

# The Quarterly Dispatcher

Issue 5

*Initial Attack, Mobilization, Training, Support*

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I must admit it has not been easy putting the newsletter together every quarter. Time seems to be the biggest obstacle but those of us on the team are determined to continue the project and make it better each issue. It took awhile to gather all the information for this issue, but we finally have the 5th issue of the ready for your reading.

In this issue of The Quarterly Dispatcher you will find ways and ideas to help create a productive, happy, successful 2015. Ronda Estey's article on Wellness continues with discussion on attributes which make for a successful dispatcher and smart ways to snack. You'll see articles on winter safety, crew dispatch resource management, and even a bird's eye view of a DFMO's experience in a dispatch center. The selections for the Eastern Area Dispatcher of the Year Awards have been finalized and you will meet the winners and nominees.

You will notice we have a few adjustments such as only one dispatcher and one center is highlighted and this is because it has been hard to get responses from folks, so each issue from now on will have one or the other from each geographical area highlighted.

I hope you enjoy the issue—Molly

## To Contact your Dispatch Working Team Representatives

### Eastern Area:

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/eacg/working\\_teams/dispatch/membership/DWT\\_MemberList2010.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/eacg/working_teams/dispatch/membership/DWT_MemberList2010.pdf)

### Southern Area:

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/sacc/PDFs/admin\\_mgmt/SADWT\\_Contact\\_List.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/sacc/PDFs/admin_mgmt/SADWT_Contact_List.pdf)

## Submit articles, comments or questions to:

[macampbell@fs.fed.us](mailto:macampbell@fs.fed.us) or [quarterlydispatcher@gmail.com](mailto:quarterlydispatcher@gmail.com)

## Whats Working?

### From the EADWT Chair's Corner

It has been a privilege to serve as the Chair, acting Chair and now back to Chair for the past 5+ years for the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team. The dedication that all of you all have for dispatching is what drove me to accept the chair a few years back. Each and every one of you has had a profound impact on my job and life. Seeing all of you come together on incidents, workshops and those of you on the Dispatch Working Team has been a pleasure to watch. I have seen many of you retire in the last few years and your replacements are an exciting new group of Dispatchers ready to take on any task thrown at them. This is what excites me the most! The future of the Working Team looks brighter than ever for the EADWT. As I depart as the Chair, while welcoming on Mike Kern from PA State, I am thrilled with the direction the EADWT is headed. With new leadership I am confident our support to the Dispatch Community and EACG will be as strong as ever.

As I reflect back now on many accomplishments, one that often sticks in my mind was the never ending desire and drive to create a joint Southern Area/Eastern Area Meeting. We saw back in our Charleston, SC meeting that the potential was there and the buy in had begun in Southern Area. Our Eastern Area Dispatch Community was very welcoming and that meeting planted a seed in allowing us to hold a successful joint meeting last year in Louisville, KY. I look forward to seeing this Southern Area/Eastern Area Dispatch Community flourish in the future with workshops and sharing of information and resources.

I also would like to encourage the whole dispatch community, no matter what agency you work for to be more actively involved in the Dispatch Community. As we move forward there will be some openings on the EADWT that might be an opportunity for you to step in. The Working Team is a family and I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve you the Eastern Area Dispatch Community.

**Cameron Crisp—WV-CAC:** Outgoing Chair

**Mike Kern (PA-PAS)** Incoming Chair

Hello, this is Mike Kern and I will be taking over as chair of the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team beginning on February 1, 2015. I currently work as the operations coordinator for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, Division of Forest Fire Protection. I'd like to start off by thanking Cameron Crisp of the Central Appalachians Coordination Center in West Virginia for his hard work in serving as the chairperson for the past few years.

The mission of the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team is to “to provide an interagency forum to identify and provide recommendations for action or resolution on issues pertaining to dispatch functions and mobilization”. Resolution to these issues usually comes in the form of recommendations made to the Eastern Area Coordinating Group for action. My intent as chair is to provide an open forum for the Eastern Area dispatch community to raise and address issues or challenges that they may be facing.

There are also a few other special projects that the Dispatch Working Team has coordinated and/or sponsored in the past, namely ROSS practice, the Eastern Area Excellence in Dispatch Award, and the Dispatch Workshop. I expect that the team will continue these efforts. If you have dispatch or mobilization issues that you feel need to be addressed or even ideas or suggestions, please forward them through your representative on the Dispatch Working team.

## What's Working (continued)

### Scott Swendsen—SA dispatch Working Team Chair

The Southern Area Dispatch Working Team had 52 responses to the online survey looking for input as to the location and timing of the 2015 Eastern / Southern Areas Dispatcher Workshop. Over 75 percent of the respondents indicated that December, January or February were the best months to hold the workshop. Over 15% indicated that March, April and May were the worst months to hold the workshop and 6% to 8% indicated that June thru September were also not good times.

As to distance, nearly 50% said that they were willing to travel over 500 miles to attend the workshop and nearly 45% said they were willing to travel over 300 miles. Which brings us to where to hold the workshop – almost 20% felt that Kentucky was a good location (guess we all loved Louisville!). 3% felt that Florida was good location and 5% thought Virginia was a good spot. The majority of us felt “any of the above” would be OK so I think this means that it pretty much doesn't matter where the workshop is – we are all still willing to come. Some of the other locations/comments included many which felt that a location central to both geographic areas would be important – again that points strongly to Louisville or someplace similarly located. As for the individual who thought that Minnesota, Wisconsin or Michigan would be great places for a December, January or February meeting – really? Won't see me heading north by choice in January!

Wide range of comments regarding topics we would like to see discussed or presented at the workshop: what's new with ROSS, WIMS, COGNOS, IRWIN, etc. ADs are a big interest as well as the changing future of dispatch – IDIP, moving to all-risk dispatch centers, dispatch consolidation. Crew issues (weight, self-sufficiency, credit cards, mobilization, etc) are also of interest as are mob center issues and the need for standardization. One person would like to see best practices or how other dispatch centers handle expanded and IA. Funding / budget is a big concern with the impact on training, travel and hardware (radio/computers) purchasing. VIPR, the priority trainee lists, aviation/air space, contracting issues were also mentioned. Some very good topics for this next workshop.

Ideas for the Keynote speaker also were wide-ranging: Kolleen Beesley from the IDIP project, FEMA SME, Yarnell fire review, a center manager who has experienced a loss of firefighters to go over the event to help the rest of us prepare for an incident within an incident. Possibly a motivational or emotional intelligence presenter. Someone mentioned Bequi Livingston to present FireFit – some interesting ideas! And yes, we try to keep them “short-winded”!

## SA dispatch Working Team Chair (Continue)

We also were interested in seeing what type of training could be offered – this is important for many of us getting approval and funding to attend a workshop like this. Some of the ideas include COGNOS, I-Suite training, AFF or aviation dispatcher training. Possibly some type of leadership and/or supervision development (great idea!). Wild-CAD, ROSS skills development (ie rosters, how to's, tips & tricks). Someone would like to see ESF4. NFDRS, IQCS, WIMS also mentioned. Team building and more COGNOS! Also a lone request for "Cohesive theory of positive neuron displacement" – I think this means increasing baldness and/or grey hair, but I may be wrong.....

Most of us felt that the evening banquet was beneficial in networking and would like to see this tradition continue. Similarly, 98% of us want to continue to have a silent auction with the proceeds going to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation (95%). And hey – 70% of you said you would volunteer to help out during the event so plan on getting a phone call!

So our next step is to actually find a location and start the meeting management process. We will look to see what is available in December, January and/or February (and maybe sneak a peek at November availability as well). But start planning – the 2015/2016 Eastern / Southern Areas Dispatcher Workshop will be sometime next winter. Thanks everyone for responding!

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### Got a Question?

Don't forget, if you are looking to find a answer to any dispatch related item, we'll find the answer for you.

**Submit all your questions to:**

***Molly Campbell***

[macampbell@fs.fed.us](mailto:macampbell@fs.fed.us)

618-687-1725

***Scott Swendsen***

[sswendsen@fs.fed.us](mailto:sswendsen@fs.fed.us)

501-321-5232

*Or send it to:* **Quarterlydispatcher@gmail.com**

**REMINDER:** We are looking for individuals who are willing to write for the newsletter, once each issue (that's only 4 times a year). If you are interested, please give us a holler!

## 2014 Dispatcher of the Year

Selections have been made for the Eastern Area's Dispatcher of the Year award. Individuals selected as the recipient were forward to the National selection committee for consideration. Congratulations to the Winners and Nominees.

### Eastern Area:

The Eastern Dispatch Working Team is honored to announce **Mary Carillo- Bigner**, NPS (Acadia NP), ME-NECC, to represent the Eastern Area for the Dispatcher of the Year! Mary was nominated by Tom Parent Center Manager of NECC and the EADWT unanimously agreed that Mary was a great dispatcher and was well deserving of this award! Others that were nominated were Cec Houtari from MN-MIFC and Maggie Schuetter from IN-ICC. All of these nominees should be proud of being considered for such a great award and we would like to honor them too for their service to the Dispatch Community!

### Southern Area:

The Southern Area is wrapping up their selection process, and their nominees and winner will be in the next issue of The Quarterly Dispatcher.



### Training Information

For the past few years, the Eastern Area has been providing ROSS training sessions once a week starting in February or March. Keep a eye out for emails with information on when they will begin. It's a very good idea for all individuals who have EDRC, EDSD, EDSP qualifications to participate in at least one training session, so everyone is prepared for the upcoming mobilizations.

### ROSS Newsletter

Ross now has a newsletter with great information:

[http://ross.nwccg.gov/news/ross\\_news\\_letter\\_2014\\_12.pdf](http://ross.nwccg.gov/news/ross_news_letter_2014_12.pdf)

## **Crew Dispatch Resource Management**

### **By Rachel Dunne- PA-ALF**

One of the challenges of being an aircraft dispatcher in the eastern US, whether you do flight following for the occasional project or mobilize out west as an ACDP, is that we simply have fewer opportunities to refresh and practice our skill set. Maybe you're like me—on my home forest, I'm much more likely to book commercial flight tickets than schedule a charter or exclusive use mission. So as we move into refresher and training season, here's something to think about...

Crew resource management (CRM) has become an integral part of aviation training for aircrew members and pilots—and dispatchers are finally being recognized as part of the equation as well. Dispatch resource management training focuses on “situational awareness, communication skills, teamwork, prioritizing, resource allocation, risk management, human factors, and decision-making skills.” (FAA, AC-121-32A) How can we take initiative to develop and maintain those skills once we've finished our basic IAT and D-312 courses?

Work with aviation management officials to be involved with briefings, AARs, simulations, and local training. This helps develop relationships with the aircrews, vendors, and project officials and ensures that everyone is on the same page about what will happen with communication, flight following, and other aircraft procedures. Take advantage of opportunities to join recon flights as a passenger—you'll get to see how busy the aircrew is when they're not talking with dispatch.

Studies by NASA show that distracted cockpit crews are more likely to make mistakes and miss key problem indicators, so keep your communications to what's mission-critical. Help develop good SOPs for flight following, in-flight communications, and what traffic should be repeated back to the sender, to ensure that you get the information *you* need without surprising the folks in flight. Read that unit aviation plan—does it need an update?

When it comes to flight planning, remember you're not a silent partner—read the PASP, check to make sure the latest frequency list is enclosed for vendor pilots, and don't schedule flights without identifying a flight manager. Being aware, helping troubleshoot problems, and asking questions before take-off reduces the frustration of poor communications and the hazards of missed check-ins.

From IAT CRM courses to assignments out west to simulations at home, there are many ways to strengthen aviation dispatch skill sets even when the flight board is empty. See what SAFECOM and the FAA are saying about the latest and greatest in aviation safety—and remember that you're part of the crew even when you're not on board.

## **Building Working Knowledge**

By Seth Grimm, DFMO Sherburne District:  
SBR, CMR, RLR Units, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, MN.

In an effort to build working knowledge of the dispatch arena and to assist the MN Interagency Fire Center (MIFC) in times of increased activity, MN Fish and Wildlife Service rotated four fire employees through MIFC Dispatch during the summer and fall of the 2012 fire season. This was the first time the service has sent operational folks to Grand Rapids, MN to assist MIFC. The goal was to increase awareness of the dispatch process and to create a pool of candidates that could continue to assist when MIFC would be in need of extra dispatchers due to the duration and or the pulse of ordering that the in-state and national fire season brings.

By working multiple employees into an Expanded Dispatch Recorder trainee role, Service employees were able to gain valuable experience working outside of their normal duties and were able to bring that understanding back to their home stations and to be able to communicate to other employees the importance of accurate, timely and complete information sharing, including the importance of accurate and complete IQCS records, availability lists, and various records to facilitate efficient dispatching of resources.

It was a challenging and fun assignment for all involved to learn from each other. There were long nights, early mornings, marginal coffee, and good camaraderie just like being on the line. Hopefully this will open up future opportunities for dispatch and operational folks to work together to gain understanding, trust and respect of the different components of the fire profession.

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## **Dispatch Team Opportunity**

Every year, California stands up 4-6 Dispatch Teams that function like Incident Management Teams whereas they mobilize as one group. So if there is a fire say on the Inyo National Forest and they request a Dispatch Team to come in and get the expanded set up, a team order could be placed and members of one of the above teams will be mobilized.

This is a good opportunity to get our ESDS and EDSP trainees experience at the Expanded level. If you are interested in applying here is the link to the procedures: Click on the 2015 Dispatch Team Application link and then just print the form and submit as directed.

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/logistics/dispatch/dispatch\\_forms.htm](http://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/logistics/dispatch/dispatch_forms.htm)

**Introducing the  
Mike Kern —Center Manager**



**How long have you been at PA-PASC:**

Just over 7 years, I came here in September, 2007. Our office is in downtown Harris-

burg, PA, which is also the state capitol. We have peregrine falcons nesting on our building. You can watch them on a webcam at:

<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/falcon/>

**What elements of a dispatch program does your center provide:** Initial Attack, mobilization, both etc.

Mobilization and demobilization of Pennsylvania State resources to national incidents and support to other states in the Mid-Atlantic Compact as needed. We also provide support and coordination for wildfires occurring on state and private land within Pennsylvania. All of our IA dispatch is handled locally by our 20 forest districts offices.

**What additional services does your center provide**

We also operate the Mid-Atlantic Mobilization Center in Harrisburg, PA. The Mob Center here is hosted through an agreement between the Forest Service and a volunteer fire department. Our fire staff provides the operational personnel and the VFD personnel do all the cooking and allow use of the facilities for lodging. It's a really nice, new building and there are some solid people in the fire company there who help us out tremendously.

**What are your responsibilities at your center**

I supervise and coordinate the center operations under the direction of the State Fire Supervisor. We don't have anyone dedicated full-time to dispatch, so we all have other jobs to do in our fire program. When I am not working on dispatch-related issues, I coordinate and supervise our fire training, prescribed fire, and air operations programs.

I am fortunate to work with a great staff here who knows what to do and when those things need to happen, so mostly I just try to keep everything working as smoothly as possible and stay out of the way.

**What is your most favorite thing to do as dispatcher**

Helping trainees get training assignments. We have some goals as an agency as far as capacity building, so I think it is a great accomplishment when we can promote individual and agency development at the same time.

**Who's your favorite actor?**

Sam Elliot – now the voice of Smokey Bear

**What is your most un-favorite thing to do in dispatch**

Having to call crew members back and tell them the order has been cancelled, especially if they are already on the road. Even worse would be trying to explain it to their supervisor.

## Meet Mike Kern (continue)

### What is your most memorable fire you worked on?

Cascade Complex, Idaho 2007. The camp fire burned "around" camp and ICP. It seemed like it was safer on the line than back in ICP.

### What accomplishment in dispatching are you most proud of

Our Mob Center operations here during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Over 1,100 personnel came through the mob center in a three week period. This was the first time that we have imported resources on that scale and it required a large contribution from all of our staff to make it successful.

### If you could choose any place to live and work, where would it be?

I really enjoy living *and* working here in Pennsylvania. If I could live somewhere and not have to work it would be Hawaii.

### What's your favorite movie?

*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

"Well, ain't this place a geographical oddity. Two weeks from everywhere!"

### What do you do for fun?

Anything outdoors: hunting, fishing, hiking, camping

### List 5 things people don't know about you

1. My wife Karen and I have been married 13 years.
2. I have two children: Emily is 6 and Allison is 2.
3. My oldest daughter, Emily, was born on August 9<sup>th</sup>, the same day as Smokey Bear.
4. I have one brother, he lives (and works) on the Big Island of Hawaii
5. Before I worked in our fire program, I spent about 7 years working as a forester on the Tuscarora State Forest here in Pennsylvania.



**Mid-Atlantic Mobilization Center  
Courtesy of Lower Swatara Fire Department**

## Introducing the Louisiana Interagency Coordination Center Fred Mascher—Center Manager

- 1 **Where are you located?** We are located in Pineville LA
- 2 **What is the area known for?** The state of Louisiana is known for being the sportsmans paradise, also It is well known for the Cajun food and family values
- 3 **How long has the center been there?** 20 Years
- 4 **What Agency (s) does the center support?** USFS, FWS, NPS, and Louisiana Department of Forestry
- 5 **How many dispatchers work in the center?** 2
- 6 **If you could change one thing about your center, what would it be?** Keep moving forward on building a true interagency coordination center and becoming a 3<sup>rd</sup> tier center
- 7 **What do you consider the center's greatest accomplishment?** The relationship with the Cooperators here in Louisiana FWS, NPS, LDF
- 8 **How would you like your center to be remembered?** The legacy that Sheryl Roach and Syllas Hamilton Left Behind (customer service) it is all about the Resource
- 9 **What do you consider a great day?** Everybody goes home safe (Resources)
- 10 **If you could add one thing to your center, what would it be?** A Budget



**Winter Weather Safety and Survival**  
**Winter Weather Safety Kit**  
**By Ronda Estey (MN-MIFC)**

The National Weather Service advises you to prepare a readiness kit to prepare for winter storms.

**Be prepared, before the storm strikes! At home and at work, primary concerns are the potential loss of heat, power, telephone service and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions persist. You should have available:**

- A flashlight and extra batteries.
  - Battery-powered NOAA weather radio and portable radio to receive emergency information. These may be your only links to the outside.
  - Extra food and water. High-energy food, such as dried fruit or candy, and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration is best.
  - Extra medicine and baby items.
  - First aid supplies.
  - Heating fuel. Fuel carriers may not reach you for days after a severe winter storm.
  - Emergency heating source, such as a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc. Learn to use properly to prevent a fire, and be sure to have proper ventilation.
- Fire extinguisher and smoke detector. Test your units regularly to ensure they are working properly.

**In cars and trucks, plan your travel and check the latest weather reports to avoid the storm! Fully check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins.**

**Carry a winter storm survival kit including the following items:**

- Blankets/sleeping bags
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Knife
- High-calorie, non-perishable food
- Extra clothing to keep dry
- A large empty can and plastic cover with tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes
- A can, candles and water-proof matches to melt snow for drinking water
- Sack of sand (or cat litter)
- Shovel
- Windshield scraper and brush
- Tool kit
- Tow rope
- Booster cables
- Water container

Compass and road maps.

**Keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.**

**Try not to travel alone, and be sure to let someone know your travel plans - your timetable and route.**

**Southern Winter Driving Tips**  
**By Donna Reagan**  
**NEPA Coordinator**  
**Ouachita National Forest, Poteau-Cold Springs Ranger District**

Winter weather brings its own driving challenges no matter where you might live. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), an estimated 7,630 people died in motor vehicle crashes between January and March of 2012(1). Because the weather in southern states is normally mild during the winter, when conditions take an icy turn, driving can become pretty perilous. Drivers aren't used to slippery roads, and often cities don't have snow removal equipment or sand or salt trucks ready to go. Here are some tips:

- Don't try driving in snow, ice or freezing fog if you're not experienced at it.
- When it's snowing or foggy, slow down, leave plenty of room to stop and allow at least three times more space between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Brake gently on snow and ice. If you should start to skid, ease off the brake.
- Be especially cautious on bridges, overpasses and shaded areas, which freeze first.
- Watch out for black ice. It can be caused by melted snowfall that refreezes or fog that is near the freezing point and makes contact with cold surfaces like the road. Black ice is particularly dangerous because it is almost invisible to the naked eye. It is most prevalent at dawn and dusk when temperatures drop.
- In foggy conditions, drive with lights on low beam. High beams will reflect back off the fog and impair visibility even more.
- In heavy fog, slow down and use the right edge of the road or painted road markings as a guide.
- In rainy or icy conditions, don't use cruise control. If a vehicle hydroplanes, cruise control could make it accelerate.
- Drive around — not through — big puddles. Water splashing into a vehicle's engine compartment could damage electrical systems, or the water could be hiding damaging potholes.
- ◆ Don't try to drive across running water. There's an old saying that water always wins — don't chance it.

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**Pocket Books!**

No it's not a pocket book like my mother use to call her purse, it is a book with great information on a multitude of topics and it fits into your pocket. Check it out:  
<http://quickseries.com/>

**QuickSeries** Publishing is a specialty publisher that concentrates on creating smart, reliable pocket guides that capture the essential information you need to lead you through everyday life. Our pocket guides are "Field Ready" and are being used by most federal agencies. Here's a list of the most popular guides within the wildland fire community: FS New Employee Safety, ICS, Are You FireFit, FS Travel Safety, FS Stress Control and Resilience, Wildfire Preparedness...

Please contact Carlo Masciotra ([carlo.masciotra@quickseries.com](mailto:carlo.masciotra@quickseries.com) or 800-361-4653 ext 236) if you're interested in more information or free sample.

## Secrets to Smart Snacking—Ronda Estey

Snacking sometimes gets a bad rap, but snacking can be great for you when you choose sensible portions of nutritious snacks. For instance, snacks can:

- **Add good nutrition** to your eating plan by providing important nutrients and filling in food groups you missed at meals.
- **Give you fuel** to keep going through the day.
- **Dampen your appetite** so you're less likely to overeat at meals.

### Try these secrets to make the most of your snacks:

**Follow the five food groups:** Choose foods that contribute to the recommended daily food group amounts in your MyPlate eating plan. For example:

- Whole-grain cereal, whole-grain crackers and popcorn from the **Grains Group**
- Broccoli florets, celery sticks and radishes from the **Vegetables Group**
- Apples, strawberries and raisins from the **Fruit Group**
- Reduced-fat cheese sticks and low fat or fat free yogurt from the **Dairy Group**
- Nuts, sunflower seeds and hummus from the **Protein Group**

**Prepare to snack:** Put nutritious snacks on your shopping list so you have plenty of nutritious options on hand.

**Practice portion control:** A smart snack is big enough to take the edge off your appetite, but not so big that you eat too many calories. To control portions, use the serving size information on the Nutrition Facts label as a guide, put a portion of your snack on a plate or in a bowl rather than eating out of the bag or container, or choose snacks with built-in portion control. For many people, a snack with 100 to 200 calories is about right.

**Pack a snack:** Toss a bag of baby carrots, a yogurt cup or some grapes in your lunch bag to stow in the office fridge for an afternoon snack. If you're on the go all day, bring along non-perishable items such as whole-wheat pretzels, nuts or dried fruit.

**Choose nutritious quick picks:** Choose vending machine snacks such as cereal bars, yogurt cups, small bags of nuts or trail mix, fresh fruit, fat free milk or 100% fruit juice. At the drive through, look for small green salads or fruit salads, bags or cups of fruit, or small cups or cones of low fat frozen yogurt or reduced-fat ice cream.

**Time it right:** Snack two or three hours before your next meal to take the edge off your hunger. You might be less likely to munch while you make dinner or overeat at your meal.

**Skip distracted snacking:** Break the habit of snacking while you watch TV or talk on the phone, or you might overeat before you realize it. Pay attention to what and how much you eat, so your snack is enjoyable and satisfying. And only snack if you're hungry, not just out of habit.

## Keeping Dispatchers Healthy

**Ronda Estey, MIFC Assistant Coordinator, contributed the following article which pinpoints "Wellness Strategies" we can all utilize in our centers and programs.**

**This will be a continuing series in the Quarterly Dispatcher for the next few issues.**

### **Wellness Strategy #3: Optimize resources.**

"You need to get your resources to the right places," Bandy from Transitions Consulting Group said. "Whenever owners hear the word resources, dollar signs immediately come to their minds. Fortunately, dispatchers don't always view resources in the same way. Many of the tools they need to do their jobs actually cost very little.

"For example, a simple call form provides them with a job aid that will help ensure that all information is obtained during the initial service request, paving the way for an efficient transaction from service call to billing," Bandy said. It can be used by anyone answering the phone, not just the dispatcher, so it alleviates some of the constant strain placed on the dispatcher.

Other types of resources fall into the following categories:

- \* Equipment - Computer, software, laptop, desk/location, phone headset, chair/foot rest, fax machine, other.
- \* Talent - Additional dispatching help, better understanding of technicians' capabilities, temp help during peak times, different technician mix, access to different people.
- \* Tools - Management guidelines, measurement systems, performance feedback, process for coordinating sales and dispatch, process for coordinating project managers and dispatch, system for identifying technician capabilities.
- \* Training - Technical, interpersonal communication, time management, safety practices.

"Ask them what's getting in their way," said Bandy. "Most dispatchers say they need correct information from salespeople."

To help improve workplace empathy, "Have a dispatcher drive with a technician and have a technician sit with the dispatcher."

### **Wellness Strategy #4: Outline opportunities.**

"Quality dispatchers are almost a breed of their own," said Bandy. "They are fast-paced, organized, decisive, seek challenges, require variety, and adopt a lifelong learning philosophy. Companies with dispatchers who possess those qualities thank their lucky stars every day for their good fortune.

"It's always a sad day when a well-respected dispatcher leaves the company," she continued, "but it's even sadder when they leave for better opportunities - something that could have been prevented."

Contractors can help their dispatchers grow by:

- \* Creating a development plan (training, ride alongs).
- \* Offering continuous learning
- \* Having them mentor dispatcher duties.
- \* Seeking their input on company issues.
- \* Appointing them to chair committees.
- \* Having them teach classes.
- \* Providing them with a career path.

## Sidebar: Inside The Service Dispatcher's Mind

MSCA seminar presenter Nancy Bandy said a group of high-impact dispatchers was surveyed, revealing multiple qualities and attributes they said were important for successful on-the-job performance:

- Accuracy
- Assertiveness
- Basic common sense
- Cares about technicians
- Communicates effectively
- Compromises when necessary
- Controls situations
- Customer service oriented
- Detailed note taker
- Easy to get along with
- Efficient
- Flexible
- Friendly
- Generous listener
- Good phone skills
- Good memory
- Good temperament
- Handles pressure well
- Hard worker
- Healthy self-esteem
- Knows HVACR language
- Level headed
- Multitasker
- Organized
- Patient
- Persistent
- Personable with customers
- Reacts quickly
- Respects everyone
- Sense of urgency
- Strong computer skills
- Willingness to learn

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### New Hires, Retirements and Vacancies

\*\*If you know of any new dispatch center hiring, individuals retiring, or any vacancies coming open, please send them to me so we can include in next issue\*\*

#### Eastern Area

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Hires</b> <b>EACC Logistics Coordinator –Jennifer Parrish</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Retirement</b> <b>Trudy Fagre (NPS-VOP), MN-MIFC—April 3rd</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vacancies</b> <b>Center Manager –NH-NECC</b> <b>Initial Attack Dispatcher IL-ILC</b></p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Hires</b> <b>SACC Intel Coordinator—Paul Gellerstedt</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Promotions</b> <b>Bruce Drapeau (Puerto Rico) to RMCC</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vacancies</b> <b>Initial Attack Dispatcher—AR-AOICC</b></p>
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