Key discussions focused on:

- **Predicting and Identifying Communication Disruptions**: All algorithms being used to help to foresee potential failures and take preventive action.
- **Optimizing Resource Allocation**: Al-driven analytics being used to streamline the deployment of emergency resources.

Cybersecurity Committee (continued)

Enhancing Data Analysis: Al processing of real-time data to improve situational awareness and decision-making among communications professionals.

By highlighting and providing education on AI integrations into public safety communication initiatives, SAFECOM hopes to enhance emergency response efficiency, ensuring that first responders operate with accurate, real-time information.

APCO International's Involvement in SAFECOM

APCO International, a leading association in public safety communications, plays a vital role in supporting SAFECOM's initiatives. APCO contributes expertise and resources to enhance interoperability and cybersecurity measures within the emergency response community. Through its collaborative efforts with SAFECOM, APCO International ensures that emergency communication personnel are equipped with the knowledge and tools to protect mission-critical networks against evolving cyber threats.

Future Initiatives

SAFECOM continues to advance public safety communications by:

- **Expanding Cybersecurity Measures**: Updating best practices to counter emerging cyber threats.
- Integrating Advanced AI Technologies: Utilizing AI for predictive analytics and automated threat detection.
- **Enhancing Training Programs**: Providing comprehensive cybersecurity education for emergency responders.
- **Strengthening Governance Frameworks**: Supporting decision-making structures for emergency communication resilience

As public safety communication systems evolve, SAFECOM remains at the forefront of ensuring their operability, interoperability, and security. By leveraging cybersecurity strategies and Aldriven solutions, SAFECOM enhances the ability of emergency responders to manage crises effectively. The continued collaboration with organizations such as APCO International further strengthens these efforts, ensuring that public safety communications remain resilient in the face of ever-evolving threats.

References

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. (2025, February 11). SAFECOM Publishes Spring 2024 SAFECOM Bi-Annual Meeting Executive Summary. Retrieved from https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/news/safecom-publishes-spring-2024-safecom-bi-annual-meeting-executive-summary

Cybersecurity Committee (continued)

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Submitted by: Nic Briseño, Communications Commander, Story County Sheriff's Office, SAFECOM At Large Member, Iowa APCO Vice-President

Cybersecurity Challenges for Small and Large ECCs

It can be a challenging task trying to figure out the best methods, practices or ways to keep your centers cybersafe, regardless of how small or large it is. Having someone who is well versed in cybersecurity can be hard to find regardless of the size of your ECC. What is a best practice? Well, a best practice is defined as commercial or professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective. This means that no matter if you have someone on staff that can handle cybersecurity, you are a large or small center, there are some things that you can do to help keep your centers protected.

CISA recommends two best practices that anyone can do to help reduce the cyber risks at your centers: Develop a Cyber Incident Response Plan and participate in a Cyber Risk Assessment. A Cyber Risk Assessment helps provide you with where there are deficiencies or gaps in your network and recommends next steps to help you continue to improve your network resilience. A Cyber Incident Response Plan provides guidance in how to identify, mitigate, respond and recover from an incident and this helps ensure that gaps in services are minimized, prevent data loss

Cybersecurity Committee (continued)

and ensure continuity of operations. A Cyber Risk Assessment should be performed at least annually and based on those findings you can develop trainings around the gaps identified to help your personnel become more cyber aware and adjust your response plans to accommodate for any new changes that might result from these assessments. Our centers continue to be high value targets because of the services provided. The interruptions to these services can have major impacts, so it's important to stay up to date on the latest trends and threats, keep your hardware patched and up to date, and continue to train your employees.

This Committee has been preparing another insightful webinar this year which will explore these challenges in more detail and provide additional resources you can take away and implement immediately in your ECC. APCO Webinars like the one the Cybersecurity Committee is presenting on April 29th, 2025, at 1pm are a fantastic opportunity to see how experienced 9-1-1 Directors, IT Managers, System Administrators, and Line Dispatchers have come to understand what has worked for them in preparation for the inevitable when, not if, a Cyber Incident can occur and effect their Center. Please join our Cybersecurity Committee colleagues on the 29th and learn more about how you can be ready for these Cybersecurity challenges.

https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/24 0517_ecd_ead-brown_cyber-best-practices_508c.pdf
https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-12/ess-cyber-risk-assessment_112023_508.pdf

Submitted by:

Mike Wurst Kevin Lessard
Systems Administrator Executive Director
Springfield-Greene County 911 Northern Middlesex RECC



Commercial Advisory Corner

An Interview with Julie Heimkes, Jack Daniel Award Recipient

To honor the 2024 recipient of APCO International's Jack Daniel award, Commercial Advisory Council member Joe Jackson was able to sit down with Julie to discuss her service to the public safety industry, and her connection with Jack himself during his life and career.

Joe: Thank you so much for joining us today, and again congratulations on winning this award.

Julie: I still shake my head in disbelief, and it's been several months already. Yeah. But it was such an honor to receive the Jack Daniel award.



Joe: We at APCO know you pretty well, but why don't you give us a little bit of your personal and professional background?

Julie: I've been in public safety for the majority of my life. I started in 1978; I was I was in high school. I always wanted to be a medic, you know, watching Emergency. Johnny and Roy; they were my heroes. But I grew up in a rural town, and they had a volunteer ambulance. I knew if I went there and said, hey. "I want to join your ambulance company" they would probably laugh at me. I also knew that a lot of them were just first responders, so I went out and got my EMT license. And then I went to them and I said, I would love to join your ambulance. I went on after high school and college, got my medic's degree, worked on an ambulance for total of ten years in Minnesota. I got tired of freezing my tail off on a medical accident scene or something and thought, where can I next best go? I was with the police department at the time where they were police medics or community service officer medics and decided that hey, dispatch is warm. I can probably do that. And so I started helping out in their dispatch a little bit now and then as needed and then decided and just fell in love with the whole aspect of dispatch. I did that for eleven years, working my way up in in a couple different departments from dispatcher, trainer, supervisor, and eventually director. And so my heart and soul was there for many, many years. I received a phone call one day from EF Johnson Radio that wanted to offer me a job as a trainer on a radio system that I knew very well and had been training for them on the side. And I was like, really? I get to travel, and I get to see all these places, and you're going to pay me twice as much as I'm making now? Sold! And I stepped away, which, you know, some days I regret it a little bit, but, that's how I entered the commercial world of public safety. And at the time, again, in Minnesota so I had been very active with the Minnesota APCO chapter as a member and helping with conferences and everything else. And so it was easy because I knew everybody just to keep that energy rolling. At the time, they were hosting the national APCO conference, so I jumped in with both feet.

Joe: How did you originally meet Jack Daniel?

Commercial Advisory Corner (continued)

Julie: I didn't meet Jack until maybe five years in as a commercial member, when we moved to Arizona. Jack was very active, not just in California, which is where he was from, but all of the Western US chapters. I think everybody out there knew Jack. Jack attended one of our Arizona APCO meetings, and I met him there. He introduced himself to me, and he basically put his arm around me, and took it under his wing. I think I had said to him at one time, you know, sometimes I feel like the redheaded stepchild. You know, the commercial members are redheaded stepchildren. And he told me that's not the way it has to be. He opened my eyes and guided me through how important commercial members truly are to the APCO organization. And instilled in my brain that without the commercial members, the APCO organization would not be as strong and valuable as it is now.

Joe: You and I talked briefly about your time on the Commercial Advisory Council. And since I'm on that now as well, I'd love to hear about some of your experiences there.

Julie: That was thanks to Jack. He pulled me into the commercial advisory council, and I remember walking into the room, and he nominated me to be part of the commercial advisory council. It was it was tremendous to see such knowledge in a room from these commercial advisory members. But I also could see that we needed to take it even further. Commercial members are very important to the APCO membership. I worked very hard within the commercial advisory council and wound up being the chair of the council. My two greatest accomplishments during that time was working with APCO to set term limits. You always need fresh blood in there, people with new ideas. That was very important to me because it meant that we would always get new people into there, and we could groom people. Back when I was a supervisor, my sergeant of the police department told me, "Always create your replacement, always mentor your replacement." And so that's what I did. And then, of course, the other thing that we did when Jack passed was to create the Jack Daniel award. And there had never been an award for commercial members prior to this one. So that's what also makes that, award extra special to me. Not only was he a friend and a mentor that we helped, but I was part of the group that created that legacy for Jack.

Joe: With that said, why don't you tell us a little bit more about who Jack was as a person?

Julie: Oh my. Jack and his wife, Pat, you know, they came as a team most of the time, and he was he was that guy that you could always count on. I know my chapter would always go to Jack, and he would always support financially, physically helping out with conferences, and just professionally helping us with ideas and making sure we were on the right track with everything. And I have no idea how he did this for at least five or six chapters. He was very active in every single chapter he belonged to. Jack and Pat would be at every state conference we did, at least in Arizona. He was just an amazing man. You could always count on him. I could call him anytime day or night and ask for advice, it didn't matter what time of day or night he would answer that phone. I will never forget the things that he taught me and what he did for me. I mean, I think I would've I don't know if I would've stayed with the commercial advisory Council as active as I have been without his mentorship.

Joe: What overall impact would you say Jack had on APCO?

Commercial Advisory Corner (continued)

Julie: I think Jack installed that message, not in just the commercial members, but in the regular membership that commercial members are an important part of APCO. Not only do we provide knowledge, but we also provide wisdom, we provide the ability for them, even the financial ability for them to continue as a chapter and to continue as a national chapter to get things done within the commercial world. Many of the commercial members that are out there came from a public safety world. They were officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, or a dispatcher, any or all of that. It's a reminder for everybody that we play an important role, and we can help them. I think especially with the Commercial Advisory Council, the council members do it because they love public safety, and they love what they do. They love what they do for APCO.

Joe: Is there anything else that you'd like to share, or say as the award winner here?

Julie: No. Again, just let's keep it up. Let's keep recognizing those people. I know there's a lot of commercial members up there that deserve the recognition as well. And I know APCO is trying to make it special, so we're not doing it every year like some of the awards that they do. But I just think we need to keep it on the forefront because I know that there's others out there that will be as equally honored and humbled to receive the award as I did. Like I said, I still shake my head and just and then I smile, and then I cry.

Learn more about the Commercial Advisory Council on the APCO website!



Health & Wellness

A Letter to 911 Dispatchers: Your Work Matters More Than You Know

To My Fellow 911 Dispatchers,

As we celebrate National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, we want to take a moment to recognize you—not just for the lifesaving work you do, but for the resilience, dedication, and sacrifice you show daily.

Being a 911 dispatcher means carrying the weight of emergencies that few people could imagine, and most will never fully understand. You are the calm in the chaos, the voice in the darkness, and the lifeline between crisis and help. Whether it's a frantic parent, a trapped firefighter, or a distressed caller who just needs someone to listen, you are there—steady, strong, and unwavering.

But we also know the toll this job can take. The long hours, emotional burdens, and relentless pace impact your well-being in ways that aren't always visible. You absorb the stress of every call, often with no closure, moving from one emergency to the next without a moment to process. The weight of that responsibility is immense, and yet, you continue to show up, shift after shift, day after day, ready to serve. That kind of dedication deserves more recognition than a single week can provide. Please know that your work is valued—not just by the responders and communities you serve, but by those of us who stand beside you in the comm center. Your sacrifices do not go unnoticed. We see the way you push through exhaustion, the way you support each other after tough calls, and the way you carry the weight of the job with quiet strength. We see your dedication, and we are grateful for it. But most of all, we see you.

As we honor you this week, we also want to remind you that you are more than this job. We encourage you to take care of yourself—not just physically, but emotionally and mentally. Prioritize your well-being. Take time to rest, breathe, and to reconnect with the things that bring you joy. The job will always be there, but you are irreplaceable.

You are the heart of public safety. You are the voice that makes a difference and you are appreciated—today, this week, and always.

With gratitude and respect,

911 Dispatch Center Supervisors Everywhere

Written by: Alicia Williams

Phoenix Fire Department Regional Dispatch Center





Louisiana State Chapter Highlight

Louisiana 9-1-1 representatives attended the annual 9-1-1 Goes to Washington event in Washington, D.C. in February. They were able to meet with Representative Clay Higgins on two bills supporting 9-1-1: the 911 SAVES Act (H.R.6319) and NG911 (H.R.1784).

911 SAVES Act: "This bill requires the Office of Management and Budget...to categorize public safety telecommunicators as a protective service occupation under the Standard Occupational Classification System."

NG911 (Next Generation 9-1-1 Act of 2023): "This bill establishes grants and requires other activities to support next generation 9-1-1 systems (interoperable, secure, Internet Protocol-based systems for receiving 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance)."

Our representatives were:

Sheriff Jayson Richardson, Desoto Parish Sheriff's Office
Capt. Phillip M. Daniels, Desoto Parish Sheriff's Office
Director Richard McGuire, Calcasieu Parish 911 Communications District
Director Jim Verlander, East Baton Rouge Parish 911 Communications District
Brenda Welch, East Baton Rouge Parish 911 Communications District
Director Jade Gabb, Ouachita Parish 911 Communications District
Director Ben Chasteen, East Feleciana Parish 911 Communications District









Wyoming State Chapter Highlights

We (APCO/NENA Chapter and the WY State 911 Coordinator) now have a seat on our state PSCC (Public Safety Communications Committee). Our APCO/NENA President Monte McClain was selected about a year ago and is able to advocate and educate our stakeholders throughout the state.

Notes from Monte: Currently the PSCC is working on getting statutory authority to change the reporting requirements for 911 outages to align with Wyoming's needs. SF0057 911 outage and reporting. We are also introducing an interim topic with the legislature of modifying the surcharge cap and giving PSCC rulemaking authority on NG911 rules.

Other than that, we are holding our 911 provider's feet to the fire and working to improve communications with service providers when outages occur.

We will meet in May for more updates.

Submitted by: Maryanne Christensen - Communications Supervisor Lincoln County Sheriff's Office

North Carolina State Chapter Highlights

North Carolina, the ninth-largest state in the nation, boasts a population exceeding 10.7 million residents. This diverse populace is spread across 100 counties and over 500 municipalities. In 2023, the state's Emergency Communication Centers (ECCs) answered approximately 7.2 million 911 calls. This highlights the critical role of our 115 Primary PSAPs and nearly 3,000 dedicated telecommunicators.

Our North Carolina Chapter of APCO International is a vibrant community of over 1,500 members. These professionals are actively engaged in various facets of the public safety communications industry, from frontline telecommunicators to technical support staff. The chapter's journey began on November 14, 1961, with its inaugural meeting in Greensboro, NC. Fast forward to November 19, 2021, we celebrated our 60th anniversary in the same city, reflecting on six decades of commitment to enhancing public safety communications. Throughout the years, North Carolina APCO has been at the forefront of promoting and improving the public safety communications industry statewide. Our influence is evident in the inclusion of an NC APCO representative on the North Carolina 911 Board. Currently, Melanie Jones, the Executive Director of the Guilford Metro 911 Center and National NENA President, serves as our representative. Additionally, Chapter Historian and PIO Grayson Gusa contributes to the NC 911 Board Workgroup, focusing on updating the State 911 Plan. On the international stage, our chapter takes pride in having 16 Senior Members and 7 Lifetime Members of APCO International, underscoring our members' dedication and

North Carolina State Chapter Highlights (continued)

expertise. Education and networking remain at the core of our mission. We host an annua Tele-communicator Training Symposium, a three-day event dedicated to training and networking for frontline telecommunicators. Furthermore, in collaboration with the North Carolina Chapter of NENA, we co-host the annual NC Public-Safety Communications Conference. For those eager to delve deeper into North Carolina APCO's initiatives and events, we invite you to visit our website at www.ncapco.org or connect with us on Facebook at http://facebook.ncapco.org.

Teammates in Action



DAILY ACTIONS BY HEADSET HEROES.

WE'RE
WORKING TO
BRING THESE
MOMENTS TO
LIGHT AND
NEED YOUR
NOMINATIONS!

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

Teammates in Action (continued)

This month we celebrate the teamwork at Adcom911 in Colorado!

On November 1, 2024, at 00:01 hours, we received multiple calls reporting shots fired at a residence in Northglenn. Due to the high volume of callers, all available personnel were required to assist in answering the calls. Julie, Michaela, and Vallen, along with her CTO Erin, managed calls from individuals at the scene, with each taking reports from witnesses who described different victims being shot.

Cheyenne, who was handling the Northglenn channel, was commended in the debrief for quickly toning in the call in under seven seconds. Her efficient handling of the call was highlighted as a key factor in the success of the operation.

Jack, working on the North Metro Fireboard, also received praise during the debrief for his swift coordination. His efforts to quickly deploy fire department resources and secure the necessary number of ambulances (seven in total) were instrumental in minimizing further casualties.

Throughout the incident, the entire team was involved in managing multiple tasks and coordinating resources. Cheyenne was specifically tasked with requesting additional police officers from neighboring jurisdictions, and as a result, Thornton PD, Adams County Sheriff's Office, Federal Heights PD, and Colorado State Patrol responded to the scene. Additionally, the coroner and District Attorney were notified, and a CodeRed shelter-in-place alert was issued. A Mass Casualty/Beds Count was sent to local hospitals to prepare for incoming patients.

During the debrief, it was noted that thanks to the speed and coordination of Adcom, all victims, except for one who was beyond saving, were transported to the hospital with a pulse. Unfortunately, two victims did not survive once at the hospital, resulting in a total of seven victims, three of whom passed away.

Those not directly involved in handling the incident were still actively engaged in managing day-to-day operations, including making notifications and sending alerts, ensuring that those directly involved could focus solely on the immediate response.

Join APCO MCSC in thanking this incredible team for a job well done!



Upcoming Event





Workshops You Can Attend:

- Domestic Violence & the Role of the Telecommunicator
- Suspicious Activity Reporting & the RAVE Alerting
- Effective Strategies for Dealing with Workplace Conflict
- You Got the Promotion...Now what?
- Revolutionizing Cybersecurity
- Wicked Heroic Dispatch Tales & Lifesaving Call
- The Hidden Cost of Heroism: PTSD & Suicide Prevention for Responders
- When Trauma Strikes
- Traffic Management for the Telecommunicator's Ensuring Safe Responses
- The Ethical Compass: Navigating Ethics & Accountability in Public Service
- 9-1-1 Tech Tune Up: Back to and Beyond the Basics!
- The Social Media Frenzy
- NG9-1-1 in Action during Disaster Response
- Elevating & Connecting QA, Feedback
- What happens if your new NG Call handling equip goes down?
- Responding to Natural Disasters: How Your 9-1-1 Neighbor Can Help
- Louisiana State Police
 - > NCIC FBI Auditing
- Next Generation 911 Education & Planning
- PSAP & Alarm Call Center Relations
- LA Legislative Auditor Public Bid Law

CONTINUING EDUCATION



TODA

https://www.eventleaf.com/laapconena2025

Upcoming Conferences





Upcoming Conferences



Upcoming Conferences (continued)

2025 MICHIGAN PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE









2025 Michigan Public Safety **Telecommunications Conference**

Monday, May 19th -

Thursday, May 22nd



VanDyk Mortgage **Convention Center**

460 W. Western Ave. Muskegon, MI 49440



Chapter Member Services Committee Members

NAME	STATE CHAPTER LIAISON	OTHER COMMITTEE DUTIES	EMAIL ADDRESS
LaToya Marz, RPL	Pennsylvania	Chair, CLR Guide & CO Toolkit	lmarz@tri-com911.org
Celeste Baldino, RPL	North Carolina	Vice-Chair, Teammates In Action (TIA)	cbaldino@albemarle.org
Amanda Dodd, RPL	Montana	Vice-Chair, Teammates In Action (TIA)	adodd@wilson911.org
Amy Kosinsky, RPL	South Dakota	Proofreader	kosinskya@naperville.il.us
Andrea Raber	Oklahoma	TIA	adrea.raber@cityofdenton.com
Benjamin Curry	Backup	Proofreader	benjmin.curry@edmondok.gov
Bill Behar	Tennessee	Polls	bill@pitronps.com
Catherine Raley, RPL	Ohio	Proofreader	craley@arapahoegov.com
Charlene Fisk, RPL, CPE	Nebraska	CLRG & CO Toolkit	cafisk@nortonmaus.com
Charlene Williams	No. California	TIA	cwilliams@hpdps.org
Charles Venske, Retired	Alaska	Life Member Content, Proofreader	charles.venske@outlook.com
Corey Overstreet	Caribbean	CLRG & CO Toolkit	coverstr@vbgov.com
Diva Miranda Jones		Commercial Member Highlight Content, Polls	divam@carbyne.com
Donna Crochet	Mid-Eastern	TIA	dcrochet@cpso.com
Elizabeth Henegar	Utah	Proofreader	Beth.Henegar@mtsu.edu
Erin Eaton	Wisconsin	TIA	eeaton@nwcds.org
Heather Barnes		Polls	heather.barnes@csec.texas.gov
Heather Butler	Idaho	TIA	hbutler@dekalbcounty.org
Jared Pelham, RPL	Texas	TIA	pelham_j@hc911.org
Jeryl Anderson, RPL, CPE	Illinois	CLRG & CO Toolkit	jbesttraining@yahoo.com
Jodie Chinn, RPL	Indiana	CLRG & CO Toolkit	jchinn@qunnisonco.gov
Karen Anderson	Kansas	Webinars	kanderson@dcp.virginia.gov

Chapter Member Services Committee Members (continued)

NAME	STATE CHAPTER LIAISON	OTHER COMMITTEE DUTIES	EMAIL ADDRESS
Katrisha Harrison	Missouri, Colorado	CLRG & CO Toolkit	Kmharrison75@gmail.com
Krista Kilmon	lowa	TIA	kkilmon@co.northampton.va.us
Kristen McCullough	West Virginia	Polls	KRMccullough@vbgov.com
Laramie Scott	Saudi Arabia	Proofreader	laramie.scott@madisoncountyky.us
Lisa Allred	Backup	Polls	<u>Lisa.allred@newcastlede.gov</u>
Lisa Rice	Florida	Polls	Irice@tiogacountypa.us
Mandi Jones	New Mexico	Webinar	Mjones@theprpc.org
Mary Sue Robey	Backup	Newsletter Editor	Marysuer@valleycom.org
Matthew Harwell	Minnesota	CLRG & CO Toolkit	mharwell@lincoln.ne.gov
Michael Newsome, RPL	Atlantic	Proofreader	michael.newsome@fultoncountyga.gov
Michelle Hernandez	Georgia	Webinars	Michelle.hernandez@birminghamal.gov
Peter Kinnas	North Dakota	Proofreader	peter.s.kinnas@mass.gov
Rebecca Taft	Louisiana	Webinars	rtaft@dekalbcounty.org
Ron Dunn	Mississippi	Proofreader	rdunn.cpra@gmail.com
Sabrina Morgan	Wyoming	Proofreader	breemorgen@hotmail.com
SaBrina Woodall, RPL	Alabama	Polls	sabrina.woodall@cobbcounty.org
Sally Panozzo	Kentucky	TIA	panozzos@pbso.org
Samantha Dutch, RPL, CPE		Webinar Coordi- nator & Com- mittee Content	scameron@scotlandcounty.org
Sara Eagle	Oregon	CLRG & CO Toolkit	saraeagle@gapa911.us
Sebrina Jackson, RPL	Virginia	TIA	sebrina.jackson@nashville.gov
Shante Lipscomb	CPRA	CLRG & CO Toolkit	shante.lipscomb@ncapco.org
Stephanie Howard	Washington	Polls	stephanie.howard@dps.oregonstate.edu
Susie Saunders	Michigan	Proofreader	saunderss@cityofnampa.us
T'airra Whitis	Arkansas, Nevada	Webinars	tairra.whitis@rdu.com

Chapter Member Services Committee Members (continued)

NAME	STATE CHAPTER LIAISON	OTHER COMMITTEE DUTIES	EMAIL ADDRESS
Teresa Imler	Pacific	Webinars	tsavage@athens911.com
Warren (Chris) Errickson	Arizona	Polls	erricksonw@hillsboroughcounty.org
Tim Stencel		Group Leader	tstencel@NWCDS.org
Rebecca Hull		Staff Liaison	hullr@apcointl.org
Susan Stowell Corder		Staff Liaison	stowells@apcointl.org