

The Quarterly Dispatcher

Volume 1, Issue 4

Initial Attack, Mobilization, Training, Support

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(MTF Photo Library)



Wow! The 4th issue of “The Quarterly Dispatcher.” Who would have thought. What started as a summer adventure is slowly gaining momentum and notice. We now have a small team of folks who are willing to take the time to contribute to the newsletter whether it is by researching and writing an article addressing specific issues, keeping the dispatch community informed on what their working teams are doing, or just finding a recipe to share with others. We have a TEAM!

All in all it is great to see the interest this little newsletter has generated, and I can’t wait to see it pick up steam.

In this issue, besides the familiar highlights, we are starting a section informing readers of “New and Retired” dispatchers throughout the Southern and Eastern Geographic Areas. We are including more photographs of, not only the dispatch centers and its surrounding landscapes, but dispatchers themselves (if they so choose). In addition we are hoping to get traction with the healthy dispatcher section with the start of a “Wellness” series and posted recipes. You will continue to see articles from the Dispatch and Incident Business Working Teams as well as the Question and Answer column (check out the information on Voice over IP), and information regarding the “Excellence in Dispatching” Award that is currently open for nominations. And as always, a request for input from you the dispatchers, fire management officers, firefighters, and fire administrators who are a vital part of the dispatcher and their work. We’d love to hear from you.

So with all that said, I hope you enjoy issue 4 of The Quarterly Dispatcher.— **Molly**

FS Road 133
Ouachita National Forest
(Photo By Dava Bauer)



Submit articles, comments or questions to:

macampbell@fs.fed.us or quarterlydispatcher@gmail.com

What's Working

“From the EADWT Chair's Corner”

By Cameron Crisp

The Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team (EADWT) will be busy this Fall/Winter preparing for submissions of Briefing Papers as well as nominations for the EA Dispatcher of The Year Award. As we slide closer to December we will be working with EACC on a schedule for ROSS practice for early 2015. New exciting things are in store for 2015 too as we welcome Mike Kern, Chief of Operations from the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry as our new incoming Chair. We hope to have Mike in place by February 1 and Cameron will still be around to assist with any transition. We look forward to Mike's leadership and are excited about the future of the Working Team. We will try to gather some more information on Mike for the next newsletter.

Priority Trainee Mobilization Program

Matt Dillon, Eastern Area GATOR

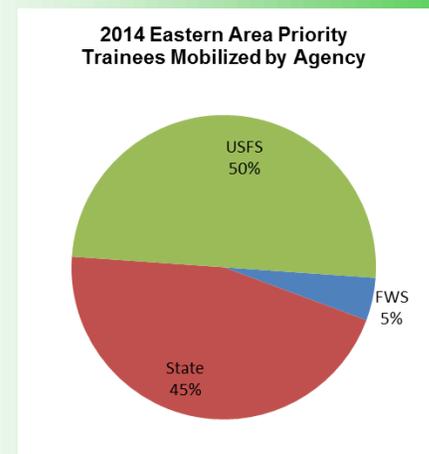
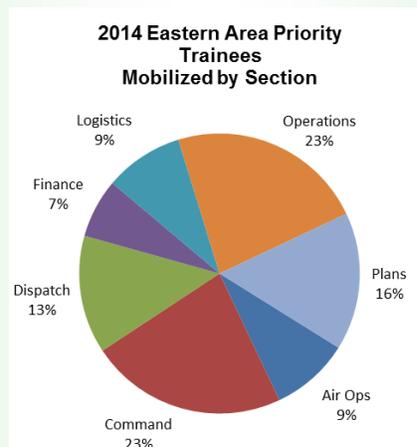
This is the second year of the Pilot National Priority Trainee Mobilization Program. The program is intended to assist individuals, who have been identified by their supervisor and agency administrator, to complete an open position task book. Typically, individuals will elect to become part of the Priority Trainee Mobilization Program for the following reasons:

- * Position Job Requirement such as IFPM, FSFPM, or other agency similar program
- * IMT Shortage Position
- * Local unit has identified this as a key position for the unit and there is a need to develop candidates at the local level
- * Qualification is related directly to evaluation criteria commonly required for future advancement in the employee's chosen career development path

The Priority Trainee Mobilization Program is not meant to capture everyone who has an open task book. Rather, it is meant to capture those individuals who meet one of the above listed criteria. These are true priorities needing on-the-job training.

In 2014, the Eastern Area has had limited success in mobilizing Priority Trainees.

Graphs depict mobilizations from January 1, 2014 thru September 30, 2014.



What's Working (continued)

Southern Area Dispatch Working Team Update **Scott Swendsen, Chair**

The Southern Area Dispatch Working Team (SADWT) has been working on getting a survey ready to assist in polling Southern and Eastern Area dispatchers in see when and where the 2015 EA/SA Dispatcher Workshop should be held. The 2013 workshop was held in Louisville, Kentucky and was a resounding success. Kudos to the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team for hosting and putting together this workshop for all of these years and for kicking off the first joint Eastern Area/Southern Area workshop in 2013. However, for this next go-round, the SADWT will be hosting the joint workshop and we are looking for your input in getting this organized. Please take a moment and go to this survey and let us know when, where and what you are looking for in the 2013 Dispatcher Workshop. We will be closing the poll towards the 1st of November.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2015_Dispatcher_Workshop

The SADWT is also ready to start collecting nominations for the "Southern Area Dispatcher of the Year" award (also known as the Excellence in Dispatch award). This year we are encouraging managers, co-workers, firefighters, and others to consider those individuals who really make a difference in the dispatch process. And when we talk about the dispatch process, we really mean all of the people who dispatch or support the resource mobilization efforts – the initial attack and expanded dispatchers, the local purchaser who feeds or finds hotel rooms for our incident resources, the driver or fire cache worker who, if we didn't have helping out, would leave a huge gap in getting resources (people, equipment, supplies, etc.) to the incident. If you know of someone who really stood out this year, let us know.

This year, the SADWT is also looking for those individuals who put their big toe into the roiling waters of the dispatch process for the first time – a rookie, the newbie, the dispatcher who never saw a computer before but learned ROSS inside out by the end of the season. If they made it thru their first year in helping out in the dispatch and resource mobilization support process, they are ready to be graduated from the "B" squad to the "A" squad – so we want to acknowledge their efforts. So nominate them for the "Rookie of the Year" award – we need to be nice to them so they come back next year!

Our other new award is the "Most Improved of the Year"; the individual who really stepped it up this year and went from the greenhorn-newbie status of last year to that experienced dispatcher who you can leave alone for long enough for you to actually go to lunch knowing that the place won't be on fire when you get back. We all have those co-workers who have really taken on the goal of becoming better – went from not wanting to be on-call to volunteering for it or being the first to find the newest bug in ROSS or WildCAD.

For more information and the nomination forms for the "Southern Area Dispatcher of the Year", "Rookie of the Year" and "Most Improved of the Year", please see the SACC's web page. Nominations are due to the SADWT by November 7th.

Rental Vehicles 101

From the Incident Business Desk- Randee Olsen (Eastern Area)

When an employee obtains a rental car through dispatch, it should be rented under the U.S. GOVERNMENT RENTAL CAR AGREEMENT, NUMBER 4; also known as the DoD Agreement (<https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/CarRentalAgreement.pdf>).

Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) is a daily fee (\$5 or foreign currency equivalent) and is intended to address those costs incurred by the rental company which are peculiar to doing business with the government. If GARS is listed on a rental contract, you will receive program benefits.

The Government Rental Car Agreement provides the following guidance in regard to vehicle damages:

In most cases, neither the Government nor the renter will be held responsible for loss or damages to a rental car when rented through the program.

If the vehicle is being used in an unauthorized manor, travelers may be responsible for loss or damage. Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to: using the vehicle for illegal purposes, operating the vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, operating the vehicle off road * (**unless the Company has agreed to such operation in writing at the time of rental**); using incorrect fuel, and pushing or towing another vehicle (see Government Rental Car Agreement, Number 4, Article 18).

Renters are responsible for:

- Loss or damage of GPS rented from rental car company

- Loss of keys

- Damage caused by adding improper fuel type

- Rental vehicles, including the type of vehicle, must be authorized on a resource order

- Confirm with your local dispatch office the method used to rent vehicle. Who is paying for it?

 - Can the vehicle be taken off professionally maintained roads?

- *Off-road refers to off professionally maintained roads (i.e. two-track roads, brushed-in roads, etc.).

Payment Methods:

Government rents vehicle (Buying Team, Purchasing Agent or EERA)

- These vehicles can typically be taken off professionally maintained roads

Travel Card for regular government employee – must be used for the Agreement to be valid

- DoD Agreement; GARS fee

- Cannot be taken off professionally maintained roads

Personal Credit Card for ADs – not recommended; *use as a last resort*

- Not under DoD Agreement

- AD assumes ALL liability up front

- AD is responsible for any damage, repairs or cleaning costs if determined damage was caused by negligence

The Forest Service has no authority to reimburse employees for:

The cost of the personal or optional insurance coverage

GPS units

Cleaning Fees:

If you are charged a “cleaning fee” provide the above information to the rental car company and request that any cleaning fees charged be immediately refunded on the travel card. (See Government Rental Car Agreement, Number 4, Article 22.)

The exception that is probably most applicable and that would be the basis for these cleaning fees is as follows:

(12) Operation of the vehicle off paved, graded, Federal, state, or professionally maintained roads, or driveways, unless the Company has agreed to such operation in writing at the time of rental.

These fees can be paid if deemed appropriate, but payment must be requested under one of the allowable exceptions and by following the guidelines in the Agreement. Otherwise they are considered part of the coverage provided by the Agreement and cannot be charged.

Prohibited Charges to Government Travel Charge Card or Personal Credit Card:

Pre-charging or placing holds on credit or charge cards with the estimated amount of the rental and making adjustments when the car is returned is prohibited (See Government Rental Car Agreement, Number 4, Article 22).

Insurance, Damage Liability, and Billing for Damages:

Neither the Government, nor Government renters will be responsible for loss or damage to the vehicle except as stated in Article 18 of the Agreement. Personal accident insurance, personal effects coverage, or other optional coverage is not addressed in this Agreement and in most cases they are not reimbursable expenses. These optional coverages are not a prerequisite for renting a vehicle (See Government Rental Car Agreement, Number 4, Article 18).

If Government Denies Liability:

If the renter’s employing Government agency denies liability on the basis that the renter or other authorized driver was not operating the vehicle for official travel at the time of the loss, the Company may handle the matter directly with the renter.

Caney Glade
Mark Twain National Forest
(Photo by Kathy Miles)



An Introduction to Expanded Dispatch **Kathy Miles (MO-MTF)**

After a long dry period, dispatch-related classes returned to the Midwest Wildfire Training Academy that was held June 4-8, 2014 in Jefferson City, Missouri on the campus of Lincoln University! The MWTA was made possible through a grant with the USFS and is co-located with the University of Missouri (Columbia) Fire & Rescue Training Institute's Summer Fire School. Expanded Dispatch, Dispatch Recorder (D-110) was last taught in 2007; the last ROSS class in 2009.

Fourteen students, from as far away as Maine listened intently as lead instructor, Marge VanPraag, with the help of instructors Sueanne Cmehil-Warn and Kathy Miles steered them through two days of introduction into the world of expanded dispatch. The usual feeling of being engulfed by numbers, names, and forms subsided a bit on the third day when they could plug all those details into ROSS and really see how the flow of information works. More than a few agreed that everyone in fire should take these classes just to see how resources really get moved to and from incidents.

The cadre was very happy to be working together again and really appreciated the support (and funding) given them by Mark Twain National Forest Fire Management Officer, Jody Eberly and their buddies at the Missouri-Iowa Interagency Coordination Center, Charlene Nazarenko and Liz Barrera, who gathered all the materials for D-110. Liz and Charlene also made themselves available to help coach during the ROSS class, which helped since they work with it almost daily.

The new crop of EDRC trainees is ready and available anytime you need assistance!

2014 Excellence in Dispatching

The Eastern and Southern Area Dispatch Working teams have begun the process for requesting submissions for the 2014 Excellence in Dispatching Award. This award is not only designed to recognize dispatchers throughout the varied Geographical Areas, but to recognize dispatchers on a national scale for work they have provided throughout the 2014 fire season.

Each year the Eastern and Southern Dispatch Working Teams select an individual from their respective Geographic Areas whose hard work and dedication exemplifies a high standard of excellence in professional dispatch and coordination procedures. These selected individuals will then be the nominees from their respective Geographical Area for the National Excellence in Dispatching Award.

Eastern Area Procedures: Nominations will be accepted until Tuesday, November 4, 2014, and should be sent to Cameron Crisp, EA DWT Chair. Nomination forms can be found on the EACC Website: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/index.htm>

Southern Area Procedures: Similar to Eastern Area, nominations will be accepted until Friday, November 7, 2014 and sent to the SA DWT. However, in addition to the "Dispatcher of the Year", the Southern Area DWT is also looking for those "Rookies" who have come into the dispatch and incident support communities for the first time this past year and for a "Most Improved" dispatcher who really stepped it up this year to support the local and national mobilization efforts. See more information on the SACC Website: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/sacc/>

Introducing the Missouri Iowa Coordination Center Charlene Rogers—Center Manager

Devils Backbone Wilderness
Mark Twain NF
(Photo by Kathy Miles)



Where are you located? The Missouri Iowa Coordination Center (MOCC) is located in Rolla, Missouri at the Supervisor's Office of the Mark Twain National Forest.

What GACC is that in? We are in the Eastern Geographic Area .

How long has the center been there? MOCC opened in 2001.

What Agency (s) does the center support? We support the U.S. Forest Service, Missouri Department of Conservation, National Park Service, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy and Mingo Job Corps.

How many dispatchers work in the center? 4 - We have a lead initial attack dispatcher/coordinator (USFS), two initial attack dispatchers (USFS) and one aircraft dispatcher/INTL (NPS).

If you could change one thing about your center, what would it be? It would be nice to expand our center and make it larger. When MOCC was built in 2001, it was designed for expanded dispatch. In 2009, we started centralized dispatch (initial attack) for the Mark Twain NF. It would be helpful to have a separate room for initial attack with plenty of wall space for maps. We would like to have an electronic map board that is connected to WildCAD, which would update when information is input into WildCAD.

What do you consider the center's greatest accomplishment? In 2009, going from expanded dispatch to centralized dispatch, which included all initial attack on the Mark Twain NF. I worked as a dispatcher on a District so I was a key player that was affected by this. It has been nice to be a part of a transition and see the advantages acquired from this change.

How would you like your center to be remembered? I would like for us to be remembered as a helpful center that is always willing to go that extra mile to help get a resource an assignment or assist them while they are on an assignment and encounter issues.



What do you consider a great day? A great day is when everyone arrives back to their home unit safely and has accomplished their goals for the day!

If you could add one thing to your center, what would it be?
We could use more space



Meet Dave Nugent
Fire Logistics Dispatcher
National Park Service
Indiana Interagency Coordination Center

How long have you been at IN-IIC? Since October 2001

What elements of a dispatch program does your center provide? Initial attack, mobilization

What additional services does your center provide? We conduct dispatch operations for Hoosier NF

What are your responsibilities at your center? NPS Fire Logistics Dispatcher and I assist Maggie, the Center Manager

What is your most favorite thing to do as dispatcher? Dispatch operations

What is your most un favorite thing to do in dispatch? Crew mobilization can be very hectic at times.

What accomplishment in dispatching are you most proud of? Throughout my dispatch career, I have prided myself in functioning in a professional manner, ensuring my resources arrive home safely at the end of their day.

If you could choose any place to live and work, where would it be? I am very happy here in southern Indiana

What do you do for fun in Indiana? Radio hobbyist

List 5 things people don't know about you:

1. I retired from Indiana State Police with 28 yrs. as a dispatcher.
 2. During my working career, I have worked for city, county, state, and now, a federal agency.
 3. I live in the house I grew up in.
 4. Have been a licensed amateur radio operator since 1979.
 5. I am married, have two children, and two grandsons.
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Meet Connie Penning
Resource Assistant-Fire
National Forests of Alabama

How long have you been at NFs in Alabama? I have been with the forest since March 1991, and went on my first dispatch assignment to Texas in 1998. I accompanied my Center Manager, Cathy Cline, who was filling in for the Center Manager in Texas.

What elements of a dispatch program does your center provide? Mobilization, our districts do initial attack

What additional services does your center provide? We are responsible for all phases of IQCS. We provide up-to-date information on Forest resources that are dispatched off forest to our staff.

Meet Connie Penning (cont.)

What are your responsibilities at your center? I assist Cathy Cline with keeping IQCS updated, print IQCS cards, filing and keep our SO employees fire folders up-to-date. During heavy fire activity, we share on-call/staffing duties on the weekends. When my schedule permits, I also cover for Cathy while she is on scheduled leave.

What is your most favorite thing to do as dispatcher? I enjoy the entire dispatch process, from contacting our employees for assignments, talking with the requesting unit to facilitate the most effective way to ensure our employees meet the date/time needed and to help make their travel seamless and as safe as possible.

When I get the opportunity to go on off-forest assignments, I enjoy seeing how different dispatch centers work. As expected, there is commonality between the centers but I usually encounter variables in how they approach task differently. I always love seeing the different regions of our country, each one has a beauty of their own, but I have never been tempted to live anywhere else but Alabama.

Who's your favorite actor? Clint Eastwood

What is your most un-favorite thing to do in dispatch? When a problem arises and you have to tell an employee that an assignment has been cancelled.

What is your most memorable fire you worked on? It was not a fire, it was Hurricane Katrina. It was the most exhausting time of my dispatch life. We had a contingency plan with Mississippi that if either of us were impacted by the hurricane, we would be the backup for each other. As it turned out impacts to Alabama was minimal. Mississippi on the other hand took a hard hit. The biggest challenge at first was not the long hours, but lack of communications: radio, phone, no information on road closures, and that lasted for almost a week or more. After the first two weeks, I went back to my regular duties, helping out dispatch when I could. That was not the case for Cathy Cline (Center Manager), who oversaw an expanded dispatch that was active through December.

What accomplishment in dispatching are you most proud of? Again, Hurricane Katrina

If you could choose any place to live and work, where would it be? Right here in the Heart of Dixie

What's your favorite movie? *Remember the Titans*

What do you do for fun? Sit and watch my grandson play baseball and watch SEC football - War Eagles

List 5 things people don't know about you.

1. I used to be 5' 6".
2. I can still drive a car with a stick shift.
3. I used to have auburn hair.
4. I am a good poker player.
5. I can dance.

**Bridge Sugar Creek
Ouachita National Forest**
(Photo by Dava Bauer)



Introducing—Arkansas Fire Center

Sheri Russell - Center Manager

Where are you located? Malvern, Arkansas.

What GACC is that in? Southern Region.

How long has the center been there? The center was established in August 1998, so 16 years.

What Agency (s) does the center support? The Arkansas State Forestry Commission and local fire departments.

How many dispatchers work in the center? 8...a supervisor, an assistant supervisor, and 6 dispatchers.

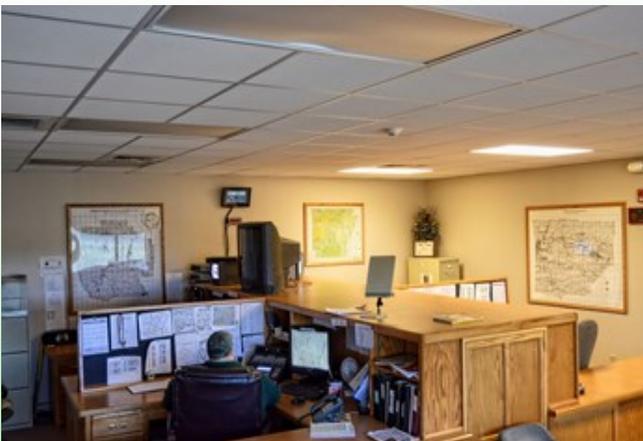
If you could change one thing about your center, what would it be? The layout

What do you consider the center's greatest accomplishment? In 2005, the center moved from the old house we started in to the nice, new center we have now. We also started out just dispatching the southern part of the state, but recently improved our communications systems and we now dispatch a large portion of the state.(63 out of 75 counties).

How would you like your center to be remembered? As a good working partner with the AOICC (Arkansas-Oklahoma Interagency Coordination Center).

What do you consider a great day? A great day would be just enough fires to keep us busy and no one injured.

If you could add one thing to your center, what would it be? More workspace so we could employ more people



**Knopper's Ford Recreation Area
Ouachita National Forest**
(Photo By Dava Bauer)



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.

VANCOUVER, British Columbia - There is a famous quote from Sir Edmund Hilary: "You don't have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things. You can be just an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated to reach challenging goals." According to Nancy Bandy, dispatchers are ordinary people who are extraordinarily motivated.

Bandy, from **Transitions** Consulting Group LLC, Mission Viejo, Calif. (www.transitions.com), said that paying attention to what dispatchers do on a daily basis will give contractors "a greater appreciation for the dispatcher's role and how that role can be better supported by management." Her seminar, "Get Inside Your Dispatcher's Head," was presented at the Mechanical Service Contractors Association (MSCA) annual meeting.

She described six wellness strategies that can help improve the effectiveness of a service contracting operation by improving the health of the dispatcher's role.

"You make it work," said Bandy of the strategies. "You make it happen. Dispatchers play a significant and awesome responsibility for your profitability. We need to create health and wellness for dispatchers."

The association interviewed several high-performing HVAC service dispatchers as part of its new dispatchers program. The study concluded that, among other things, "The dispatcher's job affects internal and external customers, the service manager, and the technicians," said Bandy. "The way the job is done can affect technician retention, company efficiency, profitability, and customer loyalty. The dispatcher is the pivotal point of service."

Their chief role, said Bandy, is "to move people efficiently and productively. It's a pretty awesome responsibility."

Wellness Strategy #1: Hire correctly.

"That's easier said than done," commented Bandy.

Two-thirds of new hires will disappoint their employer within the first year, she said. Two-thirds would rather work somewhere else. "Most hiring decisions are made too quickly."

"Today's dispatcher requires a skill set that includes an exceptional combination of technical, interpersonal, and self-management skills," she said. "Dealing with a diverse customer base, handling numerous fire drills, and keeping varied personalities in the office happy, requires someone who can navigate through a unique and quickly changing cultural environment."

Dispatcher turnover is particularly hard for a service company to absorb. In addition to costs associated with finding and training a replacement, there are issues of low productivity and service before the old dispatcher leaves, in addition to lower productivity and reduced customer service during a new dispatcher's learning curve. The cost of replacing a good dispatcher, Bandy said, is around \$100,000.

Therefore, it's important to hire a suitable dispatcher in the first place. "Research has shown that if a multitude of resources are used in selecting candidates, the employer's chance of finding a correct match are greatly increased," she said. For the best results, use a face-to-face interview, reference checking, personality testing, abilities testing, interests testing, and a job matching consultant (who comes into the company and benchmarks a position's traits; new hires can be measured against profiles).

"Phone skills can be tested in prescreening when you call them to set up the interview," Bandy pointed out.

The best place to start looking for a new dispatcher is within the company, she said. "Your best source is going to be within your organization

Wellness Strategy #2: Energize the environment.

"All successful business enterprises start with a leader who sets the standard for how the company will operate on a day-to-day basis," Bandy said. "The key to creating a motivating environment is making sure all the necessary elements are in place."

Dispatchers interviewed by the MSCA said they thrive in an environment where:

- ◆ They feel like their jobs make a difference.
- ◆ Empowerment is encouraged.
- ◆ Bureaucracy is discouraged.
- ◆ Initiative is recognized and rewarded.
- ◆ Management is consistent.
- ◆ Trust, harmony, and honesty are paramount to the operation.
- ◆ Adjustments are made when necessary.
- ◆ People are passionate about the organization.
- ◆ Obstacles are eliminated.

Bandy was asked, "Where do you draw the line on how hard the dispatcher pushes technicians during busy times?"

"The dispatcher needs to understand techs' points of view and develop a good relationship with the service manager," she replied. "There needs to be open communication and understanding of each other's roles."

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 Logistics Coordinator at EACC, closes 10/6/14	Retirements Jim Flores, Hiawatha NF, UPC, January David Hilton, Maine State, NECC, August
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Southern Area

New Hires Tami Buchanan, Center Manager at TX-TIC Fred Mascher, Center Manager at LA-LIC Stephen Polk, Center Manager at SC-SCC Sean Flanagan, Asst. Center Mgr. at TN-TNC	Vacancies Intelligence Coordinator at SACC is vacant, hope to see the announcement out soon. Phyllis Smith has two vacancies at VA-VIC. Stephen Polk has the Assistant Center Manager position vacant at SC-SCC Retirements Silas Hamilton retired from LA-LIC.
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From the kitchen of Ronda Estey

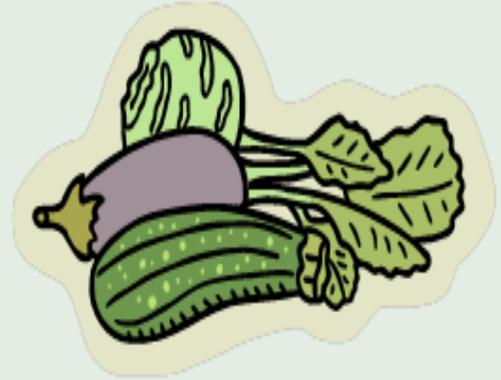
Baked Zucchini Chips

Prep time: 5 minutes Cook time: 10 minutes

Ready in: 15 minutes Serving Size: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 medium zucchini, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 1/8 tsp ground black pepper
- ½ cup crushed Corn Chex
- 2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 egg whites



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 475⁰F.
2. In a Zip-Lock bag, crush Corn Chex to crumbs with a rolling pin (Or rolling pin-like item).
3. In a small bowl, stir together the Chex crumbs, pepper, and parmesan cheese.
4. Place the egg whites in a separate bowl. Dip the zucchini slices into the egg whites and then coat with the crumb mixture.
5. Place on a greased baking sheet. Bake for 5 minutes in the preheated oven on one side and then turn each slice over to bake for 5 minutes, until brown and crispy. (Baking may take a few minutes longer on each side)
6. Once cooled they are ready to serve!

****Tip:** Zucchini contains vitamin C which is a powerful antioxidant that has anti-inflammatory properties. They can help to prevent disease, lower homocysteine levels from regular intake and contain a high amount of water.

Nutrition Facts (per serving, about 1/2 a medium squash):

Calories: 49

Fat: 1g

Cholesterol: 2mg

Sodium: 112mg

Carbohydrates: 7g

Fiber: 1g

Sugar: 2g

Protein: 4g

Attributed to allrecipes.com; Modified by Emily Madden; 2013 Dietetic Student

Greer Cave Springs
Mark Twain National Forest
(MTF Photo Library)



Taking Risks and Learning WildCAD

by Donna S. Reagan, AOICC IADP

I have been an Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP) for several years, mostly working at the Arkansas-Oklahoma Interagency Coordination Center with a few stints in Louisiana and Mississippi. Each location has its own unique way of performing tasks. That's what makes it so interesting. It is always a little scary, but also very intriguing, to step out of my comfort zone and take a detail off forest. I was extremely scared to take an IADP detail out of region.

That is exactly what I did recently, a detail out of region to a dispatch center in the Eastern Area. I was a little nervous because I knew WildCAD was being utilized and I only had a limited amount of experience with the program. I was hoping that the program would be user-friendly and that the other people I would be working with were patient and willing teachers.

WildCAD has been sweeping across the country as a pivotal program in the wildland fire-fighting dispatch world. I knew sooner or later that I would have to delve into it if I was to remain productive in this fascinating world. The thing about it, like anything else, you have to start somewhere. Somebody somewhere has to be willing to teach you the ropes. I was fortunate. I worked with some very knowledgeable people who were also willing teachers. I appreciate them for helping me and I hope that by the end of my detail, I was useful to them. I also vow to teach whoever crosses my path in this dispatching world. I think most dispatchers are willing to share their knowledge. After all, we have the same goal; we want everyone to go home safely every night.

WildCAD was not as scary as I thought it would be. There are a few screens that a basic user needs to learn (Resource Status, Open Incidents, Daily Log, and Maps). Once you get those screens figured out you are well on your way to being a WildCAD expert... well, maybe not an expert, but you should be functional in the program. The plus side is that it does not really take that long to learn those screens. This is good news for anyone who is hesitant about taking a detail because you have not used WildCAD.

My suggestion, take a risk and hope for the best. You get to meet new people, see new places, learn new things, and become a better dispatcher. Hopefully, the next time I am sitting in front of a computer and a radio, I will be somewhat at ease and just focus on the job. Whew! Glad I got that first one out of the way....and I survived! Now, on to the next adventure!



Submit articles, comments or questions to:
macampbell@fs.fed.us or quarterlydispatcher@gmail.com

Blue Springs Trail
Mark Twain National Forest
(Photo by Kathy Miles)

What's Your Question?

For a Radio Technician:

Question: Are the voice over IP systems becoming the standard?

Signed: I-want-a-radio-to-just-work

Answer: [Kevin Throop (MN-SNF) EA Supervisory Electronics Technician]

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is becoming the standard for phones and radio control. The Network group handles the requirements.

Pros of VoIP:

Greater capability, with fewer telephone lines. Decreased cost from leasing lines.

Easier access to radio system from other locations. All we need to do is (basically) reprogram a console to match the local network configuration, plug it in and we can operate from most locations on the Forest Service network.

Cons of VoIP:

It relies on the network and network connectivity to control sites/locations.

Unless the control site is physically at a Forest Service office with a network, the "last mile" to the site is still leased copper lines.

We are at the mercy of the service provider to keep us (network folks) informed of the changes they make to the system so we (network folks again) can ensure proper configuration of the system.

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

618-687-1725

Scott Swendsen

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!