



Director's Corner:

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Happy birthday 9-1-1. Well when this is published it will be a belated birthday wish. 50 years. Have you paused and reflected on the technological advancements that have transpired over the last 50 years? In the last 5 for that matter? When I started working at Davie County 9-1-1 in 1996 as a part-time telecommunicator (dispatcher back then), where I currently serve as the agency's director, I can remember our county doing a major address overhaul just prior to that to accommodate E-911. Cell phones were an oddity. In fact, during our last vacation, I noticed a payphone (out of service) and I took my teenage son over and showed him this rare and exotic object. I told him that, in the past, if you had an urgent need to call someone you had to use this, stop at someone's home or business and rely on their good nature to borrow their phone (as long as it was not long distance), or simply wait until you got home. He just shook his head. Now we have NG barreling down at us. I can only imagine what the next advancement will be. Maybe holographic images and transporter pads. After all Captain Kirk had a Communicator, or was that really a Nextel prototype. Regardless, change is always happening, so why fear it? The change eventually becomes the norm, then there is change again, and again it will be the norm.

Speaking of change and norm, our agency is currently beginning the stages for CAD replacement/upgrade. We have had the same product since 1999 and it has served us well, but whatever is decided will be a change. Once completed, I guess I will have achieved the trifecta in the 3 years of becoming director: phone system replaced, radio system replaced, and now our CAD. I am not counting all the "minor" tweaks that have been worked in such as online scheduling and new policies and procedures. To say I have an awesome staff is an understatement. I have included them in the process and have shared the overall big picture. Without the staff, none of this would have been achieved. My advice to any new director or aspiring director is to value and involve your staff. They truly are an extension of you. Also, build a good relationship with your fellow directors. We all face the same challenges. Those colleagues that I regularly tab for advice, I give a shout out to you.

9-1-1 Communications Centers are special and unique agencies. We are the "go to" for almost any and all problems that are faced. It takes a special and dedicated person to be ready to help someone face their problems, and that is what a Telecommunicator is. As we approach National Telecommunicator week in April I salute all those dedicated men and women who have the unique job to assist someone who is possibly going to experience the "worst day of their life". No one wakes up in morning thinking, "I am going to call 9-1-1". It is not a major "to do" list item. However, if it does make it to the list, there is a special person waiting to answer their call. I am humbled to manage such people. Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts, God bless.