

The Quarterly Dispatcher

Issue 6

Initial Attack, Mobilization, Training, Support

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With the Eastern and Southern Area's fire seasons upon us, and the western fire season getting closer every day, it's time for every one of us to shake off the dust and get ready for a busy year. There is so much to do to get a dispatch center ready for the year from updating all the manuals, assuring everyone has a current redcard, making sure you have enough office supplies to get you through the end of the fiscal year, making sure everyone's NAP password is working, assuring everyone understands proper mobilization procedures to the trickiest responsibility of a dispatcher – making sure all the phone numbers are current....am I right?

This issue of The Quarterly Dispatcher will give dispatchers new Tricks of the trade in WildCad which you may not know as well as proper procedures for statusing Priority Trainee's in ROSS for the Eastern Area. You'll get an update on what is happening in the Incident Business world, information on the Dispatch Workshop in 2016, what is going on with the INTS training, and tips on what to do if you detail into a dispatch center.

So, sharpen your pencils and get ready for what could be a very busy season ahead of everyone and remember, the more we are prepared, the easier the whole summer will flow... in theory anyhow.

The Quarterly Dispatcher newsletter team:

For the last year, Scott Swendsen, my Southern Area counterpart, was an integral part in getting the newsletter off the ground. Scott recently took the Center Managers job at the Rocky Mountain Coordination Center so he will be stepping down as the Southern Area's contact, however Donna Reagan will be taking on that role.

I'd like to thank Scott for all his hard work in moving this newsletter forward, and I thank Donna for stepping in to keep things moving in the right direction.

Remember, if you would like to contribute as a writer on a regular basis or just a one time article, we would love to have you participate, just give me or Donna a call.

Molly

Dispatching Eastern Area Priority Trainees Matt Dillon—EA GATOR

The Eastern Area Coordinating Group made a few changes on October 16, 2014 that will aid in the mobilization of Eastern Area Priority Trainees for national assignments. Some of these changes will impact Eastern Area's local dispatch centers.

When a Priority Trainee notifies the local dispatch center to change their status to Available - National, the local dispatch centers also need to go into ROSS to the Resource Item screen. Besides changing the status of the resource, dispatchers will need to uncheck the Visible box for all fully qualified positions and all trainee positions other than the Priority Trainee position for the first seven calendar days of being statused. On the eighth day, local dispatch centers may recheck the Visible box for the fully qualified positions, but the other trainee positions must stay in the unchecked mode.

This change only applies to the statusing of Priority Trainees for Available - National. While Priority Trainees are Available - Local or Available - GACC, all fully qualified and trainee positions may remain Visible.

For a complete review of the Eastern Area's Priority Trainee Mobilization, please see the below link:

http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/uploads/groups/EasternArea/Assets/EA_Priority_Trainee_Mobilization_Program.pdf

What's Working

Southern Area Dispatch Working Scott Swendsen - Outgoing Chair

On March 5, the Southern Area Dispatch Working Team (SADWG) had their monthly conference call. During this call, it was announced that Scott Swendsen, current chair of the working team, would be resigning as he would be transferring to a new job in R3. It was determined that the chair position would be split into two co-chair positions, with Kathleen (Lorri) Rich, current vice-chair and Starla Peters splitting the chair duties. With several large taskings occurring over the next year, this will give each co-chair opportunities to lead task groups to tackle the workload associated with the upcoming joint Eastern/Southern Areas Dispatcher Workshop and the establishing of the evaluation process of prioritizing candidates for the D-300 and D-510 level classes (more about these two projects below).

Kai Olsen, Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC) Manager, and the DWT will be coordinating the effort to find an a Forest Service dispatcher to replace vice Swendsen.

What's Working (continued)

As stated above, one of the large tasking's coming up this year will be the hosting of the 2015/2016 joint Eastern/Southern Area Dispatcher Workshop. After reviewing the survey results and seeking ideas from the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team (EADWT), it was agreed that the next dispatcher workshop would be held February 23rd thru February 25th, 2016 at the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV. A member of the EADWT who represents the US FWS is able to reserve the large auditorium, several break-out rooms and one or more computer lab(s) at no cost.

In addition, the Eastern Area Training Working Team is willing to put on a one-day dispatcher-based Command and General Staff (S-420) simulation. We are also looking to see about the possibility of putting on a 1 day COGNOS training course or having several smaller half-day training sessions. A tentative agenda is to hold a dispatcher "refresher" on Tuesday February 23rd with our normal presentation and discussion session, a training/simulation day on Wednesday, February 24th and a morning close-out and afternoon/evening breakouts for our various teams and center manager meetings. We hope to still have a keynote speaker and an evening banquet on Tuesday evening.

The Eastern & Southern Area Dispatch Working Teams will create a joint ad-hoc team with members of both DWTs to begin the planning of this 3 day event. Starla Peters, SADWT co-chair will lead this project.

In addition to the workshop, the SADWT will also be developing criteria to be used for prioritizing candidates for geographic or national dispatch classes. When D-310 (EDSD), D-311 (IADP), D-312 (ACDP) or N-9032 (INTS) courses are given in the Southern Area, the course coordinator, SACC and the SADWT will work together to ensure that the instructors are meeting NWCG course requirements and applicants have the necessary prerequisites completed. The course coordinator will provide a copy of the applications to the SADWT who will review and prioritize the candidates according to these criteria. For example, if we have 30 applicants for a 20 student course, it will be important to ensure that students who may be close to completing a PTB are selected above students who just received a PTB. Similarly, preference should be given to agency employees above administratively determined (AD) hired resources.

A similar prioritization process will be developed for candidates seeking to attend the national D-510 EDSP course at NAFRI in Tucson. This is a highly sought-after class and with reduced training and travel budgets, and possibly reduced capacity (going from 2 classes every other year to just 1 class every other year), the number of candidates who will be selected to attend will be limited.

As these criteria and processes are developed, a SADWT Annual Operating Plan will be created to list these SOPs and tasking's. Lori Rich, the 2nd SADWT co-chair will be taking the lead on this project.

Other projects ongoing include finalizing the 2014 Dispatcher of the Year awards and preparing for the process for the 2015 Dispatcher of the Year nominations. Pat Boucher, SACC Liaison will be taking the lead on this effort.

Eastern Area Incident Business Working Team
By Randee Olson

Who are we? We are a team whose mission is to provide an interagency forum to identify and provide recommendations for action or resolution on issues pertaining to incident business functions and mobilization of emergency incident resources in support of the policies and procedures of all agencies. The team recently re-convened partially due to the Regional Incident Business Management Specialist vacancy. The team consists of seven members:

- * **Randee Olson**, USFS, Regional Incident Business Management Specialist
- * **Brenda Miles**, NPS, Fire Program Management Assistant
- * **Cristina Basina**, BIA, Administrative Officer
- * **Tamie Thompson**, USFS, Regional Fire Contract Specialist
- * **Sandra Williams**, USFS, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry, Emergency Preparedness Specialist
- * **Peter Beringer**, Northeast Compact State Representative
- * **Vacant**, State Representative

What are the current issues that we are working on? We're in the process of establishing a Casual Hire Frequently Asked Questions Guide. This will hopefully provide a one-stop shopping guide for anyone that may have questions regarding casuals. It is posted on the EACC website for easy access.

The other issue we are trying to tackle is rental vehicles for incident use. There is a national team that is currently looking at this issue as well. Until that team provides further guidance or instruction, we are looking to establish a simpler process of acquiring rental cars for incident use in our region. One of the options we are looking at is to initiate a Blanket Purchase Agreement with a car rental company that will allow us to order at any time with a fairly quick turnaround as well as allow off road use. The intent is to try and have something in place by mid/late summer.

Got a Question?

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

Submit all your questions to:

Molly Campbell

macampbell@fs.fed.us

618-687-1725

Donna Reagan

dreagan@fs.fed.us

479-675-4743 ext. 107

Or send it to: Quarterlydispatcher@gmail.com

**2016 Eastern / Southern Areas
Dispatcher Workshop / Training / Simulation event
Feb 23rd – Feb 25th**

The Eastern & Southern Area Dispatch Working Teams are pleased to announce the 2016 joint Eastern/Southern Area Dispatcher Workshop and Training event. This bi-annual dispatcher refresher will be held February 23rd thru February 25th at the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) (<http://training.fws.gov/>), in Shepherdstown, WV.

With access to a large auditorium, several breakout rooms and computer labs, and with the help of the Eastern Area Training Working Team, one day of the 3 day event will be dedicated to providing training opportunities for our dispatcher workforce. The highlight training event will be a one-day dispatcher-based Command and General Staff (S-420) simulation. We are also hoping to provide several half day training sessions in addition to the simulation (for example a COGNOS reports session).

An ad-hoc task group of both Eastern Area and Southern Area dispatch working team members will begin to make plans and additional information will be shared later this summer including registration for the workshop and training sessions, how to make reservations for lodging, transportation suggestions, and a tentative agenda. Information on the first night banquet and keynote speaker will also be shared at this time. We will also be hosting our traditional silent auction to support the Wildland Firefighter Foundation.

For those who have not attended training at NCTC, the facility is a great place to provide for quality training and workshop activities. The campus has a number of "dorms" where individual rooms share a common room which has a fireplace, comfortable couches and chairs, a large screen TV and a patio area. Each room has a double bed, reclining chair, a desk/work space, small TV and wired/wireless internet connectivity. Lodging includes a meal plan and the food in the dining room is outstanding. In addition to lodging and great meals, there is a lounge/social center which is opened in the evenings where beer, wine and soft drinks are sold.

If you are interested in volunteering to assist with the training or the workshop, please contact your DWT representative or Starla Peters (speters02@fs.fed.us), co-chair of the Southern Area DWT or Mike Kern (mikern@pa.gov), chair of the EA DWT.

Wild about WildCAD

Favorite tips, tricks and features for use at home and on assignments...from floor dispatchers who've used them.

- Use the **Highlight** checkbox in the daily log to make important traffic red in the log for all dispatchers at your center.
 - **WX button**—it will give you the closest weather station to your incident and the latest obs.
 - When you're trying to **find a place** name in the map, hit the Escape key—It'll let you type more than just the first letter and save a lot of scrolling!
 - Using the **"Group" button** on resource status allows you to move OH with equipment without having to drag them separately
 - Using the **VOID button** on the *last* incident created will clear it—and still let you use the number again—if you accidentally hit the "New" button or create a duplicate.
 - If you've found a location on your **map and hit the New Incident** button, it'll auto-fill those fields and pop up the new incident for additional info
 - Using the **New Timer button on the Response tab** saves you a drop down search for your resource during an incident.
 - You can add visiting resources (like hotshot crews or aircraft) under **Foreign resources** and treat them like they're yours for dispatching.
- * If you use **Local GIS layers**, you can overlay things like counties, districts Radio repeaters onto your map.
 - * The **phone directory** is searchable on every field—which means you don't Have to spell a name correctly to find someone!
 - * You can send **text/email** messages to people from within the system (see button on response log) This is great for updating a duty Officer on a new incident start or burn progress.
 - * **Resource timers**-you can change the notification noise, like to Clint Eastwood saying "Go ahead punk, make my day," to make sure it gets your attention.
 - * **Open incidents color coded** by type Make it easier to visually "sort" and Find.
 - * **Snooze button on timers**-prevents alarm from going off, but saves you from opening a new timer when you Start tracking them again.
 - * If you use the **Line Up** to status your resources, the program will recommend who to send to a given fire location.
 - * Even if you aren't using the program in your home dispatch center, you can find the User guide [here](#).

So You Want to Detail in Dispatch

By: Eddie Hutton

Craig Interagency Dispatch Center—Craig Colorado
Detailer-Illinois Interagency Dispatch

Detailing into a new dispatch center can be fun but challenging at times. No matter how prepared you think you are, there will be tons of questions that you will have. When those questions arise don't be afraid to ask others, they are there to help you. Every dispatch center has different ways of doing things. Always go into any detail with an open mind, and be prepared to learn new processes and procedures that are applicable to that dispatch center

Your first day at the new dispatch center is a day for you to get a feeling for the area and just watch how they run things. Every dispatch center has standard operating procedures that they compile into a binder, some call it the DOG, others call it The Story Book, or it's simply called the SOPs. This binder should be one of the first things you read; it will tell you how the center operates and what's expected of the dispatchers. When you go to a new center be considerate of their procedures and do not say "well this is how we do it". That will drive the other dispatchers insane not to mention it makes for a long two weeks. Now I'm not saying that's it's a bad thing to bring new ideas, because it's not. It's actually a good thing to bring new and different ideas to a center, but don't try to change it to the way your home unit runs just to change it. Make sure there is a valid reason for proposing a change and be prepared to discuss the advantages of such a change.

Being in a new area you will run into some challenges, like where places are and the names of places and people. That's where the map on the wall, if they have one, comes in handy. Make sure you check the map out and have someone take you through what area the dispatch center covers. Ask them to show you a few major places that resources commonly go to, whether it's fire resources or field personnel. I have noticed that the colors on the map that represent who owns the land is not always the same everywhere. Also if you get a chance to go out on a field orientation trip with someone from the office definitely go. It will allow you to see the places first hand and you will have a better idea of what the areas look like.

Names of people and places also offer a challenge as well. No matter what the spelling is, the pronunciation could be different. Also they may speak fast, so if need be don't be afraid to ask them to repeat a little slower. If you don't know what someone said, don't be afraid to ask them to repeat, especially on a radio call. You can also always ask how you pronounce a name, even multiple times!

My detail here to Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center has been fun but challenging at times. For the most part this dispatch center and my home dispatch center run things pretty much the same, there are just a few things different like how they track their resources; fire personnel and field resources, how they do WIMS and the weather. Also people here speak fast, so it was hard to understand what they were saying at first but after a few days of working here I got used to it and was able to understand them. So to those of you who work here, I'm sorry if you are one of the people whose name I butchered while trying to pronounce it, but I also thank you for your **patience** with me and helping me learn the area! It has been a fun detail for me and couldn't have done as well as I did without all the help from you guys!

Introducing the New Michigan Interagency Coordination Center (MICC) Jae Naugle— Acting Center Manager

***Where are you located?** The Michigan Interagency Dispatch Center (MI-MIDC) is located inside the Supervisors Office of the Huron Manistee National Forest in Cadillac, Michigan.

• **What is the area known for?** The Great Lakes

***How long has the center been there?** The original dispatch center – Huron Manistee Dispatch (MI-HMFC) – moved to this location in 2006. We started our first fire season in the spring of 2007.

The Michigan Interagency Dispatch Center was formed with a merger of the Michigan Upper Peninsula Dispatch Center (MI-UPC) and the Huron Manistee Dispatch Center (MI-HMF) in late 2014 and officially began full operations March 1, 2015

***What Agencies does the center support?** We dispatch for: The National Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife, National Park Service Sites, Bureau of Indian Affairs and The Nature Conservancy.

***How many dispatchers work in the center?** Dispatch Center Manager Debra-Ann Brabazon, Assistant Center Manager Jae Naugle, and 3 IA Dispatchers: Bruce Amsbary, Robert Chapman, and Kim Owczarzak

***If you could change one thing about your center, what would it be?** More wall space

***What do you consider the center's greatest accomplishment?** This dispatch center started with the centralization of 2 dispatch centers that were on the Huron Manistee NF (Mio Dispatch for the Huron Zone and Baldwin Dispatch for the Manistee Zone). Over this last winter we accomplished a merger between the Huron Manistee Dispatch Center and the Upper Peninsula Dispatch Center bringing together 3 National Forests, 7 refuges for the US Fish & Wildlife Service, 4 National Parks, 12 Indian Communities for the BIA and 20 Nature Conservancy areas.

***How would you like your center to be remembered?** I wish for the Michigan Interagency Dispatch Center to be known for its excellence in service and integrity.

***What do you consider a great day?** Everyone making it home safe

***If you could add one thing to your center, what would it be?** As of right now we are sitting well. We've gotten new furniture, new radios, new maps, and new dispatchers.

Introducing
Lexie Rue-Harris
Archeologist-Ouachita NF
Arkansas-Oklahoma Interagency Coordination Center

How long have you been at AOICC? I don't actually work at AOICC, but instead work on the Poteau-Cold Springs Ranger District of the Ouachita NF (about 2 hours NW of AOICC.) I came to this District of the Ouachita NF in March 2003. Previously I had worked on the Ozark NF and before that for the US Army Corps of Engineers.

What elements of a dispatch program does your center provide: AOICC (Arkansas-Oklahoma Interagency Coordination Center) provides all elements—initial attack, crew mobilization, and expanded dispatch support when needed.

What are your responsibilities at your center? Dispatch duties aren't my normal job. The hat I regularly wear is that of a zoned Archeologist. When I do go on detail to AOICC (or any fire detail for that matter,) my main duties are that of expanded or initial attack dispatcher or radio operator.

What is your most favorite thing to do as dispatcher? My most favorite thing to do is initial attack! To me, it's a lot of fun to get the call, get resources rolling and track those brave folks who get it done on the ground!

Who's your favorite actor? I like Timothy Olyphant a lot.

What is your most un-favorite thing to do in dispatch? My most un-favorite thing is aircraft. Those things are great machines, but tracking them and getting them from 1 spot to another is challenging at times.

What is your most memorable fire you worked on? Most memorable fire was at Fort Collins, CO. There were fires in/around Rocky Mountain National Park and right after came a horrendous flood!

What accomplishment in dispatching are you most proud of? That I've been able to keep up my quals for all these years, only doing it a few times a year. I don't get out as much as I would like! Something about another "regular" job that still needs to be done...

If you could choose any place to live and work, where would it be? Right where I'm at (within an hour or two!) I LOVE Arkansas!

What's your favorite movie? I like those types of movies where you don't have to think. You know, the kind where you just watch and laugh....no thinking required!

What do you do for fun in Arkansas? I love to scrapbook and just about anything outdoors! I'm lucky that I live about 30 minutes away from two of the most beautiful national forests in our nation.

List 5 things people don't know about you

1. *If I wasn't in my chosen career, I would probably be an orthodontist*
2. *I've been skydiving more than once*
3. *My two boys are my biggest and proudest accomplishments*
4. *I once won an all-expenses paid trip to Washington DC*
5. *I'm a reality show junkie!*

Intelligence Support Specialist (INTS) update

Scott Swendsen

Intelligence in the dispatch world? No, really! There are some of us out there that can actually figure out how to count up the number of fires and acres to input into the dreaded SIT/209 system. But did you know that there is an actual position dispatch centers can use to order in an intelligence support specialist to help with the intel duties which seem to overwhelm us when we get busy with supporting a large incident while still having a lot of local initial attack? Or that when EACC or SACC are supporting numerous large fires, incident management teams and the MAC group, having an extra (or 2!) INTS to support the information gathering process makes life much happier for the GACC center manager?

But there is a crisis in the intelligence world – we have discovered that many of the INTS resources out there may not have the solid training, skills and experience to really help out when we get really busy in a dispatch center environment. Unfortunately, unlike our other dispatcher positions, the requirements to become an INTS are limited and the INTS training is out-of-date and hasn't been offered in years.

The intel community has recognized that this is an issue especially now with the workload of our intelligence reporting applications and processes have increased so much. To address this issue, a group of local, geographic and national intel coordinators and specialists met last December to form a "re-write" cadre to focus on some of the challenges of the INTS qualification – training, qualification requirements, an outdated task book, and the lack of NWCG and agency support for the qualification standard.

Currently this rewrite cadre is in the process of revamping the whole INTS training (N9032). A beta course is planned for this fall. In addition, the INTS PTB was revised to meet the current NWCG standards of having competencies, behaviors and tasks that must be completed in order to become a fully qualified resource in this position. Additional tasks and competencies were added to increase the quality of training assignments needed to become qualified. The INTS qualification was also reviewed and additional training was added to the required training. It is hoped that by increasing the required training, qualified INTS will have a better background in the terminology, fire environment and intelligence processes and applications, INTS will be more confident and capable when coming into a dispatch center on an assignment.

Finally, with the recent release of the Federal Wildland Fire Qualification Supplement Guide, four federal agencies are now supporting the INTS position – USFS, NPS, BLM & BIA. The Intel community is excited to gain approval from 3 more agencies (for a number of years, only the USFS recognized the position). We are working with several GATRs to bring our revised INTS training and proposed changes to the PTB and qualification standard to these agencies for consideration in updating this document to reflect the increased specialized needs of the intelligence area.

If you have questions on INTS position, please contact your geographic intel coordinator for more information.

Keeping Dispatchers Healthy Ronda Estey (MN-MIFC)

In continuation of the Dispatch Wellness Series, the below section discusses the importance of empowering dispatchers .

Empowering the dispatch community is something all dispatchers should be providing, especially to the new up and coming dispatchers for both Initial Attack and Expanded Dispatch settings.

Wellness Strategy #5: Empower your dispatcher.

The concept of empowerment has its challenges, Bandy from Transitions Consulting group said. "Managers are often frustrated when employees fail to make decisions and take ownership of day-to-day problems. On the other hand, employees are equally frustrated when managers don't listen to their input, don't trust them to make decisions, and don't truly empower them."

The question to explore, she said, is whether empowerment is given by managers or taken by employees.

Benefits of empowerment include:

- Improved service quality and work climate.
- Better job done by all employees.
- Stress goes down.

"Operations are much more effective if decisions are made at the level closest to the situation," Bandy pointed out. "The goal is to achieve an outcome that satisfies customers, retains goodwill, and ensures continued profitability for the organization."

Successful empowerment requires three elements: direction, authority, and resources. "There is a tendency for managers to take an all-or-nothing approach," Bandy said, "especially with dispatchers who are reliable, high performers who adapt to the most challenging of situations. Because they have the ability to figure things out on their own, managers sometimes inadvertently set their dispatchers up for failure by telling them to take the ball and run with it."

To increase empowerment in a service organization, Bandy recommended these leadership actions:

- Communicate - Clarify expectations, measure performance, discuss priorities, and provide interim results.
- Delegate - Shift to a long-term focus, clarify limits of authority, coach rather than do, and share the glory.
- Support - Use tools, resources, and training.

STRAWBERRY SPINACH SALAD

INGREDIENTS - SERVINGS 4

1 tablespoon cider vinegar
2 teaspoons vegetable or Olive oil
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ teaspoon honey
1 pinch rosemary
pepper
1 (10 ounce) bag spinach, rinsed and torn
2 cups strawberries, hulled and halved
¼ onion, thinly sliced
⅔ cup aged goat cheese, crumbled

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large salad bowl whisk together the dressing ingredients
2. Add the spinach, strawberries and onion. Toss
3. Sprinkle with the cheese. Toss

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

New Hires	Vacancies
<p>NH-NECC –Center Manager-Molly Campbell MN-SUP– IA Dispatcher—Elizabeth Schmidt</p> <p>Retirement</p>	<p>IL-ILC –Initial Attack Dispatcher IL-ILC—Center Manager OH-OIC-Initial Attack Dispatcher Or Aircraft Dispatcher MN-MIFC—Initial Attack (yet to be Advertised)</p>

Southern Area

New Hires	Vacancies
<p>Promotions Scott Swendsen, AOICC Center Manager relocated to R2 GACC Center Manager</p>	<p>AOICC - Center Manager AOICC - Assistant Center Manager</p>