

The Quarterly Dispatcher

Initial Attack, Mobilization, Training, Support.

VOL. # 1 ISSUE #1



Starting Something New

Starting something new is like planting a new seed – You work really hard on the process in hopes that in the end, something great will grow and come out of it. It is the same with this newsletter. We are hoping to create something that will last for more than one fire season and, in the process, provide a lasting forum for dispatchers to highlight all the good we do.

This news letter came about because of something another dispatcher said to me a few years ago. We were discussing the annual dispatch award, and she stated that she would never be nominated because her supervisor wouldn't take the time to participate. I quietly thought to myself that every dispatch center and dispatcher needs to be recognized, and if their supervisor won't acknowledge the good they do, then the dispatch community should. So the birth of "The Quarterly Dispatcher".

In each issue you will become acquainted with a dispatch center in the Eastern Area (or other geographical area in time) as well as one of the many dispatchers we all work with. There will be articles from the Coordination Center(s), other dispatchers, Compacts, dispatch working team(s), as well as national activities and updates on ROSS, WildCAD, IRWIN, etc.

You may find articles on how to stay a healthy and safe dispatcher through nutrition, exercise, relaxation, mind games (fun ones), ways to avoid stress, etc. You may also find articles submitted from dispatchers throughout the Eastern Area or from other parts of the county. In other words, dispatchers helping dispatchers.

There is just so much we can share with each other. We just needed a venue to do it. I believe The Quarterly Dispatcher can be that venue, but we need the support, expertise, and creativity of dispatchers everywhere.

I look forward to hearing from those of you that are interested in participating as writers, your suggestions for improving the newsletter, as well as any positive ideas you may have.

Send comments, ideas, articles, etc. to

quarterlydispatcher@gmail.com

The Dispatch Center: An Introduction

Illinois Interagency Dispatch, (IL-ILC)

***Where are you located?** Murphysboro, Illinois

***What GACC is that in?** Eastern Area

* **What is the area known for?** Mining, Southern Illinois University (go Sulakies), wineries

***How long has the center been there?** Which time...? (we just moved to a new center in July 2013)

***What Agencies does the center support?** Shawnee National Forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Area 3), Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Illinois Division of Natural Resources, Golconda Job Corps

***How many dispatchers work in the center?** 2.5 (1 Center Manager, 1 IA dispatcher and 1 Seasonal)

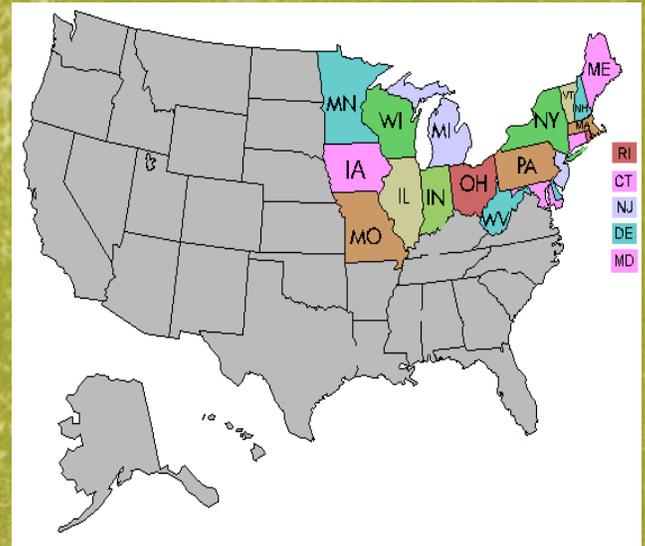
***If you could change one thing about your center, what would it be?** Location, prefer to be more central

***What do you consider the center's greatest accomplishment?** Working dynamics amongst us dispatchers

***How would you like your center to be remembered?** That we were respectful, helpful, cooperative, efficient and fun to work with

***What do you consider a great day?** Saturday or Sunday, only the fire personnel working, no fires, no RX, no phones ringing.....PEACE!

***If you could add one thing to your center, what would it be?** Cable TV and a million dollar budget (OK that's two things, but run neck and neck).



A Snapshot of the Eastern Area

The Eastern Area is made up of 20 states from Minnesota to Missouri, over to Maryland, up to Maine, and all states in between. There are 17 primary dispatch centers spread throughout the area, providing services for 5 Federal agencies (USFS, NPS, BIA, FWS, and BLM) and 4 State Compacts. The border states also provide support on the Canadian side when needed.

Today, the Eastern Area Dispatchers play an important role, providing logistical support and emergency response support to areas affected by natural disasters from wildland fires to earthquakes and floods to hurricanes and tornadoes, throughout the Eastern Area, the U.S. and abroad.

The Eastern Area dispatchers are many:

167 (Q), 187 (T) **EDRC's**

106 (Q), 48 (T) **EDSD's**

20 (Q), 9 (T) **EDSP's**

14 (Q), 16 (T) **INTS**

1(Q) 1 (T) **INTL**

3 (Q), 6(T) **CORD's**

What's Working!

Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team

It is my honor to introduce to you the 2013/2014 Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team. Jim Flores (MI-UPC), Charlene Nazarenko (MO-MOC), Liz Barrera (MO-MOC), Tom Viers (WI-EACC), Mike Kern (PA-PASC), Michele Stephens (OH-OIC), Gwen Awonohopay (WI-MEA), Karen Hullinger (WI-WISC), Mary Elliott (MD-BWRC), Trent Marty (WI-WISC), Cameron Crisp (WV-CAC).

These members have dedicated tireless hours and discussions over meetings and conference calls to come up with suggestions and solutions that affect your Dispatch Community. Each one of these individuals has performed many duties, including ad hoc groups for ROSS Practice, IDOPP, Priority Trainee List, and Annual Dispatcher of The Year Award. The EA Dispatch Working Team is, and has always been, there to support your ideas, suggestions and tasks that are given to us, and to work diligently on coming up with solutions. As I look back on the past three years as your chair, my memories are good and I feel like we have accomplished many things. My time as chairperson ended in 2012, and I have passed the baton to Jim Flores. I plan on remaining on the team as co-chair. I would ask for your support for all your EA Dispatch Working Team members. They are a great group to work with and I look forward to many more years of service to our Dispatch Community.

Cameron Crisp, past DWT Chair

The EA Dispatch Working Team is made up of representatives from the USFS, FWS, NPS, BIA, Big Rivers Forest Fire Management Compact, Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact, Middle Atlantic Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact, Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Compact, and liaisons from the EACG and EACC.

To view the charter:

http://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/library/Administrative/EACG/DWT_Charter.pdf

Who's Doing What



The Dispatchers within the Eastern Area participate in many regional and national levels of the dispatch community.

Below are the Eastern Area representatives for the various dispatch programs / projects / committees:

WildCAD: Jennifer Parrish (IL-ILC)
Tom Viers (WI-EACC)
ROSS: Brendan Neylon (WI-EACC)
ROSS Change Board: Molly Campbell (IL-ILC)
D510 Cadre: Laura McIntyre-Kelly (WI-EACC)
Trudy Fagre (MN-MFC)
D510 Steering Committee: Laura McIntyre-Kelly (WI-EACC)
D110 Rewrite Committee: Brendan Neylon (WI-EACC)
IQS Project Team: Steve Maurer (NJ-NJSC)
(Business/ROSS Lead)
EA T2 IMT Coordinator: Beth Jablonski (WI-EACC)
EA Mob Guide Coordinator: Beth Jablonski (WI-EACC)
New FAMWEB SIT/209 working group: James Silverstone (WI-EACC)

In addition to the various national and EA programs, many dispatchers participate with local training programs, coordinating the various dispatch classes.

Send comments, ideas, articles, etc. to

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Field-going Firefighter's Point of View

By: Jackie Paukert,
Seasonal Firefighter IL-SHF

Dispatcher's Point of View

By: Diana Emmons
Seasonal Dispatcher IL-ILC

I have been working in the dispatch world since May of 2009. When I began, I knew I would answer the radio but little else about the job. Along the way, I have had some great teachers and have come to love our dispatch family.

As many of you know, I have had Molly Campbell as my teacher from day one. She, along with the infamous John Anderson, introduced me to my new world. There was someone named ROSS and someone called NIMS, which I hoped was a nickname, and they both kept saying "I see S". I did not see S. I soon learned what these acronyms, plus many more, actually meant, though. I have had the opportunity to travel for training and to help other dispatch centers, learning along the way. I have been to Milwaukee to help the Eastern Area Coordination Center set up their WildCAD program, where we also dispatched resources for FEMA. I have also been to the Allegheny and Mark Twain National Forest as an Initial Attack Dispatch Trainee. During each of these trips, my new family has expanded.

I had fifteen years of work experience before starting with the Shawnee and never felt the camaraderie I have with dispatch. Since I began with the Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center, John has gone but we gained Jennifer Parrish. She has become another great teacher and friend. I am going to gush a little here. Molly and Jennifer are the best co-workers a gal could ask for. It is nothing short of magic how we three fit together and get things done. I believe everything happens for a reason. I am glad my path brought me here.

As field-going personnel and firefighters, we appreciate all of the great support that dispatch provides for us every day, whether we are on a fire or doing project work in the field. Some of the day-to-day tasks you provide for us that we find very helpful are field updates of approaching adverse weather conditions, checking in on us when we are out in the field late, and working with us to get S numbers in order to resupply equipment.

When it comes to fire, you are vital in assisting us in getting the fire contained. It is very helpful when you give us a heads up when you hear county fire departments responding to a fire on or near Forest Service property. We like the advance notice. You are also essential in providing logistical support on fires. Providing the resources en route with travel information and directions to the fire frees us up to get our hands dirty and get that fire contained. As for initial attack, one of the most important things that we like from dispatch is patience. We can usually get you a lat and long, but some information, like what resources are on scene and what resources are needed, may take a little while for us to figure out. It can get pretty crazy out there, with a bunch of resources coming in from different organizations while you are working on sizing up the fire. One other thing that always makes us happy on fires is getting P-codes in a timely manner. Timesheets are always a big pain in the butt, but if we have P-codes for our time, it is one less thing to worry about.

Really, the most important thing you do for us is anticipating our needs in the field. That and baked goods. You know, if you have the time with all of the other amazing undertakings that you guys do for us every day.

In Their Own Words...

A Conversation with Jennifer Parrish Initial Attack Dispatcher (IL-ILC)

- **How long have you been here at (IL-ILC)?**
Since May 2010
- **What elements of a dispatch program does your center provide?**
ILC Supports IDNR, NPS, SHF, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, and FWS in initial attack, prescribed fire, resource mobilization and training.
- **What additional services does your center provide?**
We track field going resources on a daily basis.
- **What are your responsibilities at IL- ILC?**
I am the WildCAD system administrator, the ILC website coordinator and the primary initial attack dispatcher.
- **What is your most favorite thing to do as a dispatcher?**
Notify folks that a resource order for a fire assignment has come through.
- **Who's your favorite actor?**
Today it is Daniel Craig....I am going through a James Bond phase.
- **What is your most unfavorable thing to do in dispatch?**
Trouble shoot radio and repeater problems
- **What is the most memorable fire you worked on?**
Cannon Fire, June 15, 2002, Humboldt-Toiyabe NF, FFT2 – Type 6 engine, initial attack, my first “campaign fire”.
- **What accomplishment in dispatching are you most proud of?**
Being nominated for Dispatcher of the Year by my supervisor and peers.
- **If you could choose any place to live and work, where would it be?**
Any place where I could have FALL all year round.
- **What's your favorite movie?**
*Love, Actually
The 1980 US Olympic Hockey Documentary - Miracle on Ice, is a close second.*
- **What do you do for fun in Illinois**
Drink wine and kayak – most of the time these things are done together ☺
- **List 5 things people don't know about you**
 1. *I have a black lab named Abe, I treat him like my child*
 2. *I have a very healthy fear of flying*
 3. *My go to candy is a York Peppermint Patty.*
 4. *I am technologically un-advanced. I am just happy that I can operate my DVD player and cell phone.*
 5. *I always day dream about winning the lottery, but in actuality, I have only played it twice.*



ROSS TRAINING

Many of the Eastern Area Dispatch Centers are participating in ROSS practice sessions, which began in March. The Eastern Area supplied many EDRCs, ESDs, EDSPs and CORDs to various dispatch centers throughout the county in 2012/2013. Providing personnel that are current and comfortable with the ROSS program is vitally important to the mission at hand, as well as important to the image of the Eastern Area.

By participating in the ROSS practice session, dispatchers will: re-familiarize themselves with the program, will see and become familiar with the new changes/additions to the program, and will be ready to jump in with both feet when on assignment or when needed locally. The practice sessions are stress free, typically done at one's own time table, and fun. So join in and participate... Have some FUN!

Next ROSS Training Session will be held: Date: Spring 2014
Center who will be hosting.....TBD

IRWIN is an NWCG sponsored project tasked to develop an "end-to-end" fire reporting program that provides an integrated and coordinated process for collecting and reporting incident/event data.

In a nut shell, it is designed to eliminate duplication errors when the same information goes into more than one program. IRWIN will automatically populate programs which dispatchers and fire managers use, minimizing human error where the same information is needed.

Presently, there are 13 primary systems identified and 9 secondary systems as candidates for interconnection. These systems include: Computer Aided Dispatch, decision support, incident management, financial management, situation analysis, weather, public information and final fire reporting.

The first 5 programs slotted to first go into production are: WildCAD, EGP (Enterprise Geospatial), Fire Code, WFDSS and SIT/209.

The goal of the Irwin project is to be in production by February or March of 2014.

For more information on the IRWIN project, check out their website.

<http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/et/itc/projects/irwin/aboutus.htm>

Health of the Dispatcher

Stress, Exercise, Diet

Being Safe at Night: *Jennifer Parrish (IL-ILC)*

As dispatchers, we often work long days. Sometimes we go to work in the dark and often leave that way too. Workplace safety is everyone's responsibility. Here are a few ideas to enhance workplace and employee safety for dispatchers. Make sure your parking lot has proper lighting. Give the dispatcher who is working late the "late shift" parking spot, one which has the best light. Some centers have designated dispatch parking spots that are signed. These posted spots are often closest to the building and are well lit.

As dispatchers, we are responsible for making sure our co-workers get back to their station safely. When we work late and have to commute home after a long day – who tracks us? Make sure to text or call loved ones, friends or co-workers when you have made it to your residence safely. Extenuating circumstances often lead dispatchers to work late into the evening, having to turn around and get right back to work early the next day. Have a plan in place for dispatchers who have a considerable commute to stay over-night near the dispatch office to help mitigate risks of fatigue and night driving. Establish trigger points for dispatchers to use when working long days and commuting home could be a hazard. Be prepared by keeping an overnight bag available in case this situation arises.

These are just a few examples to improve safety in the workplace. Look for more ideas and examples in our next issue.

Initial Attack Console Rejuvenation Ideas

BREATHE – Sama Vritti or "Equal Breathing"

How it's done: To start, inhale for a count of four, then exhale for a count of four (all through the nose, which adds a natural resistance to the breath).

TAKE A BREAK – Below are examples of some activities you can do in five minutes or less to benefit from rest breaks.

- Take several short breaks throughout the day (about every hour). Make sure they include some movement.
- Take a short walk away from your workstation.
- Stand up and stretch or walk in place at your desk without looking at your computer monitor.
- Get out of your chair whenever you take phone calls at your desk.
- Change positions at your workstation.
- Have a drink of water or a light snack.

STAND UP – The Slog, Then Jog: Instead of slogging away for hours nonstop, take a mini break for a stationary jog. Pop up from your chair, (admire the butt imprint left behind!), and jog in place. Willing to huff and puff a little more? Pick up those knees! Continue for one minute, return to spreadsheets and repeat.

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To File a Program Complaint

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*Send comments, ideas, articles, etc.
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Khan Academy
Way Cool!

For those who have a fascination with learning, try the Khan Academy. If you have never heard of this program, click on the link to the right and enjoy. Here you can learn history, math, science, and even work on brain teasers.

The genius behind this program is the interaction between teacher and student. Students can work at their own pace.

Check out these websites!
<http://www.khanacademy.org>
www.luminosity.com
<http://www.classicpuzzles.net>