

Washington Celebrates National Telecommunicator Week April 8-14

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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The week of April 8-14, 2012 is National Telecommunicator Week, intended to honor the first link in the chain of emergency police, fire and medical responses. On Thursday April 12, 2012, from 9am to 4pm the Washington State Patrol Communications Division will have a display of equipment used by dispatchers in the State Patrol and public education material for calling 9-1-1. If you've ever been the victim of a crime, been in a collision, reported a fire or needed emergency medical help, you've called 9-1-1 and been helped by a telecommunicator. At the Washington State Patrol they are known officially as Communications Officers. Other agencies use the more formal term of Telecommunicator, or similar titles. The common term is "dispatcher"; the person who answers the phone or radio and sends help where it's needed. Dispatchers are usually the first people to know when something really bad has happened, we count on them to get our emergency response off on the right foot, and they invariably come through with flying colors. - State Patrol Chief John R. Batiste

Batiste knows the job. As a young State Patrol Cadet, he was assigned to WSP's Communications Division. He says not only are dispatchers a lifeline for the public, but for emergency responders as well. After the recent murder of State Trooper Tony Radulescu, State Patrol Communications Officers were the first ones to send help. They quickly realized Trooper Radulescu was not answering his radio and sent other officers to check his welfare. The troopers on the road and emergency responders in general recognize the radio as their "lifeline" during a crisis. Please come out to the Capital Building, Olympia - 3rd floor Mezzanine, on April 12th between 9am and 4pm and meet State Patrol Communications Officers and learn what they do every day to make the citizens of Washington State safe on our highways.

Telecommunicators Week began in California in 1981, and quickly grew to national recognition. Just ten years later, Congress had designated the second full week of each April as a time to remember the critical role that dispatchers play in keeping us all safe. **9-1-1 DISPATCHERS, America's First Responders.**