



# CALLSIGN

## Ohio Appreciates Professional Communications Operations

May 2026

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**President's Message**  
**By OHIO APCO President**  
**Cody Post**

. As we move further into 2026, public safety communications continues to evolve at a rapid pace. Across Ohio, PSAPs are balancing daily operational demands while preparing for major changes involving NG9-1-1, cybersecurity requirements, staffing challenges, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence.

What continues to impress me most is the professionalism and adaptability of Ohio's communications community. Every day, telecommunicators, supervisors, technical staff, GIS professionals, and leaders are finding new ways to improve service while supporting one another through constant change. AI continues to be a major topic across our industry. While these tools are not a replacement for the people behind the headset, they do have the potential to reduce workload, improve consistency, and support call takers during critical incidents when implemented thoughtfully and responsibly.

At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the fundamentals. Recruitment, retention, training, and employee wellness remain some of the most important challenges facing our profession today. Supporting our people must remain at the center of every conversation about the future of 9-1-1.

Thank you for everything you do each day for your agencies, your teams, and the communities you serve. Ohio APCO will continue working alongside all of you as we help shape the future of public safety communications in our state.

Stay safe,

Cody R. Post, ENP, RPL

### May Chapter Events

#### Ohio APCO/Ohio NENA Combined Membership Meeting

Wednesday May 13th, 2026

State of Ohio EMA

2855 Dublin Granville Rd., Columbus, OH

Training 8:30 – 9:30 / Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 Lunch to Follow

Go to Pgs.7 and 8 for the agenda and remote access information

## APCO – INTERNATIONAL

### President

Capt. Jack Varnado, RPL  
911 Director  
Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office Communications Division  
Livingston, LA  
[jvarnado@LPSO.org](mailto:jvarnado@LPSO.org)

### Board of Directors- North Central Region

Jessica Loos  
Lincoln Emergency Comm. Center  
[jloos@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:jloos@lincoln.ne.gov)

B. Fred Cummings, RPL  
Delaware Co. Emergency Comm. Center  
[fcummings@co.delaware.in.us](mailto:fcummings@co.delaware.in.us)

### Executive Council Representative

Johnna Gonzalez-Sells  
Regional Communications Coordinator  
Franklin County EMA & HS  
[JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov)

## Ohio APCO Executive Committee

### President

Cody Post  
[cpost@akronohio.gov](mailto:cpost@akronohio.gov)

### Immediate Past President

Cheryl Pratt  
[clpratt@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:clpratt@dps.ohio.gov)

### Past President

Johnna Gonzalez-Sells  
[Johnnasells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:Johnnasells@franklincountyohio.gov)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Erica Walsh  
[elwalsh@columbus.gov](mailto:elwalsh@columbus.gov)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Nick DiCicco  
[elwalsh@columbus.gov](mailto:elwalsh@columbus.gov)

### Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Banks  
[mbanks@summitoh.net](mailto:mbanks@summitoh.net)

### Chapter Executive Council Delegate

Johnna Gonzalez-Sells  
[johnnasells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:johnnasells@franklincountyohio.gov)

### Chapter Commercial Advisors

Mark Culbertson  
[mark.culbertson@adsrecorders.com](mailto:mark.culbertson@adsrecorders.com)

Steve Zitney  
[szitney@wsi-tech.com](mailto:szitney@wsi-tech.com)

### Appointed Executive Committee Positions

Lydia Frey  
[lfrey@marion.oh.us](mailto:lfrey@marion.oh.us)

Adrienne Sheffer  
[ajsheffer@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:ajsheffer@dps.ohio.gov)

## Ohio APCO - Standing Committees/Chairs

### Constitution and By Laws Committee

2nd V.P. Erica Walsh  
[elwalsh@columbus.gov](mailto:elwalsh@columbus.gov)

### Training

Lydia Frey, Chair  
[lfrey@co.marion.oh.us](mailto:lfrey@co.marion.oh.us)

### Nominating

Johnna Gonzalez-Sells, Chair  
[JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov)

Mike Banks  
[mbanks@summitoh.net](mailto:mbanks@summitoh.net)

Lydia Frey  
[lfrey@co.marion.oh.us](mailto:lfrey@co.marion.oh.us)

Satoru Persons  
[Persons.4@dps.ohio-state.edu](mailto:Persons.4@dps.ohio-state.edu)

### Awards & Scholarship

Adrienne Sheffer  
[ajsheffer@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:ajsheffer@dps.ohio.gov)

### Legislative

Chapter Legislative Liaison  
Johnna Gonzalez-Sells  
[JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov)

### Frequency Advisory

Bob Bill, Chair  
[Bob.bill@das.ohio.gov](mailto:Bob.bill@das.ohio.gov)

### 911 & Communications Center Mgt. Committee

Andrew Knapp, Co-Chair  
[andrew.knapp@hamilton-co.org](mailto:andrew.knapp@hamilton-co.org)

Nick DiCicco, Co-Chair  
[Nick.dicicco@cvgdispatch.com](mailto:Nick.dicicco@cvgdispatch.com)

### TERT

Nick DiCicco, Co-Chair  
[Nick.dicicco@cvgdispatch.com](mailto:Nick.dicicco@cvgdispatch.com)

Johnna Gonzalez-Sells, Co-Chair  
[JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov)

## Additional Designations

**Joint Conference Committee** – Erica Walsh  
[elwalsh@columbus.gov](mailto:elwalsh@columbus.gov)

**911 Steering Committee** – Adrienne Sheffer  
[ajsheffer@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:ajsheffer@dps.ohio.gov)

**PSAP Operations Subcommittee** – Matt Franke  
[mfranke@butlersheriff.org](mailto:mfranke@butlersheriff.org)

### Ohio ESI Net PSAP Subcommittee Representative

Johnna Gonzalez-Sells  
[JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov)

### Ohio ESI Net Technical Subcommittee Representative

Johnna Gonzalez-Sells  
[JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov)

### SIEC Representative - Johnna Gonzalez-Sells

[JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:JohnnaSells@franklincountyohio.gov)



February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Ohio APCO Meeting Minutes

**Welcome Remarks – Cody Post**

Cody Post welcomed attendees to the February 2026 Ohio APCO meeting held in conjunction with Ohio NENA at the State of Ohio DPS headquarters.

**Secretary / Treasurers Report**

Mike Banks advised that meeting minutes were available to review online and had been sent out in the newsletter prior to the meeting. Patrick Brandt made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes, seconded by Erica Walsh. Motion passed with all in favor.

Treasurer’s Report: Ohio APCO Checking Balance: \$21,774.06, Money Market: \$84,358.59 and Gold Star/Conference Checking: \$18,037.15. Patrick Brandt made the motion to accept the report, seconded by Johnna Sells.

**Joint Conference Committee – Erica Walsh**

Conference is being held September 13th – 16th at The Ohioan. Summer Camp theme, hotel rate is \$151+tax. Registration link will be available soon and the committee is exploring a conference app.

**Ohio 9-1-1 Program Office - Patrick Brandt**

- Rules reviewed by Hearing Committee; returning to statewide steering committee Feb 23 at 11:30; if passed, go to JACO.
- Technical/Ops subcommittee meeting to be scheduled (GIS and Next Gen topics).
- Funding/legislation: local distribution formula on hold pending legislative changes; draft language in progress involving Sen. Smith and Rep. Hall; House and Senate bills anticipated.



**Thanks!**  
**To our sponsors past, present and future.**

Thank you to the February lunch sponsor:

**Critical Response Group**

The May meeting is sponsored by:



For sponsorship opportunities at future meetings, please contact Mark Culbertson.

[Mark.culbertson@adsrecorders.com](mailto:Mark.culbertson@adsrecorders.com)

**Updates to 911 Training and Education Standards**

- **Minimum Training:** Basic training has increased from 40 to 80 hours. All PSAP staff must complete ICS 100 and 700; supervisors must also complete ICS 200 and 800. Training will also include legal concepts, NG911 call types, and active listening skills.
- **Continuing Education (CE):** Required CE hours increased from 8 to 12 (11 agency-provided, 1 state-provided). Annual cybersecurity training from CISA is now required.
- **EMD:** The timeframe for EMD training for unsupervised operation has been extended from 6 to 12 months post-hire.
- **Coordinator Training:** All county 911 coordinators must attend an annual in-service training.

**(Continued Next Pg.)**

**- Annual required training is online**  
**- Compliance/reporting:**  
**o Revenue Expense Reports due; March 1**  
**deadline**

**o One compliance issue from 2025 addressed; now fully compliant**

**o Plan to send compliance letters nine times a year starting January**

- Cloud and analytics (next 4–6 weeks):
  - o Three cloud connections
  - o Smart Analytics for Ohio Guardian; compliance support for healthcare information science; positive reception expected
- Carrier/connectivity:
  - o Champaign Telecom fully connected with SIP ingress
  - o Switch (T-Mobile aggregator) connected; RTT enabled for applicable counties
  - o Verizon connected via national ingress; AT&T Mobility completion scheduled next week
- GIS:
  - o Assistance offered for emergency service boundaries; outreach ongoing; missed deadlines noted; facilitation requests welcome
- Core service/security:
  - o Upgrades in progress (coverage strips, ring-no-answer timer)
  - o Background software upgrades for cybersecurity
  - o Multi-factor authentication rollout within ~10 days for hosted solution laptops
- ODR/OSP RFP:
  - o With EAS procurement; vendor outreach and legal processes underway
  - o Anticipated multi-vendor award; open for quote off state contract upon posting; sequenced announcements expected.

**Executive Council – Johnna Gonzalez Sells**

**Executive Council Update:**

**APCO International Membership:**

Grand total of 31,684 – this includes Associate Members, Full Members, Online Members, Group Members and Commercial Partners.

**Executive Committee – North Central Region Update:**

Fred Cummings from Illinois has resigned his position as one of the North Central Reps. Jessica Loos is still one of the reps. An election was held January 30th to fill the vacant seat. There were two interested parties – Cheryl Konarski from Missouri was elected by the other members of the North Central Region.

**Scholarships and Training:**

Fee Free February is currently going on...

For a limited time, receive \$20 off select course dates for some of APCO's most in-demand training offerings. Whether you're building foundational skills or advancing into leadership, these courses were specially identified to be cover all career levels for our membership.

Scholarship Application Process Opens for APCO Members APCO's Silent Key and Commercial Partner Scholarship Program opened for applications on January 15.

The deadline to apply for the Certified Public-Safety Executive (CPE) Program scholarship is February 15

Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL) Program deadline is March 1.

All other applications for general scholarships for APCO Institute courses are due by April 1.

**Government Relations:**

On the legislative side, several bills to support public safety communications advanced in the House. On January 21, the House Energy and Commerce Committee advanced the Emergency Reporting Act (H.R. 5200) and the Kari's Law Report Act (H.R. 5201), bills that will help ensure access to 9-1-1 and improve situational awareness regarding network outages that can affect calls to 9-1-1. In addition, there has been momentum on the Next Generation 9-1-1 Act (H.R. 6505), which advanced out of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee during a January 15 markup.

APCO commends the Committee's leadership and urges swift consideration of the Emergency Reporting Act and Kari's Law Reporting Act by the full House, as well as prompt consideration of the Next Generation 9-1-1 Act by the full Energy and Commerce Committee.

In his Senate Commerce Committee testimony on January 28, APCO CEO & Executive Director Mel Maier urged the swift reauthorization of FirstNet under the continued oversight of the independent FirstNet Authority Board. Maier highlighted that public safety professionals, including many of APCO's members, depend upon FirstNet service and equipment to support their lifesaving missions. As Congress considers FirstNet reauthorization, APCO will continue to advocate to ensure congressional action supports and preserves FirstNet's unique ability to serve the public safety community.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Wellness & Workforce Summit – February 18-19, 2026, at the Renaissance Phoenix Glendale
- Impact Awards – April 22, 2026, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC
- Awardees to be announced this month.
- Confirmed sponsors include FirstNet Built by AT&T, OnStar and Wilkinson Barker Knauer.

National Conference is scheduled for August 2nd- August 5th in San Antonio, Texas. Call for papers is closed- and they are in the process of being reviewed.

Find more information at <https://apco2026.org/>

### **Webinars:**

APCO presented two free webinars for members in January.

On January 20, "Supporting Call Takers in the Moment: Practical Lessons from AI Use in 9-1-1" with 462 registrants.

An additional webinar, "Redefining Reliability in Public Safety Communications: What Comes Next After Poly," was presented on January 28 with 431 registrants. Each webinar

was worth 1 CDE and webinar recordings were made available to attendees.

### **Upcoming Webinars:**

Both of these are free and count for 1 CDE-Continuing Dispatch Education

- The Role of Over the Top (OTT) Applications and Services in NG9-1-1  
February 25, 2026 at 1pm EST
- Empowering Local Alerting: Using IPAWS to Protect Your Community  
March 4, 2026 at 1p EST

### **Awards and Scholarships – Lydia Frey**

Union County has received a full group membership scholarship, working with Mike Banks to secure payment.

### **911 Operations and Management Committee**

Looking to form a joint committee with Ohio NENA. President Post has names and addresses of interested parties, her and Ohio NENA President Frey will reach out to interested parties. Bylaws will be adjusted to accommodate the committee placement.

### **MARCS Update – Angie Canepa**

Online portal is live, 2 hour turnaround time for activations, payments and invoices are now online. Review inactive/old radios and consider deactivating them to not accumulate fees or non-compliance with RA. They can always be reactivated alter. Overall, fewer than 30,000 radios do not have RA at this time.

### **Commercial Advisory Committee – Mark Culbertson, Steve Zitney**

Mark recognized all of the commercial members present for today's meeting with special thanks to Critical Resource Group for sponsoring today's meeting. Next quarterly meeting May 13 (RapidSOS sponsor)

Sponsorship opportunities exist for the chapter conference in September; private "pitch rooms"; campus-style venue with nearby

amenities; on-site restaurant more affordable than prior venue.

December 9 quarterly meeting sponsor needed; additional partners acknowledged; light-hearted conference remark exchanged; partners encouraged to contact Mark or Steven.

Critical Resource Group provided a presentation on their custom indoor mapping solutions.

### **Good of the Order**

#### **Patrick Brandt –**

Has received questions on the county final plans. The Program Review Committee is required to meet annually. If there is a change to the final plan it can be changed with a simple majority vote of the committee. It must be filed with the 9-1-1 Program Office within 90 days.

#### **Cody Post –**

Ohio APCO pursuing statewide recognition for dispatchers as first responders; prior senator meeting stalled; efforts continue via OhioAPCO.org state advocacy section. Draft resolutions available for county commissioners; two counties have adopted; aim to increase momentum, especially during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in April.

First paragraph intentionally generic; counties should customize. Jurisdictions that pass resolutions should send signed PDFs/photos for website upload. The goal for 2027 is to present a binder of resolutions from all 88 counties to the legislature.

### **Adjournment:**

Patrick Brandt made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by Kenneth Stewart, motion passed with all in favor, meeting adjourned at 1115hrs.



## **Nominations for the 2026 Ohio Gold Star Awards are now OPEN!!**

**[Click Here](#) to sign up for the nominations app and start submitting your nominations today!**

**\*\*New\*\* A new nomination category has been added to the Ohio Gold Star Awards!**

### **GIS Professional(s) of the Year**

This award honors exceptional GIS projects that improve emergency communications and public safety operations, particularly through enhanced NG9-1-1 readiness, accurate GIS data, and innovative mapping technologies. Successful nominees demonstrate measurable gains in call routing efficiency, location accuracy, and real-time coordination between agencies, resulting in better emergency response outcomes. Note: This award can either be an individual or team award.

### **Nomination Submission Closes June 1st**

For any questions regarding Ohio Gold Star please contact Chairman Scott Brown  
[scott.brown@hamiltoncountyohio.gov](mailto:scott.brown@hamiltoncountyohio.gov).



**OHIO  
APCO**

Leaders in Public Safety  
Communications

# OHIO APCO & OHIO NENA JOINT MEETING



THE 9-1-1 ASSOCIATION



**May 13, 2026**



**10:00am**



**State EMA Building**

2855 W Dublin-Granville Rd,  
Columbus, OH 43235

- **Welcome Remarks** – Cody Post and Lydia Frey
- **APCO Secretary & Treasurer Report** – Mike Banks
- **NENA Secretary & Treasurer Report** – Jason Sweney
- **Joint Conference Committee Report** – Erica Walsh
- **Gold Star Committee Report** – Scott Brown
- **Ohio 9-1-1 Program Office** – Patrick Brandt
- **NENA Remarks & Updates**
  - NENA District Reports
    - District One – Doug Houtz
    - District Two – Leigh-Ann Slaughter
    - District Three – Megan Alfani
    - District Four – Teresa Fouts – Imler
  - NENA National Report
  - NENA National Conference – Columbus, OH – June 27th – July 2nd  
*Interested in volunteering at NENA National – Check the Ohio NENA website.  
More volunteers needed. Therapy Dogs needed.*
  - NENA Work Groups
- **APCO Remarks & Updates**
  - Frequency Advisory Committee – Devan Phillis
  - Executive Council & Legislative – Johnna Gonzalez-Sells
  - Constitution & Bylaws – Nick DiCicco
  - Awards & Scholarships – Lydia Frey
  - 9-1-1 Operations & Mgt Committee – Andrew Knapp
  - MARCS Update – Angela Canepa
  - Nominating committee – Johnna Gonzalez-Sells
  - Commercial Advisory – Mark Culbertson/Steve Zitney
    - Meeting Sponsors:
  - Training Committee – Adrienne Sheffer
  - Compassionate Care – Tom/Holly/Johnna
  - TERT Update – Nick DiCicco
- **Good of the Order & Announcements:**  
Next meeting – September TBA  
(Will be held during the Conference)

LUNCH IS PROVIDED BY OUR COMMERCIAL PARTNER

# RapidSOS

**For those of you who will be joining us virtually for the quarterly meeting the link is posted below. Our training will begin at 8:30 am EST through 9:30 am EST, with the meeting to follow beginning at 10 am EST.**

Topic: May APCO/NENA Chapter Meeting

Time: May 13, 2026 08:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

[us04web.zoom.us/j/...](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/...)

Meeting ID: 785 7414 4065

Passcode: EV0MxD

Join instructions

[us04web.zoom.us/join/78574144065/...](https://us04web.zoom.us/join/78574144065/...)

Erica Walsh