

# Roanoke County

## Emergency Communications Center



## 2017 Annual Report



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## Chief's Introduction

*It is my pleasure to present this Roanoke County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) 2017 Annual Report. The women and men of our department serve as first responders together with Emergency Medical Service, Fire, and Law Enforcement personnel to save lives, protect property and stop crime. I anticipate that you will find the included facts regarding our department informative and inclusive.*



*In the last year, we have focused on recruitment efforts. We hired seventeen (17) Communications Officers (COs), providing them with structured classroom and on-the-job training modules. Four employees were released from Roanoke County probation. Four employees were promoted to Communications Officer II positions. Two other employees were promoted to Communications Training Officer and Communications Team Supervisor respectively.*

*During the first quarter, we had several ongoing projects including two telephone and radio installations. The ECC worked closely with the Roanoke County Police Department involving the SMART Policing Initiative (CIT) and the ASSI Crash Reporting Center.*

*During the second quarter, we hosted several supervisory training initiative sessions involving the newly installed statewide ECaTS (Emergency Call Tracking System) software. The ECC successfully completed their first CALEA Annual Review.*

*During the third quarter, career paths were developed for Roanoke County positions. Extensive recruitment projects were conducted for the Basic Dispatch Academy 17-01.*

*During the fourth quarter, several staff attended the 2017 Spring Virginia National Emergency Number Association (NENA) / Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Conference. There are several ongoing projects including a multi jurisdictional GIS grant and the Tyler New World Enterprise CAD upgrade.*

*As staffing has increased, my focus shifts to retention.*

*Aleta G. Coleman*

Chief of Emergency Communications

# Department Overview

## VALUES

We affirm the importance of individual empowerment. We strive to create a just, safe, and welcoming environment for all, while continuously improving our quality services.

### Compassion

*Respect the dignity of all persons*

### Professionalism

*Engage in behavior reflective of the integrity of the profession*

### Pride

*Demonstrate care and ability as public safety employees*

### Teamwork

*Strive to cultivate effective public and private sector working relationships*

### Excellence

*Endeavor to meet or exceed national public safety standards*

## GOALS

### Service

*We build confidence, integrity, and impartiality by serving our community in a professional, honest and compassionate manner.*

### Safety

*We improve safety for our community, organizations we serve and our own employees.*

### Relations

*We form working relationship with multiple organizations within Roanoke County to better serve our citizens.*

### Employee Care

*We solicit ideas from each employee to maintain a healthy working environment. Teamwork and timeliness are essential to our success. We support employees and our community.*

# Goals and Objectives

## OBJECTIVES

Service	Target	Actual
Average 911 Call Answer Times	5 seconds	5.140 seconds
Average Administrative Call Answer Times	2 seconds	1.332 seconds
Median Call Distribution Among Call Takers	12.5%	4%
Average Call Processing Time	1 min 15 sec	1 min 33 sec

## Safety

Quality Assurance	Target	Actual
ECC Serious Errors	185	92
CO Error Rate	554	218

## Relations

Educational Outreach	Target	Actual
Community Events	5	6
Citizen Observers	5	32
911 Center Tours	2	15
Educational Contacts	1	5

## Referrals

Referrals	Projected	Actual
Fire and Rescue Calls for Service	14,000	15,994
Law Enforcement Calls for Service	90,000	94,625
Western Virginia Water Authority	4,000	3,603

# Goals and Objectives

## OBJECTIVES

### Employee Care

#### Communications Officers Education

69 external training opportunities were offered during this fiscal year.

32 internal refresher training courses on a variety of topics were offered during this fiscal year.

2 individuals were referred for remedial training during this fiscal year.

#### Professional Contributions

	Target	Actual
Professional 911 Boards Service	1	1
Professional 911 Certifications	2	3
National Training Certifications	6	1
State Instructor Certifications	2	0

## PROGRESS REPORT

The Roanoke County Emergency Communications Center is pleased to report that we have met or exceeded our objectives in the following areas:

We offered more internal refresher training opportunities to staff through the dedication of our state certified instructors, who developed targeted training modules for their platoons. We are scheduling our hiring process in conjunction with our new hire classroom training to provide a structured onboarding process, which increases first year retention of employees.

We have implemented the following changes to ensure superior performance next fiscal year:

We provided remedial and refresher call taking and call entry classes to lower our average call processing time. We increased our educational outreach targets for next year to align with our increased staffing. We hope to fund additional outreach programs, as our budget will be less taxed by recruitment efforts. With additional staffing, we look to offer multiple APCO CTO certification courses and other training initiatives during scheduled working hours.

# Specialized Assignment Review

## **Accreditation Coordinator**

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Accreditation Coordinator manages the CALEA assessment process and the departmental written directives system. The purpose of the position is to undergo annual reviews and obtain CALEA reaccreditation. The position has expanded to include Quality Assurance (QA) while maintaining electronic CALEA documentation in PowerDMS. We are on task to complete our second successful Compliance Service Manager (CSM) review electronically next fiscal year.

## **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Manager**

The Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Manager oversees the ECC American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) Training Center and ensures minimum CPR standards for emergency communications services are met. The position provides classroom instruction and maintains agency certification as a Training Center. We continue to independently certify our employees, allowing flexibility in class scheduling.

## **Emergency Medical Dispatch Manager**

The Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Manager ensures minimum EMD standards for emergency communications services are met and reports on data collected from EMD calls. During this fiscal year, the position continued providing monthly statistics to the platoon supervisors to identify individual performance trends. During this entire fiscal year, calls were evaluated and information was retained for APCO compliance. The EMD Manager is able to focus more attention on managerial duties, as another EMD Quality Assurance evaluator was trained and selected to assist with reviews and course instruction.

# Specialized Assignment Review

## **Outreach Coordinator**

The Outreach Coordinator manages departmental education of our service community, news media contact, and recruitment. During this fiscal year, the position has been impacted by staffing needs. The position works closely with Roanoke County Police Crime Prevention and Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Public Education. We increased the number of applications, the number of candidates tested, and the number of personnel hired.

## **Quality Assurance Manager**

The QA Manager ensures minimum standards for emergency communications services are met and exemplary service is recognized. Last fiscal year, five additional Quality Assurance Evaluators were trained and began conducting QAs. The position created a paperless database for documentation, but security issues have delayed implementation. Currently, the position uses Excel spreadsheets to tabulate exceptional individual performance and error trends.

## **Training Coordinator**

The Communications Training Coordinator (CTC) manages the new hire and continuing education training programs. The position inputs training records into an electronic system allowing for automated reporting. During this fiscal year, this position has been dramatically impacted by staffing needs. The position has delegated continuing education opportunities to the shift supervisors, allowing more time to be devoted to the new hire training and retention. This has resulted in six more personnel being hired compared to last fiscal year.

# Agency Improvement Reviews

## GRIEVANCES

### Summary by Resolution Level

<i>Meeting with Step I Official</i>	0
<i>Meeting with Top Level Official</i>	0
<i>Meeting with County Administrator</i>	0
<i>Panel Hearing</i>	0
<i>Circuit Court Petition</i>	0

### Analysis of Actions

The review of grievances revealed that none were filed during this fiscal year.

### Policy & Procedure Review

The Roanoke County Employee Handbook, which includes the Grievance Policy, was reviewed by a panel of Roanoke County employees including representation from the ECC during this fiscal year. The new handbook became effective July 1, 2017. We reviewed Form B, which is used to file grievances, and recommended no changes to Roanoke County Human Resources staff. The form will remain available through direct contact with Human Resources staff, so accountability in the filing and processing of grievances can be maintained.

### Conclusions

In our review of policies and procedures, it was apparent that the procedure is rarely used. In our review of the grievance policies and forms, it was concluded that recurring refresher training should be provided to all employees to make the grievance process easier to access.

# Agency Improvement Reviews

## INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

### Summary by Disciplinary Action

*Supervisory Referral* — 1

*Counseling / Oral Reprimand* — 6

*Written Reprimand* — 0

*Suspension* — 1

*Demotion / Transfer* — 0

*Dismissal / Resignation* — 1

### Summary by Conclusions

*Unfounded* — 1

*Not Sustained* — 1

*Exonerated* — 0

*Sustained* — 9

### Analysis of Actions

One of the internal investigations centered around negligent supervision by two employees. Additionally, six employees were investigated this year for unprofessional behavior. Another investigation began in response to a former disgruntled employee's complaint and was ruled unfounded. A sixth investigation was referred by another public safety department and ruled not sustained. Last, an internal investigation was initiated in response to a tow company complaint regarding ECC use of the service vehicle rotation. None of the investigations involved the same communications officers so there was no indication of negligent hiring or additional liability exposure.

### Policy & Procedure Review

General Order 14 concerning Disciplinary Actions and Internal Investigations was revised in December 2015. The Internal Investigation Advisement and Conclusion forms were used in Summer, Fall, and Winter and no revisions were needed.

### Conclusions

In reviewing these internal investigations, we recognized that one platoon had less seasoned employees than the other three platoons. When subsequent communications officers were released from training, they were placed on other platoons to gain experience.

# Agency Improvement Reviews

## LIABILITY EXPOSURE REPORTS

### Summary by Risk Category

*Obtaining Information* - 8  
*Documenting Information* - 26  
*Relaying Information* - 13  
*Outside Scope* - 16  
*Other* - 6

### Summary by Action Category

*Policy* - 0  
*Inattention to Detail* - 46  
*Other* - 23

### Analysis of Actions & Conclusions

The majority of the inattention to detail errors were minor and corrected through informal individualized refresher training. Remedial training and disciplinary actions were provided to individual communications officers with recurring similar errors. Platoon training was provided for Fire & Rescue Dispatch, Emergency Activations, NCIC Securities and Address Verification. The E-911 Technical Analyst was tasked with resolving receipt of radio transmission issues and improper call routing in the ACD queue which resulted in liability exposure reports outside the scope of the ECC. Supervisory staff is reviewing the large number of liability exposure reports related to inattention to detail regarding incorrect addresses and landmark entries. Supervisory staff will make recommendations concerning policy changes, CAD procedure changes and use of mapping resources.

### Policy & Procedure Review

General Order 2, which includes liability exposure reporting, was reviewed and revised in December 2016. The Liability Exposure form was reviewed, but no changes were recommended to the August 2015 version.



# Agency Improvement Reviews

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

### ***Summary by Serious Error Category***

*Incident Location - 5*

*Call Type / Severity - 12*

*Pertinent Questions (i.e. weapons) - 9*

*Appropriate Dispatch Procedure - 21*

*Appropriate Units Dispatched - 7*

*Relayed Safety Information - 2*

*Clear, Concise, and Complete Call Narrative - 28*

### **Analysis of Actions**

The majority of serious errors related to narrative entry by call takers. Remedial training and disciplinary actions were provided to the small number of individual communications officers with recurring serious errors. Platoon training was provided for call taking, call entry, and police dispatching to address the most common errors. Supervisory staff discussed recommendations concerning policy and procedure changes for incident location verification.

### **Policy & Procedure Review**

General Order 11 was reviewed in August 2016. No changes were recommended to the current procedures of Communications Team Supervisors (CTS) assisting the Accreditation Coordinator with the completion of Quality Assurance (QA) evaluations and an additional APCO EMD instructor assisting the EMD Manager with EMD QA evaluations.

### **Conclusions**

We continue to place newly promoted Communications Officers II on daylight platoons to gain additional experience before transitioning them to night platoons several months later. Communications Team Supervisors continue to identify trends in QA evaluations and respond with platoon refresher training and individual remedial training, as needed.

# Agency Improvement Reviews

## RISK MANAGEMENT

### ***Summary of Incidents***

*Number of Reported Incidents - 0*

### ***Issues / Conditions Affecting Risk***

The InterAgency Team is comprised of all public safety stakeholders served by the ECC. The purpose of the team is to review any prior gaps in policy or communication. The team rectifies situations to avoid future problems. The ECC hosts these roundtable discussions each quarter. All new employees participate in Workplace Violence Training through Roanoke County Human Resources. This training provides clear categories of unacceptable behavior and procedures for employees to follow. All employees have been educated on Roanoke County's zero tolerance for workplace violence and harassment.

### ***Issues / Conditions Affecting Worker's Compensation***

In July, VACORP completed an annual review of our facility to ensure compliance with facility safety and security. The annual review evaluated the following topics: First Aid, Fire Protection, Building Security, Machinery and Equipment, Materials Storage, Safety: Policy and Procedures, Hazards, Illumination and Wiring, Physical Facility, Housekeeping, Vehicles, Tools and Regulatory Administrative Issues. No hazards were identified in the report. A new First Aid and Safety Coordinator was selected in September 2016.

### ***Issues / Conditions Affecting Liability***

Roanoke County remains committed to retaining the highest caliber of employees. As such, newly promoted supervisory staff attended Roanoke County Successful Supervisor classroom training modules. Newly promoted supervisors and trainers also received structured, on the job training from a seasoned Communications Team Supervisor in accordance with our promotional training checklist. In addition to reducing liability, these supervisory training programs target employee retention.

# CALEA Accreditation

## New Reaccreditation Process

### VACAP Triannual Meetings

Accreditation Manager Mary Martinez and Communications Officer Teresa Blackwood participated in VACAP training and meetings in October 2016, January 2016, and May 2017.

They received additional direction and support regarding the transition to a four year reaccreditation process.

### External Annual Review Process—December 2016

Compliance Service Manager (CSM) Tim Hazlette completed an electronic review of agency documentation. CSM Hazlette provided a highly favorable review of the agency, after looking at approximately 60 areas of agency operations and administration. The ECC will undergo three more annual reviews by CSMs during this reaccreditation cycle.

### External Annual Review Process—January 2017

Compliance Service Manager (CSM) Bernard “Jay” Murphy was selected from CALEA staff to review agency written directives and standard compliance electronically. This highly trained and experienced law enforcement employee will submit recommendations for agency quality improvement. The ECC will incorporate these recommendations in future documentation.

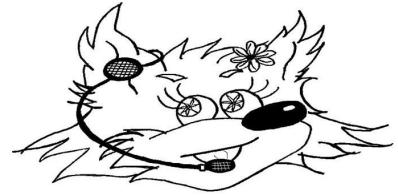
### Future Reaccreditation Review —November 2019

CALEA assessors will conduct an on-site accreditation review of the ECC in 2019. A few months later, the Assistant Director and Accreditation Manager will advocate for the agency to a CALEA Commissioner Review Panel at the Fall CALEA Conference.





## Community Outreach



### Events

The ECC elected to return the Outreach vehicle to Roanoke County Fleet Services this year. We reverted to using personal vehicles to attend community events. In September 2016, CTC Paige DeSilvey educated 50 individuals from a variety of age groups regarding 911 at Roanoke Seventh Day Adventist Church. In conjunction with our hiring advertisements, the ECC hosted 3 news media teams at the beginning of 2017. In March 2017, the VIP Club invited CTC Paige DeSilvey to educate them as 911 callers. In Spring 2017, the ECC attended the Roanoke Valley Career & Lifestyle Fair, Roanoke Assisted Living Facilities & Adult Day Care Centers Provider meeting, and Roanoke County Kids in Camp Recreation Programming.

### Observers

During this fiscal year, the ECC hosted 32 observers. Logistically, this presented some challenges, as each console only seats 2 people. We had up to 10 trainees at one time in the Center, with minimum staffing of 1 supervisor and 4 or 5 communications officers. ECC management was able to stagger applicant observers to observe on a console to prevent us from having more observers simultaneously than communications officers working. We also hosted observers from Roanoke County Sheriff's Office, Town of Vinton Police, Roanoke County Police, and Roanoke County Fire & Rescue.

### Tours

This year, Roanoke County Crime Prevention Officer D. Bruch has brought several groups to our center. We have received guests from Evangel Child Care, Childcare Network, Boy Scout Troop 352, Special Education Group, Blue Ridge Autism & Achievement Center, Bonsack Baptist Church, Northside High School German Exchange, Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, Roanoke County Parks & Rec Kids In Camp Program, Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Character Academy, Roanoke County Law Enforcement Youth Police Academy, Roanoke County Police Citizen Police Academy, and other Virginia 911 centers.

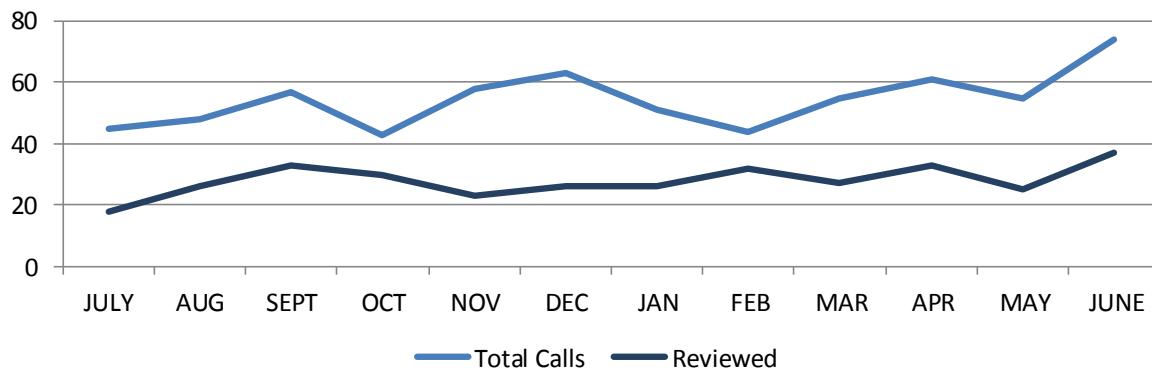
### Education

We look forward to continued partnerships with Roanoke County Police Department's Crime Prevention Officer, Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Public Education Specialist, and Roanoke County Sheriff's Office Outreach Deputy in the next fiscal year. We hope to provide each 1st and 2nd grader in the Roanoke County Public Schools system with a 911 educational activity booklet, as well as continue educational programs with elderly & special populations.

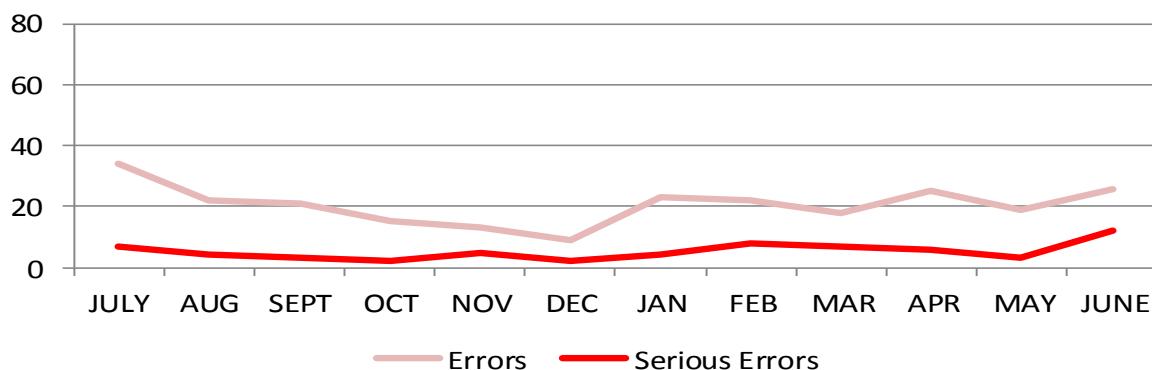
# Emergency Medical Dispatch

## Quality Assurance

### Emergency Medical Dispatch Calls for Service



### Emergency Medical Dispatch Areas for Improvement



## Training

14 Communications Officers I completed EMD certification this fiscal year with instruction by CO Mandy Moore, CTO Lauren Oliveira, and CO Taylor Ralph. In Spring 2017, CO Ralph became our newest EMD instructor upon completion of APCO and ECC courses. Our EMD instructors taught a minimum of 12 hours this year to maintain their certification.

# Employee Awards

## Rookie of the Year



CO-II Tyler Severa has consistently demonstrated enthusiasm and a desire to learn more about emergency communications. His positive attitude exemplifies the LEADER qualities, which Roanoke County values, including excellent, adaptable, dynamic, engaged, and respectful leaders. He is already engaged in helping newer personnel succeed.

## Employee of the Year

AC Mary Martinez has guided the agency through two successful accreditation processes. She is adaptable and flexible with her work schedule, placing the needs of the agency above her own. She continually displays engagement in the workplace, is enthusiastic about her work and consistently adds contributions for improvement.



## Supervisor of the Year



CTS Beth Clemson has been recognized by the Emergency Communications Center as Supervisor of the Year for the second year in a row. Recruitment and retention is critical in the ECC, and Beth is known for making new employees feel welcome and part of the team immediately. She always has an eye on the future, finding ways to recruit and retain team members, including team building exercises and creative rewards. The members of her Platoon are a strong and vibrant team, and she is respected by the public safety community as someone who will get the job done and having the "know-how" to make it happen.

## Platoon of the Year

D Platoon is recognized for working together as a team throughout the year. They have pulled together and helped each other during several incidents in 2016. Highlighted incidents throughout the year included calls during a large scale winter weather event, a possible terrorist attack with multiple injuries, and an officer down incident.

# Employee Awards

## Red Cross Hero Award



Nikki Crush was selected as the recipient of the Red Cross 911 Hero Dispatcher Award. During Snowstorm Jonas, an adult male called 911 for his pregnant wife. CO-II Crush kept him calm, while dispatching fire & rescue apparatus to the residence. CO-II Crush provided Emergency Medical Dispatch instructions to her caller. She effectively prepared the family in case they had to deliver the baby prior to the arrival of the ambulance. Within minutes of EMS arrival, baby Lukas was delivered in the family kitchen.

## APCO Virginia Telecommunicator of the Year

Mary Martinez was selected as the 2016 APCO Virginia Telecommunicator for her dedication to the ECC. In 2016, she worked numerous hours on the floor as a communications officer due to critical understaffing in the ECC. She worked both daylight and night shift hours, never complaining about helping out on a console. The ECC relies heavily upon her expertise and many employees go to her for help on special assignments. The ECC also appreciates her Spanish fluency. Mary is a self-starter, attends many classes outside of the ECC to further her knowledge, and develops ECC classes to share that knowledge with her fellow communications officers.



## Roanoke County Merit Awards

In December 2016, Roanoke County Human Resources rolled out the new employee recognition program. This program was developed by a multidepartment committee led by COMMIT Assistant Director Susan Slough. The program ties employee recognition to the Roanoke County vision and LEADER values. Awards exist to recognize full-time and part-time employees as individuals, monetarily or with additional leave time, or as a team for a specific project. This year, ECC merit award recipients were CTS Beth Clemson, AC Mary Martinez, CO-II Tyler Severa, and D Platoon.

## ECC Employee Recognition Programs

In September 2016, the ECC implemented a program to recognize employees that did not call out sick. Each quarter, platoons competed to have the lowest hours of sick leave. The program allowed individuals to use their leave time for annual vacations, medical procedures, and other pre-planned events. At the end of the fiscal year, 8 communications officers were recognized for perfect attendance.

From June to September 2016, ECC employees were also recognized for "Going the Extra Mile" through our GEMS program. Their recognition was displayed behind the supervisor console on a monthly basis.

# Recruitment Program

## Recruitment Plan

A comparison of the Roanoke County Emergency Communications Center service population to our employees demonstrates approximate proportions regarding most minorities. However, our agency currently employs less than the 3% of the service population that self-identifies as Black Non-Hispanic. While there are a lower number of males available for the workforce, the underutilization of male employees stands at 42%. The agency has reduced this percentage from 46% the previous fiscal year.

Management is committed to continuing a pre-planned classroom and on-the-job training schedule for all new employees, based on feedback from recent hires. Management changed workplace harassment and diversity awareness training from biennial to annual training for all employees. All employees involved in recruitment received Equal Opportunity Employment, workplace diversity, and job benefits training as well. In October 2016, management provided employee retention training to Communications Team Supervisors. Management continues to encourage minority staff participation in the recruitment process, publicized agency photographs, and public education videos.

Despite budget constraints, management was able to utilize two billboards in high minority traffic areas for advertising and recruiting this year. Due to staffing constraints, the ECC Outreach Coordinator was unable to attend local career fairs during the majority of this fiscal year. With more staffing in the next fiscal year, the agency plans to renew Outreach programs targeting older, special, veteran, and minority populations.

### Hiring

*Initial Testing - 24*

*Conditional Offers - 26*

*Additional Screening - 26*

*Final Offers - 17*

*Hired - 17*

### Retention

*Completed Training - 4*

*Retained 3 years - 17*

*Retained 5 years - 14*

# Training Program

## APCO Courses

- Active Shooter Incidents for Public Safety Communications
- Communications Supervisor
- Communications Training Officer
- Disaster Operations and the Communications Center
- Emergency Medical Dispatch
- Emergency Medical Dispatch Manager
- Fire Service Communications

## PowerDMS Courses

Academy	101
Mandatory	25
New Hire	8
On the Job	40
Promotional	4
Refresher	32
Remedial	4
Specialized	38

*CTC Paige DeSilvey serves as our Communications Training Coordinator. She continues to provide monthly training in PowerDMS to our platoons through our Training Committee and Communications Team Supervisors. She provides quarterly continuing education to our Communications Training Officers and manages our biannual training academies for new hires.*



# Upcoming Projects

## CAD UPGRADE

### *Tyler New World Systems: Enterprise*

The Emergency Communications Center has completed all pre-planning stages for the upgrade to their existing CAD in July 2017. This new version of the ECC's current CAD system will completely change the graphic user interface, and consequently the end user experience. All communications officers are scheduled for 2 weeks of intensive training regarding the new tools available to them. The software will include a framework for Next Generation 911.



## GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

### *Roanoke Valley NG-911 Shared Services Project*

The goal of this project is to create a new Real-Time NG-9-1-1 valid dataset for City of Roanoke, County of Roanoke and City of Salem PSAPs. The data will have the following feature datasets: Road Centerlines, Address Building Points and/or Polygons, Emergency Service Zones, PSAP Boundaries, Authoritative Boundaries and County / Municipal Boundaries. This project will support PSAP readiness for future technology and enhance the current efficiency of each PSAP.



# Roanoke County

## Emergency Communications Center



Dial **911** for Emergencies

Call (540) 562-3265 for Non-Emergencies

Visit our website: [www.roanokecountyva.gov/ecc](http://www.roanokecountyva.gov/ecc)

