

APCO

MEMBER CHAPTER SERVICES Committee



April newsletter

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911 PULSE CHECK

Hello APCO members!

This month, we have TWO surveys that we'd like to hear your thoughts on: Chapter & Vendor Engagement and Cyber Security! Take two minutes (seriously, it's quick!) to answer our short polls and share your thoughts.

We're hoping to get one response per chapter, and your input helps us spotlight what matters most to our community. We'll share the results in next month's newsletter—can't wait to see what everyone says!

[Cyber Security Survey](#)
[MCSC- Chapter & Vendor Engagement](#)

thanks for being part of the conversation!



Membership *momentum*

Membership Type	Previous Year 03/01/2025	This Year 03/01/2026
Associate Members	1,579	1,548
Full Members	3,242	2,942
Full Group Members	9,586	10,522
Online Group Members	23,375	25,396
Commercial Members	365	346
Commercial Group Members	180	224
Student/Educator Members	21	31
Total Number of Members	38,348	41,009
Total Number of Group Agencies	1,643	1,668
Commercial Groups	41	41

Straight from the CAC



APCO's Greatest Strength: Its Members

By Tina Jackson

I have given this considerable thought and what immediately comes to mind is the amazing people that represent APCO that I have worked with for over 40 years. There are lifelong friendships, as well as incredible mentoring that I have received and see shared with countless people. I see an incredible Commercial Membership base that gives of themselves in many ways. They complement the overall APCO membership beyond the day-to-day and to the core of APCO values.

I recently was awarded APCO Senior Membership. A mentor, Gary Gray, from the Southern California chapter cared enough about me and so many others to be sure to continue for many years to reach out and encourage us to meet the criteria for this excellent recognition. I thank every person within APCO that has encouraged me, recognized our company's contribution to our industry and who go above and beyond to make this association a better place!

As a Commercial Advisory Council member for six years, I see people who give of themselves to better APCO. Many give countless hours of service that go without compensation, like so many APCO members. This dedication, caring nature and type of talent are way above average in many cases. One of our CAC members even donated a kidney recently to save someone's life. I'm just saying that we have an amazing member base and that includes the commercial partners! These people TRULY care about the membership and the mission of the members.



Tina Jackson is President of The Spectrum Firm, Inc. and a member of the APCO Commercial Advisory Council. A longtime supporter of APCO, she is passionate about advancing the mission of public safety communications and strengthening the partnership between commercial partners and public safety professionals.

CYBER INTEL

Corner

The Human Firewall

Why People Are Still the Strongest, and Weakest, Link in 911 Security

By Katrina R. Harley



Public safety runs on trust, time, and teamwork. In a 911 center, that teamwork now includes a daily partnership with cybersecurity. Technologies will always matter, yet the most decisive factor in whether a cyber incident turns into an operational crisis is still the person sitting at the console, supervising the floor, or supporting the network. Verizon's 2025 Data Breach Investigations Report places the "human element" at roughly 60 percent of breaches, which means people remain both the strongest defense and the most common point of failure (1). A human firewall is every person in a 911 center, public safety telecommunicators (PST), supervisors, and support staff whose daily decisions either stop or allow cyberattacks to succeed.

A cyber incident in a 911 environment is not an abstract IT problem. It can delay call transfer, disrupt CAD workflows, or degrade GIS data, which affects response times and public confidence. The good news is that the same people who keep the center calm during a multi-alarm fire can also spot a malicious email, follow clean access practices, and escalate early when something feels off.

What "Good" Looks Like at the Console

- **Password hygiene that fits the mission.** Strong, unique passwords and multifactor authentication stop many intrusions before they start. That means no shared logins, no sticky-note PINs, and no reuse of personal passwords.
- **Real phishing awareness, not theoretical.** Phishing and spoofing remain top crime categories. Treat unexpected links and attachments as unknown scenes on arrival. Verify sender identity through a second channel and report suspicious messages. The 2024 FBI Internet Crime Report noted 2023 "saw a new record for losses reported to IC3, totaling a staggering \$16.6 billion." Ransomware was the most prevalent threat (2).
- **Situational awareness in the digital workspace.** Public Safety Telecommunicators already scan radio traffic for anomalies. Apply the same discipline to the desktop. Unexpected pop-ups, applications failing to launch, or files that "appear off" can be warning signs.
- **Clean hands, clean media.** Limit use of removable media and never plug personal USB devices into agency machines. If a vendor needs to move data, route that task through approved methods (3).

PSAP Managers and Supervisors: Translate Policy into Practice

- **Create a Cyber Security Script.** Keep a laminated card at each position with a short, plain-language escalation path, including an after-hours contact.

- **Run short drills.** Tabletop a “phishy email” for ten minutes during shift change. Practice reduces hesitation during a real event.
- **Close the loop.** When someone reports a suspicious message, thank them and share the outcome. Positive feedback hardens culture.
- **Mind the basics.** Confirm shared workstations lock quickly, unique logins are required, and accounts for separated employees are deactivated.

Leadership: Build a Culture of Cyber Vigilance

The APCO Cyber Security Awareness Training Standard states that agency leadership “sets the tone for the entire ECC. Support and acceptance of cybersecurity awareness training program starts at the upper management level” (4).

Practical steps for executives and managers:

- **Make cyber a standing agenda item.** Track three operational metrics each month. Phishing-simulation participation, password or MFA compliance, and time to report a suspected incident.
- **Codify roles and authorities.** Name a Security Manager and Security Administrator, even if your IT is shared at the county level (3).
- **Train the entire team.** APCO provides cybersecurity training standards and practical PSAP guides. Depending on the size of the ECC and the scope of the ECC’s Cybersecurity Policy, designated agency personnel should devote at least four to eight hours annually to educating members on the ECC’s cybersecurity policy and the employees’ role in maintaining security (4). Pair that content with in-house drills and quick refreshers.
- **Exercise vendor risk.** Many PSAP incidents begin in a third party’s environment. Require least-privilege access, multi-factor authentication, prompt account termination, and incident-notification clauses in contracts and Memorandums of Understanding.
- **Plan for operate-through.** Maintain paper or offline workflows that operators can execute without guesswork. Verify that backups exist, that they restore cleanly, and that restoration does not rely on the compromised environment.

The Bottom Line

Cybersecurity in a 911 center is human work first, technical work second. Leaders can turn that power into a durable advantage: define roles, invest in PSAP-specific training, drill for quick reporting, and celebrate the everyday vigilance that keeps the lines open, the systems healthy, and the public safe.

About the Author: Katrina R. Harley is the Douglas County Georgia, E-911 Director. Katrina is a highly decorated, trained and passionate leader, with a focus on knowledge; advocacy for victims and families; and dedication to the 9-1-1 community.

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3. An Introduction to Cybersecurity A Guide for PSAPs. (2016). <https://www.911.gov/assets/An-Introduction-to-Cybersecurity-A-Guide-For-PSAPs-1638566090.pdf>
4. Salazar, M. (n.d.). APCO International. <https://www.apcointl.org/~documents/standard/31101-2019-cybersecurity/?layout=default>

Inside the Committees

What to Expect When Starting Dispatch

By Aimee Mercado, Charles Myers, and Jackie Romero
from the Young Professionals Committee

Welcome to the World of Dispatch

You've chosen a career that's challenging, meaningful, and moves at a lightning pace. It's a job that's unlike any other, and that's part of what makes it so amazing. When you start, it will be tough. Everyone feels a mix of excitement and nervousness when they begin. One day, you may feel confident and nothing can drag you down, and the next, you may be questioning if this is the job for you. That's completely normal, and everyone who's started in the field has felt it.

A New Way of Thinking

Training will be a crash course in a completely new way of thinking. You'll learn to listen differently, multitask in ways you never thought were possible, and manage the stress that comes along with dealing with people's worst moments. There will be a lot of information coming at you. Radio codes, procedures, new geography, and new technology you've never heard of. It can be a lot and feel like too much at first. But take it one step at a time. Your trainers aren't expecting perfection; what matters most is that you stay learning, getting better, and remain open to feedback. When your training starts to click, those moments are some of the most satisfying you'll ever have. Your trainer wants you to succeed. When it's been a hard day, know that your trainer feels it too.

Adjusting to Shift Work

Additionally, shift work takes adjusting to. Days, nights, and evenings start to blend. Your routine may and probably won't look like everyone else's. You'll learn how to sleep during the day, eat when you can (being a chipmunk on station while trying to answer the radio is normal), and stay connected with friends and family who work "normal" hours. At times it won't be easy, but you'll find what works for you.

The center itself has its own schedule, calm to chaotic, and learning to move with that flow will help you feel at home. One of the most significant factors to remember is that we have all been where you are. We have made mistakes and learned from them, but remember every day is a new day. Start the day with an open mind, ready to learn, and don't let mistakes define who you are. Talk to coworkers, trainers, or anyone who understands the job. Find dispatchers who support each other, and where teamwork and camaraderie are among the best and most rewarding parts of your career.



The Power of Mentorship & Team Support

Confidence doesn't happen overnight; it's a marathon that builds slowly, call by call, shift by shift. You'll begin noticing it when a situation is handled calmly, you recognize a pattern before your trainer tells you, or a problem that would've overwhelmed you feels routine.

Those moments matter; they're proof that you're growing and learning. Mentorship will play a significant role in dispatch. Both your trainers and the people sitting next to you will make the difference. Your trainer will make sure you are thinking and making quick decisions but know that you can use your partners in the room to get help. You might also be surprised that you know the answer when asked by an officer/fire/medic. Ask questions and take advice. Watch how they operate; every center has people who have been through it all. Most of them will help you succeed, and remember, one day you'll do the same thing for a bright-eyed trainee who is sitting down for the first time.

Final Thoughts

The first year is full of both challenges and progress. You will surprise yourself with what you can handle as you grow. It's a career that demands a lot but returns to you even more. You'll learn how to be resilient, patient, confident, and how to stay calm in moments most people wouldn't be able to speak. There will absolutely be days when you will question yourself, but those days shape you. Stick with it, lean on your trainer and soon-to-be coworkers, and trust that you're getting stronger every shift. Remember, every dispatcher has been where you are and has felt what you're feeling. They got it, and you will too.

From all of us who've been where you are now, welcome to dispatch. You've got this!

Aimee Mercado, Charles Myers, and Jackie Romero are members of the Young Professionals Committee.



Don't Just Think About It. Nominate Them.

By Matt Berg

It is that time of year once again. We sound like a broken record, “Recognize your coworker”, “Take a minute to show someone appreciation”, “APCO Awards are open”. I recognize for many people this quickly becomes background noise. I want to take a second to ask you to reconsider. We all know 911 is underappreciated. News outlets frequently praise quick actions by EMS, FD, or PD (as they should) but fail to even utter our name. Now they are quick to have our name in their mouth when we mess up though, right? What does that show the general public? We become associated with messing something up. This is a narrative that is incorrect. Many 911 centers are staffed by professionals who get everything right over 99.9% of the time. So much so that at times the minor mistakes we do make go unnoticed. It's time to highlight that!

I know that you know someone. There is a name in your mind right now as you read this. Say that name out loud right now and add Telecommunicator of the Year to it. Nice ring to it huh? Here is the issue...that person cannot be selected if you don't nominate them. And they won't be selected unless when you nominate them you do a good job explaining why they are deserving. APCO has made the nomination process super easy. It's all online, a few quick clicks, then you can tell your story. Tell us why your director is the best in the country, tell us why your ops manager changed the culture of your center, tell us why that new 911 call taker brought life to your low morale having floor. TELL US! We want to shout their name from the roof tops.

We want it announced at APCO International. We would like someone who may not ever get the chance to attend an APCO International conference to get to go because YOU took 15 minutes out of your day and nominated them for an award.

APCO has a variety of awards for your nominating pleasure. These include:

- **Team of the Year** – find a group of people in your center who did something extraordinary! Any group of two or more people can be as many as you want or need.
- **Radio Frequency Tech of the Year** – you remember these people, right? The ones who make sure your radios don't make that horrible bonking sound when you key up to transmit...guess who else besides dispatchers never get acknowledged? I'll give you a hint, check back to the beginning of this thought.
- **Info Tech of the Year**– this award is for those that provide technical and professional work related to the operation and support of computer hardware, peripherals, and software application. What does that mean you may ask? This is your CAD guy/girl, the one who keeps your phone system running smooth, the one who got you all those high-speed computers or fixed that glitch that kept crashing your EMD program mid call. Your IT person who you just cannot live without.
- **Trainer of the Year** – I know that you know someone who trains people with ease. So much patience, able to explain things so that anyone can understand it, so much self-control when that recruit forgets to time stamp for the 800th time. Tell them how awesome they are at their job!

- **Telecommunicator of the Year** – Listen we all know these people. When that foot pursuit happens for the officer who is showing available, the random shots fired yelled out, the person during a riot (sorry “civil disturbance”) who doesn’t let a single drop of sweat roll down their face and just acts like it is a random Tuesday. Let’s drop a nomination for them, because we for sure know they deserve it.
- **Director of the Year** – Has your director slayed the dragons for your center? Brought in a new technology piece that made your job easier, gone on a hiring blitz, fought the city/county to get you that pay raise, modeled positive behavior, or cleaned up your policy book so that your job is finally clear? Listen, you know who never gets recognized either? Your top boss.
- **Supervisor of the Year** – Ok look I know we are annoying. Always wanting to talk to you (I always say you aren’t in trouble when I ask you to come talk to me in the office ok), asking you to sign these QAs, or your eval, or asking if you are ok after a rough call, or telling you to take five minutes to go walk the parking lot, or buying you pizza or coffee out of their own pocket, or helping you with something. Find that one supervisor that makes you say, “That’s who I want leading me every day”.
- **Technology Leadership** – Small agency (1-75 employees) – for those that want to highlight a specific piece of technology that has impacted their center and those who helped bring it to the center.
- **Technology Leadership** – Large agency (76+ employees) – for those that want to highlight a specific piece of technology that has impacted their center and those who helped bring it to the center.

All nominations must be completed by 11:59 PM ET on April 1, 2026 . I know that seems far away, but remember how busy things get? Citizens who can’t open their car doors because their battery died and they need you to help them unlock the door... officers who can’t use their in car computer to sign out for a break... fire crews who need you to call the power company... why don’t we just get that nomination in right now? It’s easier for you, it’s easier for us who must grade these things and decide who is the actual “best” of the year. Why don’t you just stop reading right now, take 15 minutes, go to [Welcome to the 2026 ECC Awards](#) and just fill it out right now? Then come back here.

Ok so you got a nomination in, right? Listen, even if your person isn’t selected, being nominated is a big deal. It shows your coworkers you care. As we talked about earlier, many times we don’t get a lot of recognition when things go right because of us, so now is the time. Do an internal announcement about your candidate, call your local news agency, post it online, tell other people about your special person! We have an amazing job blessing people during times when they cannot do for themselves and they reach out and say, “Help me!” It is time for us to highlight those achievements and let the world know. Oh, and now that you have a nomination in, go ahead and choose someone else and do a second one!

Matt Berg is the Senior Operations Supervisor at Virginia Beach ECCS-911 and a member of the Awards Committee.



MILITARY HIRING EVENTS

THE MILITARY EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE WANTS TO SHARE SOME EVENTS YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN TO SEEK AND HIRE MILITARY MEMBERS AND SPOUSES.

BodShaw Air Force Base Spring and Education Career Fair

1 April @ 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

EDT Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina

Contact: Dorcus Green, dorcus.green@us.af.mil

Naval Air Station Key West Hiring Fair

17 April @ 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. EDT

Key West, Florida

Contact: Jack Callison or Danielle Martin

jack.r.callison.naf@us.navy.mil or danielle.martin@navy.mil

Fort Campbell Spring Hiring Fair

22 April @ 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. CDT

Fort Campbell, Kentucky

Contact: Abrell Jones, abrell.m.jones2.civ@army.mil

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SIGN UP VISIT
EVENTS.HIRINGOURHEROS.ORG**

Dispatches of History

Where Police Dispatch ALL Began



Remembering the first dedicated police radio broadcast on April 7, 1928

Police Commissioner William P. Rutledge was interested in the ability of shipboard radios to communicate with each other. After the Titanic issued an SOS following its collision with an iceberg, he wondered why this could not be done on land with a transmitter for moving vehicles.

According to the rules of the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) regarding radio broadcasting, it was only for commercial radio stations (later reorganized as the Federal Communications Commission). In 1921, the Department constructed an AM transmitter and equipped six vehicles with mobile units. Licensed as a commercial radio station with the call sign KOP, they were required to play music when not broadcasting radio calls. In 1924, William Potts, supervisor of communications, ordered them to stop playing music interludes.

In the spring of 1927, the radio station was shut down due to technical problems and rule changes. During this seven-year period, they were required to change frequencies five times with subsequent call sign changes.

Rutledge continued to believe that radio could be important for police work. The radio station was relocated away from the downtown area, and with a new antenna system and advancements in mobile receivers, they applied for a new radio license. On January 17, 1928, a hearing was held by the FRC, and the Detroit Police Department was awarded a license to operate on 150 meters with the call sign W8FS.

On April 7, 1928, at 0800 hours, the Detroit Police Department began operating continuous radio broadcasts on this dedicated frequency, becoming the first in the nation to do so. Within two years, over 200 police departments had established their own radio systems.

When transmitting that radio call on April 7, 2026: remember the 98th Anniversary of Police Radio.

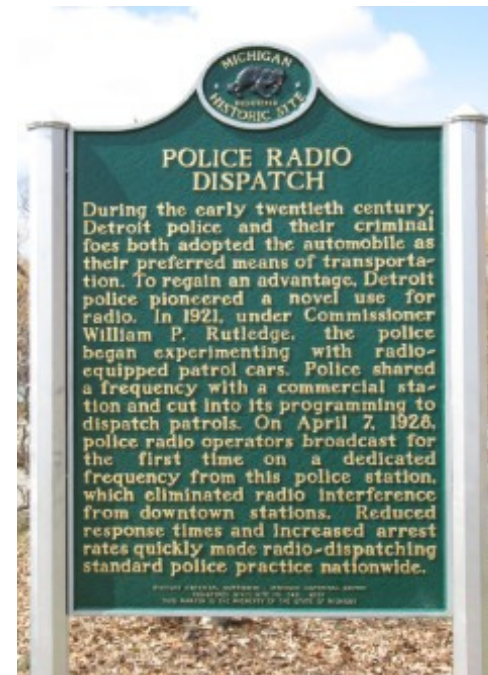


Detroit Police Department and the Official Historical Site Marker Recognizing Police Radio Dispatch History.

80 Years of Detroit Police Dispatch

During the early twentieth century, Detroit Police and their criminal foes both adopted the automobile as their preferred means of transportation. To regain an advantage, Detroit Police pioneered a novel use for radio. In

1921, under Commission William P. Rutledge, the police began experimenting with radio-equipped patrol cars. Police shared a frequency with a commercial station and cut into its programming to dispatch patrols. On April 7, 1928, police radio operators broadcast for the first time on a dedicated frequency from this police station, which eliminated radio interference from downtown stations. Reduced response time and increased arrest rates quickly made radio-dispatching stand police practice nationwide.



Rich Rybicki is a retired Detroit Police Radio Technician and a member of the APCO Historical Committee, where he helps preserve the history of public safety communications.

Teammates *in Action*

Kansas Highway Patrol Dispatch



January 4th-5th - The KHP Dispatch team in Salina worked through some tough shifts, as snow and ice covered Kansas. In just 24 hours, they handled over 12,000 radio transmissions and more than 700 phone calls. They're the main gear that keeps everything moving making sure troopers and first responders have the info they need when they need it. It's not easy, especially during storms like this, but they handled it with skill, professionalism, and calm under pressure.

January 6th - As the winter storm continued to impact Kansas roads, our dispatchers handled 2,479 phone calls (both incoming and outgoing) and 15,262 radio transmissions. These numbers reflect the dedication and skill of the KHP Dispatch team, who work behind the scenes to ensure troopers stay connected and motorists receive the help they need. Their ability to handle this high volume of activity is nothing short of extraordinary.

March 14th - At approximately 3:22pm (CDT) the Kansas Highway Patrol was notified of a multi-vehicle, mass casualty collision event on Interstate 70 (I-70) between mileposts 28.1 and 28.3 in eastern Sherman County, near the town of Edson. The collision area is approximately nine miles east of Goodland, and adjacent to the Sherman County Road 30 overpass.

Encompassing the east and westbound lanes of I-70, a total of seventy-one (71) vehicles were identified as being involved in the collision event, resulting in eight fatalities and 46 injured parties that were transported from the scene to local hospitals. Multiple motor vehicle collision reports were completed to document and separate the collisions that occurred within the event. Troopers believe the separate collisions occurred between the times of approximately 3:20pm – 3:35pm (CDT).

The KHP Dispatch team took several calls from worried and motional family members looking for their loved ones. Having the same conversation over and over where they weren't able to tell them anything of substance was mentally taxing. They empathized with callers, relayed what information they did know, offered reassurance that help was onscene and worked through the emotions that came after each of those calls.

I would like to nominate our KHP Dispatch team members for going over and above normal expectations, duties and responsibilities during the January snow storm and the March dust storm. They should be recognized for their expertise, knowledge and willingness to assist. Other agencies have praised their organization, professionalism and immediate correspondence. They were met with great challenges and exemplified why they were chosen to serve in this profession. From answering the call for assistance to figuring out resources to send to those in need. Blizzards, dust storms, ice events and everything in between have been thrown at them and yet, they always make sure our citizens, visitors and personnel have all the resources they need to get through it. Thank you KHP Dispatch for your continued hard work and dedication.

Aaron Hanna

Bartlett Police Department

On January 11, 2026, we received a call from the mother of a young man with special needs, reporting that he was screaming and punching holes in the walls. Shortly thereafter, Dispatch Trainee Hanna received a call directly from the young man, who was clearly upset and stated his distress was due to his mother not taking him to church. The caller was emotionally overwhelmed and struggling to regulate his emotions.

Aaron quickly demonstrated strong call-handling skills by building rapport and calmly redirecting the conversation. He engaged the caller by asking simple, grounding questions-such as what he had for breakfast-which helped de-escalate the situation. Through this approach, Aaron created a genuine connection with the caller, bonding over their shared love of Pop-Tarts.

The interaction was so positive that the caller later expressed his gratitude by giving the responding officer a Pop-Tart to bring back to Dispatch Trainee Hanna. This call exemplifies Aaron's natural empathy, creativity, and ability to meet callers where they are.

Just two days later, while working with his trainer, Dispatch Trainee Hanna received a call involving a female patient experiencing stroke-like symptoms. After the call was processed and help was on the way, Aaron learned that the patient was his own mother. This experience powerfully illustrates both the difficulty and the profound impact of the work we do in emergency communications. These two calls, occurring within days of each other, highlight Aaron Hanna's composure, empathy, and commitment to service- especially impressive for someone so early in his career. We are grateful to have Dispatch Trainee Hanna on our team and look forward to watching him continue to grow and develop into an outstanding emergency telecommunicator.



Teammates in Action Shine a Light on Your 9-1-1 Heroes!

Every 9-1-1 center has those teammates who make a difference - whether they handle a tough call with composure, jump in to help a coworker during a hectic shift, or show steady leadership when it's needed most. Now's your chance to recognize them! Nominate a dispatcher, call taker, supervisor, or manager who embodies teamwork and excellence for APCO International's Teammates in Action spotlight. Sharing these stories not only celebrates their dedication but also boosts morale, strengthens team pride, and reminds everyone that their work truly matters. Submit your Teammates in Action nomination today and help us honor the best in our 9-1-1 community!

<https://www.apcointl.org/membership/awards-recognition/teammates-in-action/>

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER
13-16
2026

AT THE
OHIOAN
COLUMBUS,
OH
[HTTPS://WWW.THE
OHIOAN.COM/](https://www.theohioan.com/)

OHIO APCO/NENA
STATE CONFERENCE
911 SUMMER CAMP



A promotional banner for the 2026 State Symposium. The text "2026 State Symposium" is written in a blue cursive font at the top. Below it, "April 27-29, 2026" is in bold red font, followed by "Live!" in a large red script font. At the bottom, "CASINO • HOTEL" and "Bossier City, LA" are in blue. On either side of the central text are logos for APCO and NENA Louisiana, featuring a map of Louisiana and the text "APCO" and "NENA THE 911 ASSOCIATION Louisiana". The banner has a white background with blue and red diagonal stripes in the corners.

2026 LOUISIANA APCO NENA STATE SYMPOSIUM

Bossier City, LA
LIVE! Hotel and Casino




Cassie Sexton, CMCP

KEYNOTE SESSION:

Addicted to Chaos - Learning to be Comfortable in the Quiet

BREAKOUT SESSION:

Nothing Changes, if Nothing Changes

 Monday April 27, 2026 -
Wednesday April 29 2026

Register Here!



Member & Chapter Services Committee Members

NAME	STATE CHAPTER LIAISON	WORKGROUP ASSIGNMENTS	EMAIL
Celeste Baldino, RPL	None	Chair	cbaldino@cua911.gov
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WORKGROUP ABBREVIATIONS	
CWG - Chapter Leader's Reference Guide & Chapter Officer Toolkit Working Group	PWG - Polls Working Group
LMC - Life Member Content Working Group	TIA - Teammates in Action Working Group
NWG - Newsletter Working Group	WEB - Webinars Working Group