



Metropolitan Area Communications Center Authority

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METCOM MISSION STATEMENT

METCOM's Public Safety Professionals are committed to serving with integrity, compassion and care for the welfare and safety of our citizens and personnel. We support expedient, quality fire rescue and provide emergency medical instructions through the application of the industry's best practices. Our standard is excellence and the road to success is through our teamwork.

VISION STATEMENT

METCOM believes the best way to see the future is to create it. Knowledge, innovation, and dedication are precursors to greatness. It is our vision to become renowned for quality service and professionalism, setting the industry standard for multi-agency communication centers.

METCOM VALUES

INNOVATION

Utilizing creative thinking while constantly seeking opportunities and embracing new technologies for the advancement of our standard of excellence.

TEAMWORK

Cohesively working together to achieve a common goal for the betterment of the individuals we serve and the future of our center.

DEDICATION

Selfless devotion by proactively meeting the needs of our citizens, co-workers, and the personnel we serve.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Taking responsibility within the center to promote effective communications, professional growth, and a team-based work environment.

INTEGRITY

To adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards set forth while recognizing individual needs.

Profile of a Dispatcher



Here's the "Buzz" on Angie Johnson:

I am a Colorado Native – born in Denver and raised in Arvada. I still live in Arvada with my son. He is a Senior in High School and has enlisted in the Navy. He will ship off to boot camp in July of next year and continue on to the Nuclear Program afterwards. My daughter is a Senior this year, at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. She will deploy to unknown parts of the world next June, hopefully as a Surface Warfare Officer. I am about to be an empty nester! I look forward to meeting my kids in other countries. I do not participate in winter sports – I never really enjoyed the "coldness" of it. I do, however, love the spring, summer and fall here. My favorite time of year is Fall & Halloween. I love to take the Jeep into the hills and take lots of pictures.

I started my dispatch career at Arvada Fire in June of 2001. I came here in November 2005 and helped bring MetCom on-line. I was recently promoted to B-Shift Supervisor from B-Shift Lead. I am also the Quality Assurance Coordinator. This team makes sure we are compliant with our Emergency Dispatch protocols to help maintain our Accreditation.

MetCom Buzz



METROPOLITAN AREA COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

2015 THIRD QUARTER DISPATCH STATS

7/1/15—9/30/15

NUMBER OF CALLS:

Alarms— 733
EMS— 3058
Fires— 385
Other— 81
Public Assist— 311
Special Ops— 136
Total— 4704

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SEPTEMBER 2015

MetCom Prepares for Re-Integration

The official date for the re-integration of MetCom into South Metro Fire Rescue is quickly approaching and MetCom is busy preparing. Since MetCom already works so closely with SMFR, from the outside this may seem like a very simple process. To those who work behind the scenes, there is a lot of preparation taking place in the next 3 months to ensure the re-integration goes smoothly.

Many of you may not be aware of all of the recent changes that have taken place and we would like to inform everyone of the latest and greatest news, moves and changes.

In early August, South Metro re-aligned some of its bureaus, which resulted in the Technical Services Bureau being placed under Paul Smith's direction. Paul is dedicated to ensuring the success of this change with minimal impact on daily operations. In order to do so, he created the PSAP Operations Manager position. Effective September 1st, Eric Hurst was promoted into this management position. Eric is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day activities of fire and emergency medical dispatching services including staffing, training, policies and procedures. MetCom's Shift Supervisors now report directly to Eric. MetCom's technical staff (including GIS and Analytics) continue to report to Paul.

Eric's promotion created an open Supervisor position on B-Shift. Angie Johnson, B-Shift Lead Dispatcher, was promoted into the supervisory position effective September 1st. Eric will continue to work on B-Shift until all personnel moves have been made and all new hires have been trained. Angie is one of the original hires when MetCom began operations. She has been in the Lead Dispatcher position for the past 7 years. She brings a great deal of experience and perspective to the leadership team.

With Angie's promotion, we found ourselves with an open position for a Lead Dispatcher. Due to all of the changes occurring, and the number of dispatchers who have completed their Lead packets, it has been decided that this position will not be filled until early 2016.

As MetCom's newest Supervisor, we wanted to make sure Angie was set up for success and not left without a Lead on her shift. Nate Keller will be moving to B-Shift in November to support Angie as her Lead Dispatcher. At the same time, Becki Mullen will be moving to A-Shift to assist Supervisor Neal Hoppe, since he will not have a Lead Dispatcher on his shift. Becki has her CTO certification (Certified Training Officer) and will be a valuable asset on A-Shift.

So many changes going on in MetCom right now...and there are still more! With the promotions that took place and one of our B-Shift Dispatchers moving out of state, we hired 2 full-time Dispatchers who have just begun their training. You will read more about them later in this newsletter. Brad Gleason will be filling the vacancy left on B-Shift and Jim Anderson will be taking the vacant spot on C-Shift when Becki moves to A-Shift in November.

We're sure many more changes will occur in the next few months and we will do our best to keep you all in the loop. We're looking forward to this transition.

In the words of Englishman, William Pollard:
"Without change, there is no innovation, creativity or incentive for improvement."

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Letter from the Director



Paul Smith—Director

It hardly seems possible that we are approaching the fourth quarter of 2015. As we get closer to the end of the year, MetCom’s reintegration process with South Metro Fire Rescue continues to be a major focal point. Many personnel-related processes are being wrapped up including job descriptions, compensation and benefits. In addition, as you will read later in this newsletter, my position has expanded to include management of South Metro’s Technical Services Bureau (IT). The reintegration plan has moved from “people” to “systems” as we look at merging various software and hardware components. MetCom will maintain CAD as a separate system but many other products and maintenance agreements are being evaluated to eliminate duplication and maintain quality performance for end users.

From the technical services perspective, we will spend the remainder of 2015 evaluating and improving our network stability, backup solutions, network security and other infrastructure components while still addressing help desk tickets and supporting on-going initiatives. Technical Services’ biggest priority this year is improving our core systems and customer service so the end-users have a better experience. The combined Technical Services Bureau now includes all of SMFR’s and MetCom’s IT professionals, GIS and analytic reporting and IT support.

On the dispatch front, Byers Fire Department has signed a contract with MetCom to provide dispatch services. This will add about 400 calls per year to MetCom’s volume. This brings the count to 4 rural departments being dispatched by MetCom. The other three are West Douglas Fire Protection District, Bennett Fire Protection District and Sable Altura Fire Rescue. In addition, South Adams County Fire Department is contracting with MetCom to provide GIS and fire-based reporting services, which includes agency performance analysis, GIS reporting and call density analysis.

JACC or the consolidated CAD has now been up for 1 year and continues to be very successful. The JACC project combined the computer-added dispatch (CAD) systems from five 911 centers into a single CAD supported and managed by MetCom. The consolidated CAD now supports fire/EMS dispatching for 16 fire departments, 23 cities, and 94 fire stations in a 1,507 square mile area. In the first 9 months of 2015, the consolidated CAD has dispatched over 68,000 fire/EMS calls and now shares over 10,430 preplans which can be used by all agencies being dispatched on this unique CAD solution.

As you will read later in this newsletter, there have been several staffing changes in the past few months. We have hired 2 full-time and 3 part-time dispatchers, some of whom are still in the training process. I have added an Operations Manager position, filled through an internal promotion. This resulted in an open supervisor position, which was also filled from within. These changes will allow MetCom to continue to provide the highest level of dispatching service while we work through expansion and reintegration back into SMFR.

It’s also exciting to note that January 19, 2016, marks our 10th year of operation. More information will be coming out this winter about our anniversary and the celebration that will occur as we turn 10 and come home to the agencies that helped create us.

As the saying goes, the only constant in life is change.

New Faces...New Voices

We are pleased to announce new additions to the MetCom team.



Cathy DeVisio—
Administrative Manager



Heather Hoelting was hired in August as the newest member of the GIS/Analytics Unit. She is MetCom’s GIS Specialist and brings with her a wealth of experience. Most recently she was a GIS Analyst at Intrado and prior to that she provided GIS services to the Center for Geospatial Technology at Texas Tech University. She completed an internship with the National Geographic Society and she has a BA in Geography. Right now, Heather is focused on completing map books for the rural fire agencies served by MetCom.

MetCom has also filled out the ranks of our dispatch personnel – both full-time and part-time.



In the last issue of The Buzz, you read about **Dustin Kern**, who started in March. He was formerly with the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office as a fire dispatcher and he is an active volunteer firefighter with the Franktown Fire Protection District. He has completed MetCom’s Dispatch Training program and is currently working on A-Shift.



Brad Gleason and **Jim Anderson** began their full-time employment with MetCom in September. Both Brad and Jim are experienced 911 dispatchers, formerly with the City of Aurora and they both have connections to Sable Altura Fire Rescue as volunteer firefighters. Brad spent over 3 years with Sable Altura and Jim is still an active volunteer.



Brad and Jim are both in MetCom’s Dispatch Training program; Brad has been assigned to B-Shift and Jim to C-Shift.

MetCom has 3 new part-time dispatchers: Scot Swindall, Ryan Meigel and Bryan DeWolfe. Part-time dispatchers work as needed, to cover open shifts.



Scot works full time in West Metro Fire’s communications center as a Dispatch Supervisor and Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) evaluator. Prior to West Metro, Scot was with AMR and he also served in the U.S. Air Force (firefighter and driver/operator). He has a BA degree in Communications and also holds a Fire Protection Technician certificate.



Ryan was a dispatcher for Rural/Metro and a volunteer firefighter with Wheat Ridge Fire. He also worked for Cintas Fire Protection as a Fire Safety Technician. Currently, Ryan is in the Westminster Fire Academy on a full-time basis.



Bryan DeWolfe is the newest part-time dispatcher. Bryan is a Firefighter/Paramedic who recently celebrated his ninth anniversary with South Metro Fire Rescue. He has a degree in Fire Science and prior to joining SMFR, Bryan was a Paramedic with Denver Health.

We are excited to add these outstanding individuals to the MetCom team and we are confident that they will enhance MetCom’s continuing ability to support our mission of quality customer service, compassion and care to all of our client and neighboring agencies.

MetCom Welcomes Bennett Fire



In August, Captain Caleb Connor with Bennett Fire Protection District took some time away from the office to talk with me about their department as well as to provide feedback on how their transition to MetCom is going. I hope you find this interview as informative as I did.

In 1951, the Bennett Community Volunteer Fire Department was formed to provide protection of crops (primarily wheat) to the farming community. When this Fire Department was formed, the service was one in which the firemen paid to be a part of the department (25 cents per month which eventually increased to 50 cents per month), and subscribers paid for the protection. In 1981 some citizens collected enough money to form the Bennett Rescue Squad providing ambulance services to the Bennett community. The Bennett Community Volunteer Fire Department and the Bennett Rescue Squad operated as separate entities until 1986 when they merged to form the Bennett



Becki Mullen—Dispatcher

Fire Protection District. In order to accommodate the growth of Bennett, the first paid Chief was hired in 1991. Today there are 17 paid full-time and part-time employees.

Bennett Fire Protection District covers 325 square miles. Not included in that area is the Lowry Bombing Range, for which they provide assistance to Arapahoe County. Over the years, Bennett has seen a drastic increase in the size and scope of activity of the oil and gas industry in the area. Bennett Fire also provides emergency services to Front Range Airport which is the Adams County general aviation airport. Many people are also not aware that the northwest boundary of Bennett's district borders the southeast fence line of DIA, and due to the potential of aircraft accidents outside of airport property, Bennett works closely with DIA. Firefighters attend the ARFF Academy training at DIA with crews from DIA. This ensures that the Bennett crews are ready for any incident that may occur in their district at Front Range airport or outside of the DIA property. DIA does have fire coverage on airport property making it unlikely that Bennett would respond to the property; however, they are trained for a large-scale accident that may require their assistance.

2006 brought the start of a "shift program" for coverage of the district. The department currently runs 3 shifts (A, B and C); each shift works 48 hours on followed by 96 hours off. Each shift has a paid Lieutenant in charge of the entire shift, as well as a paid Firefighter assigned to each shift. During the day there are 4 additional paid personnel working at the Admin building covering that area and responding to calls from there. On average, there are 60 reserve (volunteer) firefighters who commit to a minimum of 36 hours per month at a station. Each reserve is assigned to one of the 3 shifts and is scheduled to work on that shift. There is not a limit to the hours they can work and there is not a requirement to live in the Bennett Fire Protection District, which provides the department with a wide range of experience and backgrounds. Bennett was one of the first departments on the I-70 Corridor to start an out-of-district shift program.

Recently Bennett added the first aerial apparatus to their fleet. That Quint (Quint 91) along with a Tender, Brush Engine and ALS Ambulance are housed at Station 91. Station 92 houses an Engine, Tender, Brush and ALS Ambulance. For responses during the day by Admin staff, a Brush and an ALS Ambulance are always in service at Station 93. There are also 2 Front Range Airport-owned ARFF units housed at the airport (a Rapid Intervention Vehicle and a Crash Truck) which Bennett is certified to use. At one time this airport station was staffed by Bennett personnel, but call volume did not warrant continuing that. The call volume in the Bennett and the Watkins area has been steadily increasing. Currently Bennett Fire Protection District is on track for about 900 calls in 2015, and starting to plan for the likelihood of over 1,000 calls per year in the next few years.

I asked Caleb what Bennett hoped to get once they were dispatched by MetCom. His response was "It's hard to hope for more when the service we are already receiving from MetCom is significantly improved over our last communications center and is far exceeding our expectations." Caleb expressed that in many communications centers each dispatcher has their "core functions" (i.e., Call-taker, Dispatcher) and do the minimum required for that function. MetCom trains their dispatchers to understand what happens in the field and what firefighting crews need, in order to effectively deliver service. Dispatchers are given the correct resources needed operationally to assist their agencies. Due to increased CAD functionality, GIS data, IDT, etc., crews are able to obtain critical information easier and faster. Something as simple as weather information can make a huge impact on firefighter safety and is one of the resources that MetCom has readily available. When Bennett began looking for a new communications center, they realized that MetCom could not only perform the "core functions" exceptionally well, but on top of that, was able to provide more services than what other dispatch centers could provide. MetCom dispatchers are required to have ICS training, which gives them an understanding of what is going on in the field during fire incidents. Other agencies can repeat the information, but don't necessarily understand what it actually means or how it affects the crews in the field. Critical information is now given to responders before it is requested and MetCom is two steps ahead of what they were hoping to get. One of the biggest changes was going from a combination law and fire communications center to a fire service only center, drastically increasing the field connection to the crews. Switching to MetCom was a positive move for budget and operations and they "couldn't ask for more." There's a lot of risk and no guarantees when looking at a communications center move. Bennett placed a lot of weight on recommendations from other departments and MetCom's reputation in making their decision.

MetCom has dispatched for Bennett for 9 months now, and when asked what the general impression is so far, Caleb answered, "The move was one of the best organizational decisions we have made at Bennett Fire. The increase in firefighter safety alone was worth the move. MetCom has far exceeded our expectations and their credibility holds true. The service we are receiving has been delivered as sold, and I highly recommend them to peers."

MetCom's Training Academy

OBJECTIVES

The ultimate goal for training is for the trainee to demonstrate the ability to effectively perform the minimum job performance requirements for public safety Telecommunicators identified within NFPA 1061 -Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Safety Telecommunicators. The standard states that a fire service telecommunicator must have the ability to perform multiple tasks, make decisions based on common sense and standard values, maintain composure under high stress conditions and remember details and recall information easily. In addition to these traits, a fire service telecommunicator must be able to exercise voice control, maintain a balanced tone and modulate volume and inflection while communicating with callers and firefighters.



Nate Keller—Lead Dispatcher

MetCom's training program has been **certified by APCO** as meeting and/or exceeding the **Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators**. The training program is divided into four phases:

- Phase 1 – Introduction and Classroom Study
- Phase 2 – Practical Skills
- Phase 3 – Skills and Information Application
- Phase 4 – Evaluation Phase

The MetCom training program takes a minimum of 3 months to complete, with a maximum extension of 6 months, total. The MetCom Training Manual is issued to each trainee to read, study, and learn. A Module Checklist is used by the trainer to ensure that all pertinent material is covered. The new dispatcher must pass all tests with a score of 80% or higher and obtain all required certifications.

TRAINERS/EVALUATIONS

Each day the Certified Training Officer (CTO) will complete a "Daily Observation Report" (DOR) indicating how well the trainee performed various tasks. A narrative portion of the form allows the trainer to explain any deficiencies and problems, and provide information about any additional training which may be needed.

MetCom's QA/QI Process

As part of MetCom's accreditation through the International Academies of Emergency Medical Dispatch, we are required to maintain standards with our EMD scores. This process helps with holding our dispatchers accountable to ensure they are providing the best customer service possible to all of our callers.

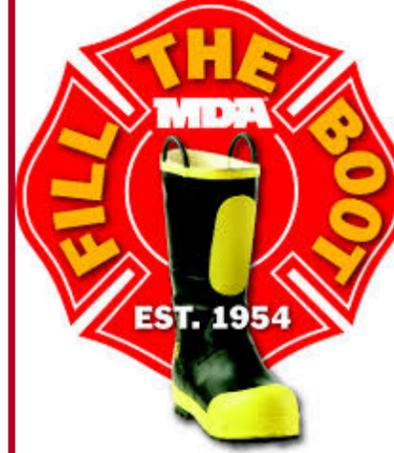


Neal Hoppe—Supervisor

MetCom Q's 10% of emergency calls which equals approximately 100 calls per month. Included in that 10% are all of the calls that involve cardiac arrests, chokings, emergency child-births and gunshot/stabbing wounds; the remainder of the calls within that 10% are chosen randomly.

From asking all of the Key Questions to giving Pre-Arrival Instructions, our call-takers are graded on making sure all questions are asked in order and relayed as closely to the written material as possible. All dispatchers are required to maintain an average score of 90% or higher.

In addition to the call-taking, we also have an in-house QA/QI process in place where we randomly select 2 calls per shift that are reviewed based on a division of duties. The **Call-Taker** is assessed on the accuracy of all necessary information input into the call-taking screen. **Dispatcher/System Status Manager** performance is evaluated based on sending the most appropriate units, assigning move-ups and making jurisdictional notifications. The **Radio Dispatcher** is reviewed on providing correct premise and medical/fire information, making sure appropriate radio channels are assigned and that all information is relayed in a clear and concise transmission.



Fill the Boot for MDA

Every Labor Day weekend Firefighters around the US collect money by "Filling the Boot" for MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association). When staffing allows, MetCom will also go out and collect money. This year MetCom A-Shift was the only shift able to get out in the sunshine to fill boots, hand out stickers and smiles. Their 1 day collection total was \$1503.08. Great job Neal, Nate, Jenni and Dustin.



What is Analytics?

Analytics is a buzzword we often hear today, but what is it, and how does it apply to the Fire Service?

Analytics can be considered a modern day term for statistics, but it goes beyond just the calculation of numbers. Analytics is the process of collecting data and generating information in order to make better decisions. In other words, using statistics to make future predictions based on past incidents.

A tableful of numbers often appears meaningless. Transform those numbers into something more visual, like a chart or a dashboard (a snapshot of various current performance measures), and suddenly you have something that quickly tells a story.

As MetCom's Fire Service Data Analyst, I not only build and automate routine reports, but also provide analysis for specialized studies. I do analysis for MetCom, South Metro Fire and West Metro Fire. In addition, I provide reporting services as needed for JACC (the Jefferson-Arapahoe Consolidated CAD).

Routine reports like Daily Turnout Times, Weekly Incident Counts and Weekly Dispatching Activities help the Chiefs, Directors, and Supervisors better understand the day-to-day activities and make adjustments to ensure efficient service delivery. Specialty projects, such as Station or Apparatus Location Studies, help agencies plan for better utilization of assets while continuing to provide the highest level of service.

MetCom's GIS department is often involved in predictive analysis projects. Using past incidents, we can use the GIS software to determine the best station location for the overall quickest response or to evaluate the response times if a piece of apparatus is moved to a different fire station. With today's technology, we are trying to improve overall performance without having to add stations, units or staff.

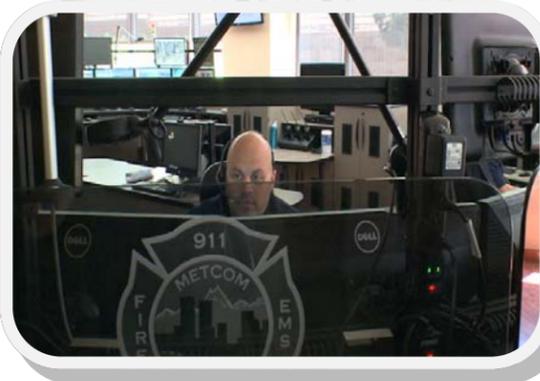
Analytics improves performance by analyzing metrics and reports to spot problems. Interesting findings or patterns can turn into opportunities for improvement. While analytics does tend to be reflective, looking back on events is a great way to estimate what the future may look like.



Mark Stevens— Fire Service Data Analyst

Altitude Sports—Colorado's First Responders

Altitude Sports Channel has recently started a monthly series called Colorado's First Responders. Each episode features different components of First Responders. On September 15th, Altitude aired an episode that featured MetCom as well as the Children's Hospital Burn Camp and the Denver Police Activities League. The TV crew spent a few hours with MetCom C-Shift personnel learning about the steps that are taken after 9-1-1 has been called.



One of our newest part-time dispatchers was interviewed about the training process here at MetCom. Our portion of the program was about 15-20 minutes long and we hope we were able to give others an idea of what it is like in the communications center. Each month Altitude comes out with a new episode, but if you missed this one, they do repeat shows from time to time. You can look it up on your TV Guide, or you can go online to www.altitude.tv and check their programming schedule.

IDT Trains Out East

On August 14th, some of MetCom's Incident Dispatch Team (IDT) members participated in a drill in Byers, Colorado. The neighboring fire departments of Bennett, Strasburg, and Sable Altura participated with Adams and Arapahoe County Sheriffs and the Colorado State patrol. The training was an "Active Shooter"



Paul Roebuck—Dispatcher

drill taking place at Byers High School. MetCom IDT responded with IDT2 and Command 3 and assisted with establishing a unified command and radio communication plans. Utilizing the functions of Command 3, IDT was able to print and enlarge maps of the school for command and create an MCI test call on EMSsystem to obtain bed counts for anticipated patients. The overall training was a great success showing what a valuable resource MetCom's IDT can be.

What is the CAD System Administrator?

Under the auspices of CAD System Administrator I have two roles. I function as MetCom's local CAD Administrator and the Jefferson-Arapahoe Consolidated CAD (JACC) Administrator.

As MetCom's CAD Administrator, I maintain the data that is specific to MetCom's operations including the fire departments for which MetCom provides dispatch services. This includes building new personnel, vehicles, response plans, configuring pages and paging groups, etc. and troubleshooting technical issues.

As the JACC CAD Administrator, I'm responsible for maintaining the system's global data and configurations. Global data and configurations were agreed upon by the five participating public safety answering points (PSAPs) - Arvada Fire Protection District, Evergreen Fire Rescue, Littleton Fire Department, MetCom and West Metro Fire Protection District. The data and configurations are shared by all participating fire dispatch centers. An example of a global configuration is the Emergency Call Taking (ECT) screen. A single ECT screen is shared by all dispatch centers. The layout or appearance of the ECT screen was agreed to by the member PSAPs. Jurisdictional-level data or configurations are specific to the individual PSAP. An example of a jurisdictional configuration is the queues. Each jurisdiction is able to configure queues that are unique to them. The data values in the queues can be diverse and in any order.

Providing technical knowledge and troubleshooting assistance is another component of my position. Most troubleshooting is done through CAD's User Interface and internal modules, but sometimes I'm required to dive into the database. To assist the PSAPs' local CAD Administrators in developing analytical troubleshooting skills, I developed a training curriculum for them. The course is designed to teach them how to troubleshoot technical issues using the system's modules and to provide an understanding of how each module is interconnected. One of the unique and fun aspects of the CAD Administrator class is that I use technical issues that the PSAPs actually experienced and reported to me for resolution.

Additionally I facilitate the JACC Dispatch Committee meetings and serve on the Training Committee.



Betty Hackett—CAD System Administrator