

Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division



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Kathy O. Rushworth
Division Chief

A CALEA Accredited Public Safety Communications Center



Shreveport Fire Department

Communications Division

Caddo Parish Emergency Communications Center

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Voice: 318-675-2200 Fax: 675-2206

February 18, 2014

As expected, 2013 brought significant challenges to the Shreveport Fire Communications Division but the service we provide was never compromised. The men and women of this division are to be commended for their commitment to providing the highest level of service regardless of vacant positions, budget constraints, the facility upgrade, aging equipment, and an increased workload.

In 2013, our division adopted the newly revised NFPA call-taking and dispatching performance standards. We knew this would be a challenge due to our staffing constraints but our communications officers embraced the challenge and have consistently met our projected goals. Our *average* call processing time has been reduced by fourteen seconds.

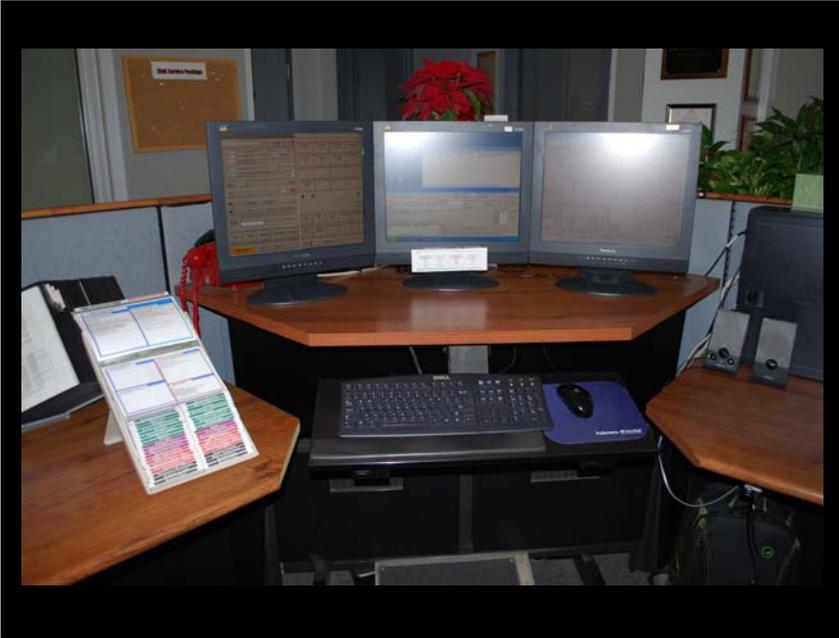
The facility upgrade was a major challenge as two new consoles were added to the emergency communications center. Our fire communications officers literally worked in a construction zone for weeks while still providing excellent service to our citizens. Our Information and Technology Specialists, as well as our administrative staff, were displaced for months. With all of the noise and confusion, the men and women of this division maintained a high level of performance with great customer service.

Aging equipment at our fire stations and in our vehicles creates a huge challenge for our IT staff. The workload of our IT Specialists continues to increase but they are steadfast in assessing situations, providing support and service to the entire department.

With senior staff members retiring, budget constraints, a city administration in its last year, and no way to purchase new equipment, this coming year is plagued with challenges. However, with the dedicated men and women we have in this division, I know that our service will not be compromised. We will continue to proudly serve our community and our department.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Rushworth, RPL
Chief of Communications

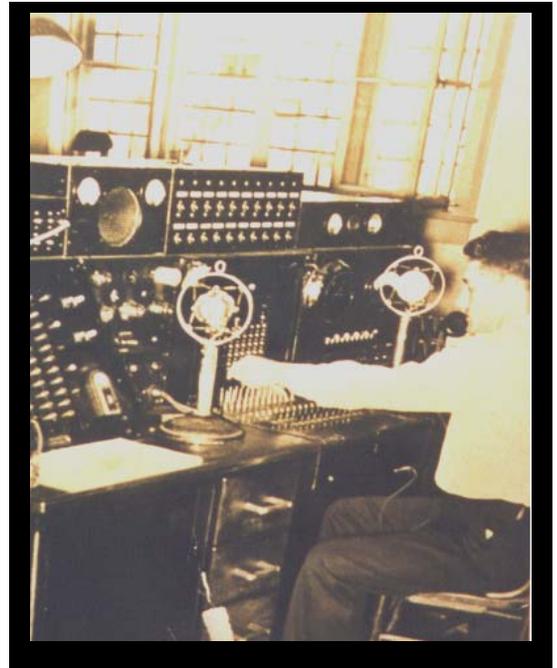


Shreveport Fire Department Mission Statement

The Shreveport Fire Department will deliver the highest level of emergency and non-emergency services to our community by protecting and preserving life, property, and the environment while providing support, encouragement, and motivation through professional development of the individuals within our organization...

Communications Division Mission Statement

The Shreveport Fire Communications Division is committed to providing efficient, effective, and dependable professional emergency services to the citizens and visitors of Caddo Parish, by quickly and professionally processing all calls for fire and medical emergencies, reducing the threat of danger to these individuals by ensuring fast, effective, and efficient call receipt, caller interviews, rapid resource deployment, and effective field support....



Shreveport Fire Communications Division

.....Caddo's Gateway to Public Safety

The Shreveport Fire Department Emergency Communications Center serves the citizens and visitors of Caddo Parish. Caddo Parish has a population of over 252,000 and covers a 937 square mile area located in the northwest corner of Louisiana. The Shreveport Fire Department Emergency Communications Center is part of a joint venture between the City of Shreveport and Caddo Parish Emergency Communications District Number One (Caddo 9-1-1).

Through this agreement, Caddo 9-1-1 provides a state-of-the-art 24,000 square foot facility which houses the Communications Divisions of the Shreveport Fire Department, Shreveport Police Department and the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office. Caddo 9-1-1 provides all of the various technical equipment and systems that are used to receive emergency reports from citizens, and deploy emergency response personnel.

In return, the City of Shreveport's Fire Communications Center is the primary public safety answering point (PSAP) for 9-1-1 in Caddo Parish. Fire Communications Officers answer over 280,000 9-1-1 calls each year and dispatch to nearly 50,000 fire and medical emergencies in Caddo Parish. In addition to providing direct support to the Shreveport Fire Department, this division also provides direct support to all seven Caddo Fire Districts. As the primary PSAP for Caddo Parish, this division also processes many law enforcement calls for service throughout the parish.



The Shreveport Fire Communications Division is comprised of forty-seven (47) staff members, forty of which are Fire Communications Officers who operate four shifts, supporting eight (8) emergency call-taking and dispatch console positions. Fire Communications Officers are certified in APCO Public Safety Telecommunicator 1 (PST1), APCO Fire Service Communications, and APCO Emergency Medical Dispatch. In addition, almost 50% of the members are certified as Firefighter 1, a large number of our members are also certified Emergency Medical Technicians, and one Fire Communications Officer is certified at the level of paramedic. Currently, four of our communications officers have completed the prestigious Registered Public Safety Leader certificate program through APCO and appear on the national registry of RPL.

In addition to providing emergency communications services to all public safety agencies in Caddo Parish, this division is also responsible for all voice and data services for the Shreveport Fire Department. From inventory control and purchasing to software and hardware maintenance and installation, this division ensures that communications takes place.

Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division Command

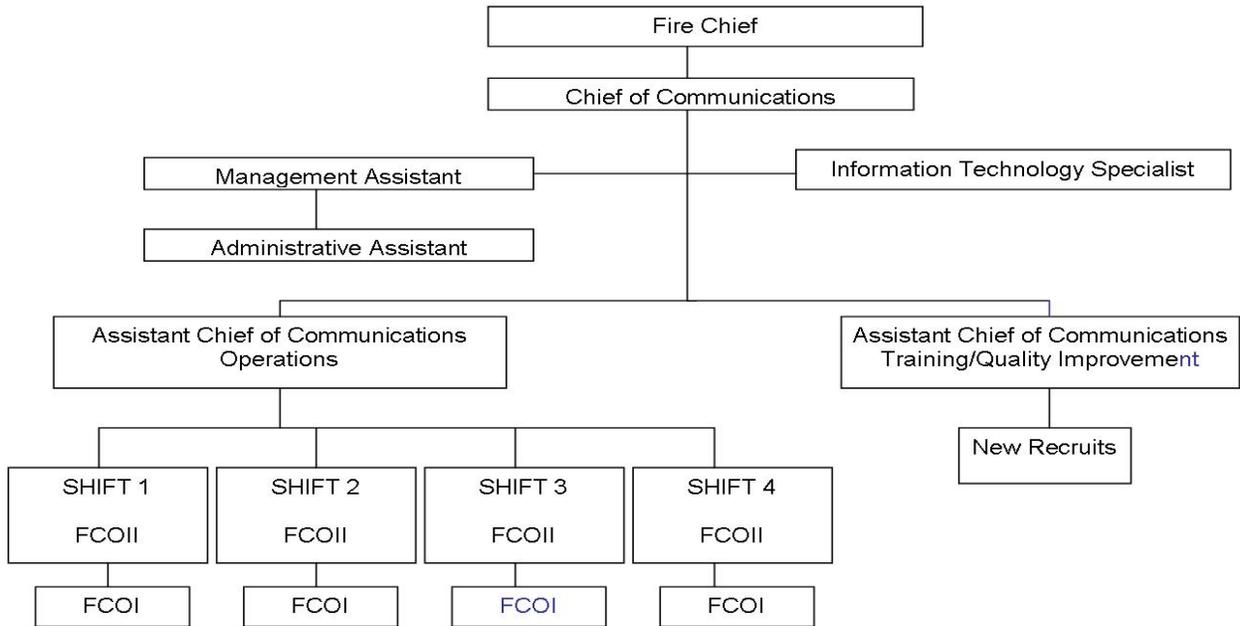


Ronald C. Mulford
Fire Chief



Kathy Rushworth
Chief of Communications

Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division Organizational Chart

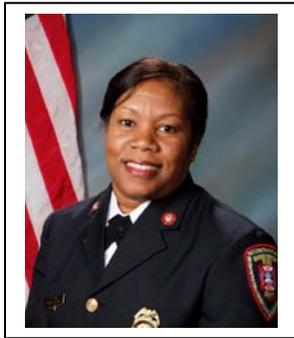


**Shreveport Fire Department
Communications Division Operations Command**

Violet Anderson
Assistant Chief of
Communications/Operations



Fire Communications Officers II (Supervisors)



Pat Bradford



Marlo Francis



Toni Johns



Ray Mathews



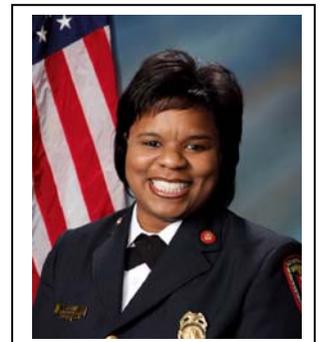
Sharon O'Neal Clark



Veronica Rambo



Roxanna Taylor



Kim Tolliver

**Shreveport Fire Department
Communications Division Fire Communications Officers**

FCOI Connie Alamond	FCOI LaTonya McKinney
FCOI LeKeisha Berry	FCOI Cissy McKinzy
FCOI Angela Boyter	FCOI Dusty Moore
FCOI Michelle Bradley	FCOI Lane Owens
FCOI Terry Carter	FCOI Sabrina Parker
FCOI Vicki Carter	FCOI Tammy Pierce
FCOI Tina Chambers	FCOI Stephanie Phelan
FCOI Connie Coleman	FCOI Karen Pilcher
FCOI Alisalyn Davis	FCOI Dawn Ramsey
FCOI John Elliott	FCOI Etta Royster
FCOI Monica Graham	FCOI Derrick Schafer
FCOI John Green	FCOI Emily Simmons
FCOI Viletra Harrison	FCOI Dan Smith
FCOI Kathy Hudson	FCOI Stephen St. John
FCOI Unique LaCoure	FCOI Denise Wheeler
FCOI Aqueelah McCray	FCOI Brian Williams
	FCOI Bruce Willis

Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division Information and Technology

Although this division is most often recognized as the Emergency Communications Center, a large part of what we do is associated with our Information and Technology Unit. In 2013, this unit processed over 600 requests for service. On a day-to-day basis, the members of this unit manage the data issues, hardware and software, within the Shreveport Fire Department.



Danny Alexander



Harrietta Parker

Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division Administration

In addition to routine administrative support for forty-seven employees, the Administration section of this division is also responsible for radio and telephone support for the Shreveport Fire Department and accreditation.



Valerie deVries



Ashley Wiggins

Caddo Parish Communications District Number One Staff

On April 5, 1986, the voters of Caddo Parish approved the assessment of a telephone surcharge to fund the development, implementation and operation of an enhanced emergency telephone reporting system, 9-1-1. The Caddo Parish Communications District was created by Parish Ordinance and allowed for the creation of an appointed seven member citizen board to establish policies and to provide oversight to the 9-1-1 staff. The proceeds from the telephone surcharge fees are used to fund: the emergency telephone system/network; emergency communications equipment and equipment maintenance; employee training; eight 9-1-1 administrative staff positions; a communications facility to house all of the agencies' communications officers, who answer 9-1-1 calls and dispatch emergency services personnel; and building/grounds maintenance. The District has held firm to its commitment to providing state-of-the-art equipment, systems, and facility in support of emergency response services.



Martha Carter
9-1-1 Administrator



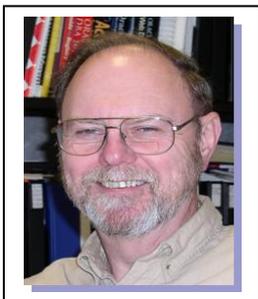
Judy



Richard



Beth Ann



Arthur



Huck



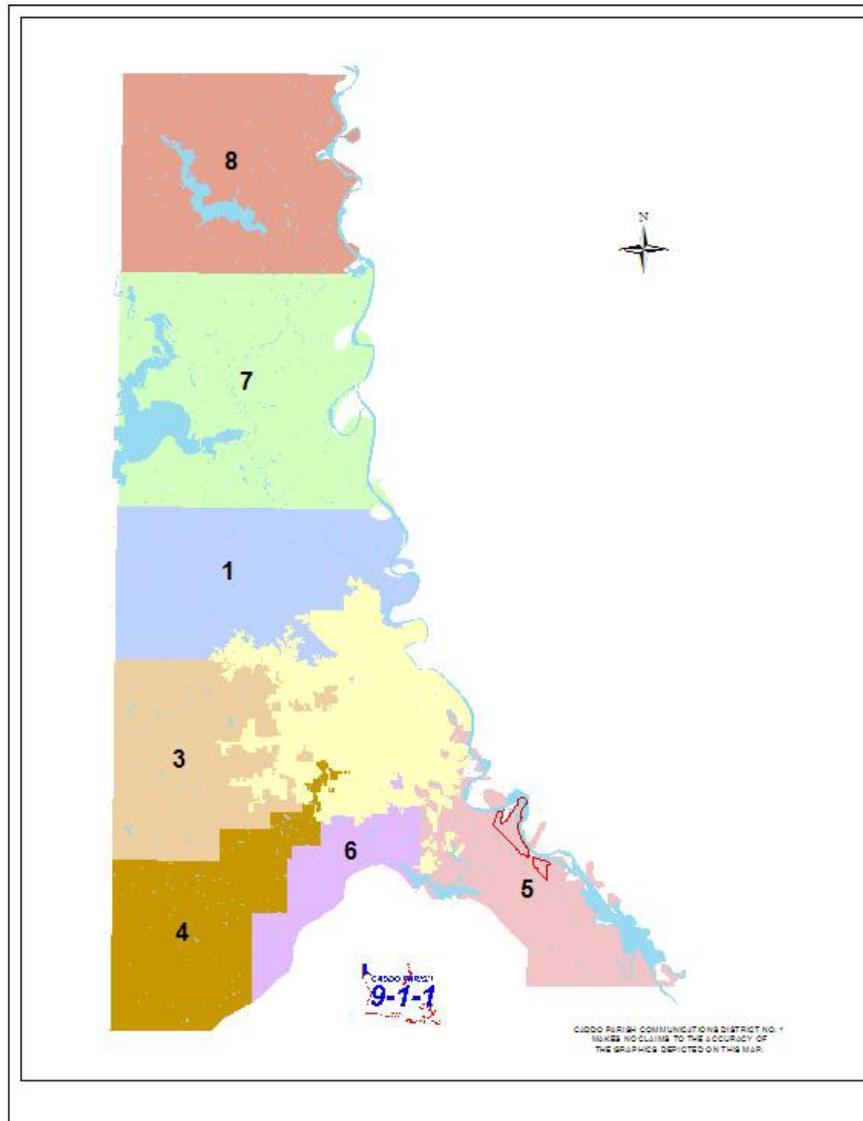
Wes



Nathan

Caddo Parish Fire Districts

Since the mid-1990's, the Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division has provided dispatch services for all of the Caddo Parish fire districts. Although each fire district has its own specific challenges, the chief officers have worked with the Communications Division on developing common standards and dispatch protocols to aid in providing the best possible service to our citizens and providing needed services to the fire districts. With the addition of automatic aid agreements and mobile data implementation, there have been many changes to the services Communications provides. Although not necessarily seen by the users, Fire Communications now provides all of the CAD database management for these districts.



Communications Division Committees

The Communications Division is dedicated to providing the best possible service to our customers and providing the best possible environment for our employees. Our members are asked, on a regular basis, to actively participate on committees, work groups, and tasks forces designed to meet long term and short term goals as well as the day-to-day tasks that need to be done. The primary functions: call taking, dispatching, and training, will never be compromised but during slow periods or times when staffing allows, our members are encouraged and expected to perform tasks other than the primary functions mentioned above.

Each year, members are asked to serve on one or more of these teams and each are given specific goals and objectives for the year. The types and make-up of these teams are evaluated on a regular basis as well as the established goals.

The 2013 Committees were as follows:

Training Task Force

This task force is necessary as a result of the vacancy in our assistant division chief position. Communications officers have local, federal, and APCO requirements for training and in addition, there are so many low frequency/high risk situations that communications officers may face, it is vital to our citizens that our communications officers are trained and routinely demonstrate their skills.

Task Force Leader: Tina Chambers

Members: Connie Alamond, Monica Cooper, Toni Johns, Aqueelah McCray, Dusty Moore, Veronica Rambo, Derrick Schafer

Quality Assurance

This team was established as a peer-driven program to evaluate the performance of our calltakers and dispatchers. Their goal was to ensure that all members performed to nationally recognized call center standards. This program proved quite effective.

Co-QA Managers: Tina Chambers, Veronica Rambo

Members: Connie Alamond, Michelle Bradley, Alisalyn Davis, Ray Mathews, Stephanie Phelan, Tammy Pierce, Karen Pilcher, Stephen St. John

Policy Committee

This committee is responsible for ensuring all division policies are reviewed annually. Recommendations for changes are discussed by the committee and if the majority approves, they are forwarded to the Chief of Communications for approval and implementation. This committee is also charged with developing new policies.

Committee Chair: Kim Tolliver

Members: Connie Alamond, Patricia Bradford, Terry Carter, Bruce Willis

Recruiting/Hiring

This committee is responsible for attending job fairs, distributing flyers, and creating media to recruit professional employees. When a selection process begins, this committee is responsible for processing applicants.

Committee Chair: John Elliott

Members: John Green, Veronica Rambo, Emily Simmons, Stephen St. John

Public Education

This committee is responsible for developing a public education program that includes facility tours, *The Communicator* newsletter, a citizen survey and any other program that will enhance the knowledge of the public and other divisions.

Committee Chair: Marlo Francis

Members: Connie Alamond, John Elliott, John Green, Kathy Hudson, Aqueelah McCray, Dusty Moore

Employee Recognition

This committee is responsible for developing criteria and rewards for employee performance.

Committee Chair: Toni Johns

Members: LeKeisha Berry, John Elliott, Unique LaCoure, Aqueelah McCray, Karen Pilcher, Dan Smith

CAD/Technology

Members receive training in CAD database management and are involved in updates. This committee also researches new equipment or upgrades.

Committee Chair: Derrick Schafer

Members: Danny Alexander, Violet Anderson, John Elliott, Lane Owens, Harrietta Parker, Tammy Pierce, Veronica Rambo, Stephen St. John, Kim Tolliver, Ashley Wiggins

Work Groups / Division Representation

Strategic Planning Team Member: Brian Williams

Peer Fitness Coordinator: Aqueelah McCray

EMD Work Group: Connie Alamond, Angela Boyter, Lane Owens, Stephanie Phelan, Kim Tolliver

Personnel Awards/Special Recognition/Accomplishments

Lifesaver Awards: Terry Carter, Vicki Carter, Tina Chambers, John Elliott, Lane Owens, Dan Smith, Denise Wheeler, Bruce Willis

STEMI Recognition: Lekeisha Berry (2), Angela Boyter, Michelle Bradley, Terry Carter, Vicki Carter, Alisalyn Davis (2), John Elliott, Kathy Hudson (3), Toni Johns, Unique LaCoure, Ray Mathews, Cissy McKinzy (3), Lane Owens, Stephanie Phelan, Karen Pilcher (2), Dawn Ramsey Derrick Schafer (3), Stephen St. John, Roxanna Taylor, Kim Tolliver, Brian Williams, Bruce Willis (2)

LSUHS Evening of Heroes Recognition: Ray Mathews

Perfect Attendance (Individual): Danny Alexander, LeKeisha Berry, Michelle Bradley, Terry Carter, Sharon Clark, Unique LaCoure LaTonya McKinney, Dusty Moore, Harrietta Parker, Karen Pilcher, Veronica Rambo and Bruce Willis

Perfect Attendance (Shift): Shift 1 – February and December; Shift 4 - May

Service: FCOI Sabrina Parker has served our country through active duty in the National Guard since 2010.

Outside Committees/Work Groups: Kathy Rushworth- Chair of APCO International's Member Chapter Services Committee; Member of NENA Violet Anderson - President Louisiana APCO; Member USAR Louisiana Task Force 3; Member SFD/IAFF Human Relations Committee; Member Shreveport Fire Department Policy Committee; Member of NENA; Danny Alexander – Member USAR Louisiana Task Force 3

Seminar / Conference Attendees: APCO International Annual Conference – Kathy Rushworth, Aqueelah McCray; Louisiana APCO meetings and symposium – Violet Anderson; Intergraph: Harrietta Parker; Communications Training Officer – Connie Almond, Terry Carter, John Elliott, Emily Simmons; City of Shreveport Leadership Academy – Ashley Wiggins; Diversity Training – All personnel; Ethics – All personnel

Major Accomplishments

Conducted a selection process and hired two new fire communications officers.

Created an opportunity for succession planning with the temporary assignment of a substitute Assistant Chief of Communications.

Improved call processing times without compromising accuracy.

Facility Renovations – The Caddo Parish Communications District finished major renovations to the communications center and included added space for both the IT Section and Administration. New console equipment was also installed in the operations area.

Training – All members of the division completed mandatory diversity training and ethics training. One member of the division attended the City of Shreveport's Leadership Academy. Two members attended the International APCO conference and one attended the Louisiana APCO symposium. Four additional personnel were certified as Communications Training Officers. Updated the FCOI new hire training program .

Information/Technology and Communications Equipment – Eighteen new desktop computers and two laptops were purchased for the department. The FireMail internal email system, FireRMS reporting system and mobile data computer software were all upgraded department-wide. Purchased eighteen headsets used on fire engines and battalion chief vehicles to enhance communications. Installed a phone system for Fire Prevention/Investigations.

Willis T. Carter Fire Communications Officer of the Year**Fire Communications Officer I Bruce Willis**

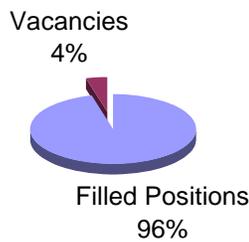
Fire Communications Officer Bruce Willis was awarded the Willis T. Carter Fire Communications Officer of the Year for 2013. FCOI Willis was selected for his participation in division activities, numerous commendations, maintaining an above average quality assurance score and little unexpected absences. FCOI Willis has served on a number of division committees and this past year was a member of the Policy Review Committee. FCOI Willis was also recognized because he is the type of person that you want to work with every day. He is dependable, volunteers to work overtime, comes to work when scheduled and does his job well. Congratulations Bruce on a job well done!

Statistical Information-Human Resources

Staffing/Vacancies

During 2013, one communications officer retired and two Fire Communication Officer Recruits were hired. The two recruits were hired in November and are projected to be working independently by summer 2014. The division ended the year with two vacant positions, one Fire Communications Officer I, and one Assistant Chief of Communications / Training. One Fire Communications Officer served active duty military throughout 2013.

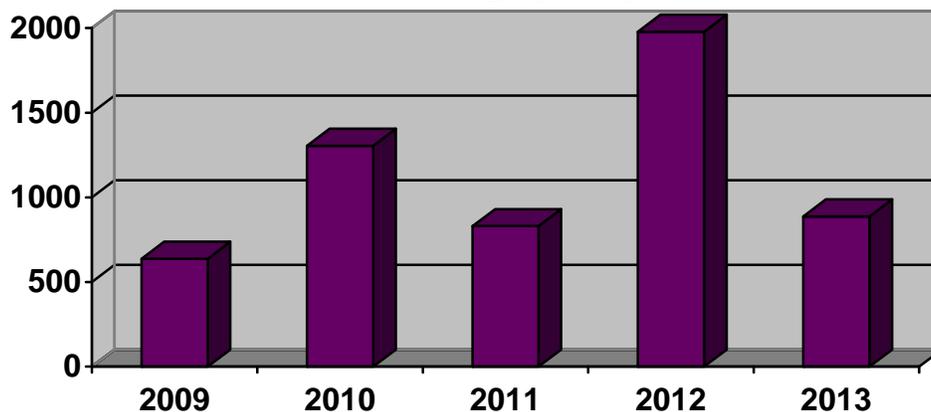
Filled Positions vs. Vacant Positions



Staffing/Overtime

Communications Division supervisors are supported by clearly defined minimum staffing guides. The staffing plan is not intended to cover every circumstance that may arise, and supervisors are still required to use a certain amount of objective reasoning to ensure that adequate staff will be available to handle call volume activity. The staffing plan also serves to identify specific job functions and prescribes specific console assignments in order to ensure that adequate staff is available at all times. Total overtime worked was 887 hours of which 695 overtime hours were used to cover minimum staffing. Minimum staffing plans were altered in 2008 and due to budgetary constraints have remained one below optimal staffing.

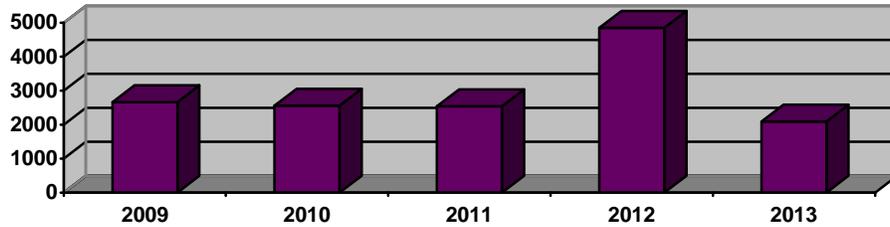
Overtime Usage (hours)-Total



Staffing/Sick Leave

The division had a total of 2097 hours of sick leave usage and twelve (12) employees achieved perfect attendance during 2013. There were no requests for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act.

Operations Section - Sick Leave Usage (hours)

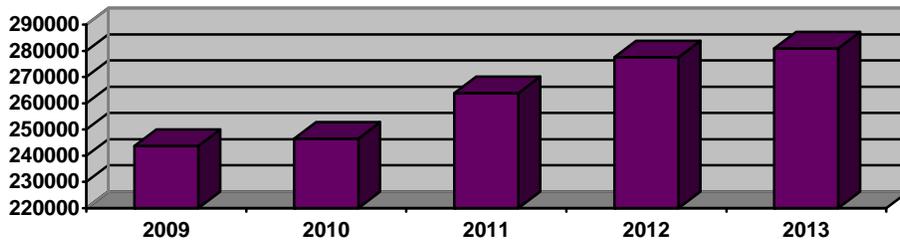


Statistical Information-Workload Indicators

9-1-1 Call Volume

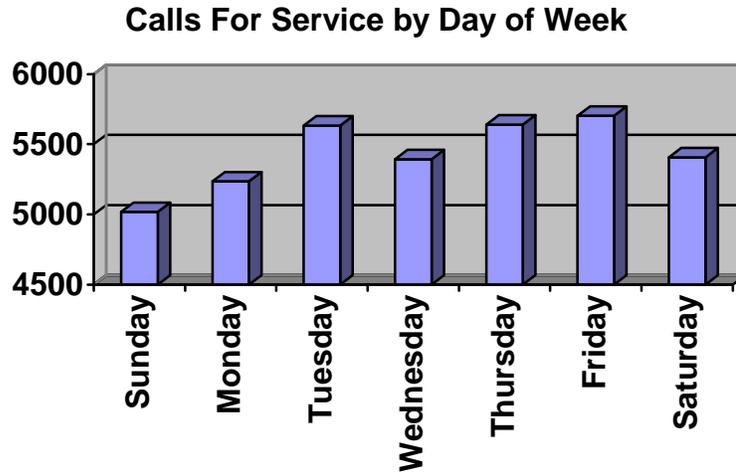
Fire Communications Officers answered 280,915 9-1-1 calls during 2013.

Total 9-1-1 Calls Processed

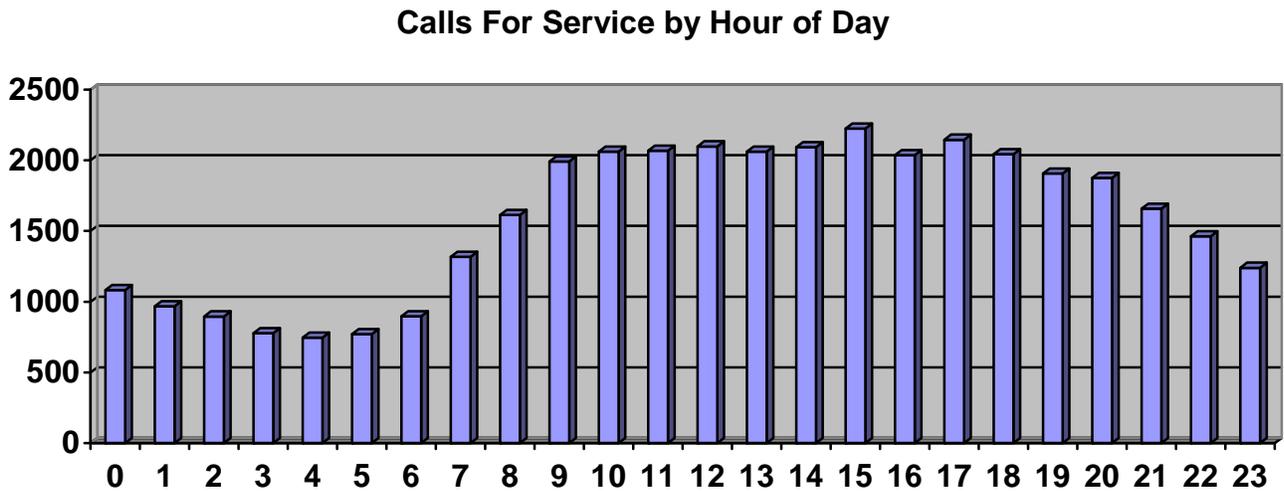


Calls for Service Volume by Day of Week and Time of Day

Our largest call volumes occurred on Thursday and Fridays with Sundays being the smallest call volume.



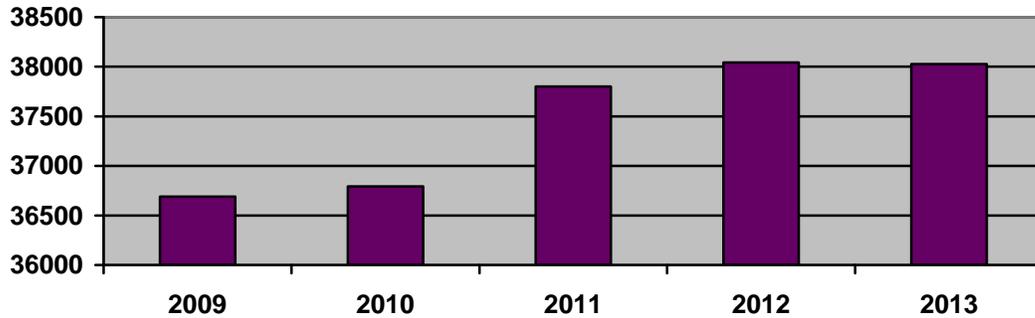
As you can see from the graph below, our call volume decreases in the early morning hours but begins to increase by mid-morning through the early evening hours.



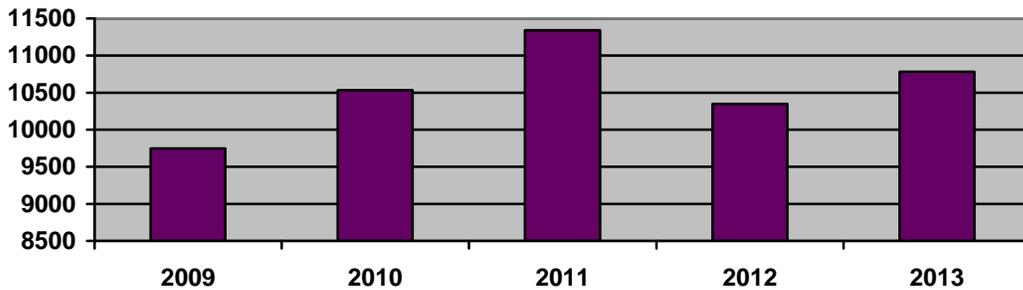
Events Dispatched

Communications officers also dispatched **38,027** events for the Shreveport Fire Department, of which **80%** were EMS. For the Caddo Fire Districts and North Caddo Medical Center, **10,782** events were dispatched. Communications Officers also created **9,478** events for Shreveport Police and **1,695** for Caddo Sheriff's Office.

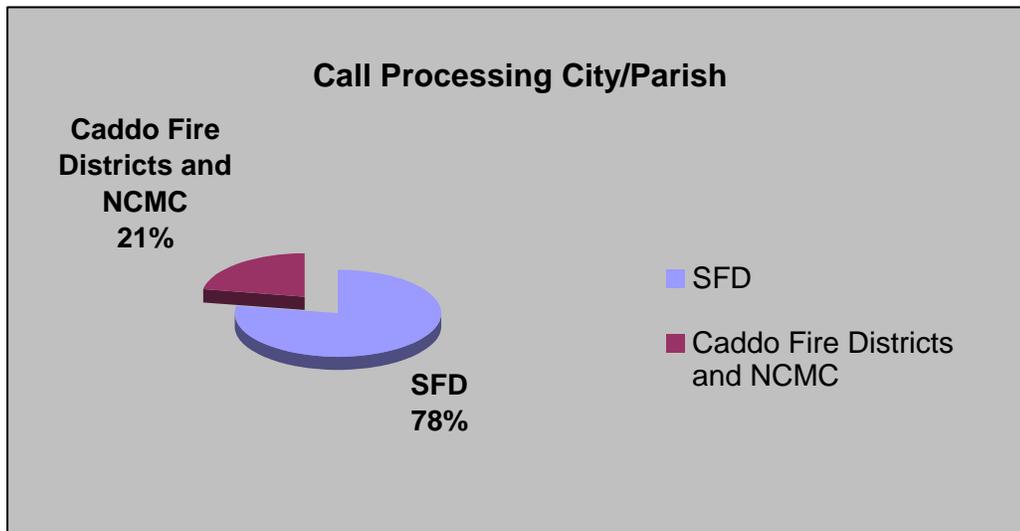
Events Dispatched (City)



Events Dispatched (Parish)



The chart below shows the percentage of calls processed for the Shreveport Fire Department compared to the seven Caddo Fire Districts and one Caddo Ambulance District.



Statistical Information-Performance Standards

For years, the Communications Division has used the standards set in NFPA 1221 to measure our performance. These standards underwent a major revision in 2013 and we are still working on meeting each of these revised standards. The 2013 overall average call processing time from call receipt until dispatch was 53 seconds, a decrease of 14 seconds from 2012. Our performance is reviewed and analyzed monthly to ensure compliance. The following is a list of the standards and our overall average for the year.

NFPA Standard	Actual Percentages
A. Ninety-five percent of alarms received on emergency lines shall be answered within 15 seconds , and 99 percent shall be answered within 40 seconds	99% <i>answered within 15 seconds</i>
B. Eighty percent of emergency alarm processing for Fire type calls shall be completed within 60 seconds and 95 percent of alarm processing shall be completed within 106 seconds .	75% <i>processed in 60 seconds</i> 96% <i>processed in 106 seconds</i>
C. Emergency alarm processing for the following call types shall be completed within 90 seconds 90 percent of the time and within 120 seconds 99 percent of the time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Calls requiring emergency medical dispatch questioning and pre-arrival instruction ii. Calls requiring language translation iii. Calls requiring the use of TTY/TDD device or audio/video relay services iv. Calls of criminal activity that require information vital to emergency responder safety prior to dispatching units v. Hazardous material incidents vi. Technical rescue 	92% <i>processed in 90 seconds</i> 98% <i>processed in 120 seconds</i>

Statistical Information-Risk Management Initiatives

Risk Management is a broad and multi-faceted process, which involves among other things, training, quality assurance, employee grievances, complaint reviews, policy reviews and maintaining accreditation.

Policy Reviews: Shreveport Fire Department Administrative Procedures and Standard Operating Procedures, along with Communications Division Directives are reviewed annually. Members of the division reviewed 88 Communications Directives, of which 18 were revised.

Employee Grievances: Fire Communications Officers are encouraged through policy to make management aware of any instance when they feel they have been aggrieved. The Shreveport Fire Department grievance procedure assures that the employee receives resolution to any condition for which they feel they have been treated unfairly. There were no grievances filed in 2013.

Training: The Fire Communications Division puts significant emphasis on training activity. New hires are required to successfully complete the Dispatch Academy receiving over 840 hours of training. All communications officers are mandated to have TDD training every 6 months, and CPR and Emergency Medical Dispatch certifications are renewed every 2 years. Training is conducted every single day in the form of 6 minute training topics and monthly with professional development training. Communications Officers also receive annual training on disaster operations. In 2013, communications officers received over 1,950 hours of training.

Quality Assurance: A good quality assurance program is necessary to improve efficiency and performance skills. A minimum of 5 calls from each call taker are reviewed each quarter and evaluated by members of the Quality Assurance Team. Calls that do not achieve 100% compliance are sent to the call taker for further review. For the year 2013 the average QA score for ALL call takers fell into the above average and the overall average for the division was above average.

Action Event Reviews (AER) / Other Agency Complaints

The Shreveport Fire Department's Action / Event Review System is utilized as a means for the Fire Communications Division to solicit questions and comments on its activity. Any officer may initiate this review which will trigger a full investigation by the Fire Communications management staff. Following a full review, a written report is provided to the individual requesting the review with copies provided to each level of the chain of command.

All requests for reviews are analyzed for potential trends, policy revisions or any corrective actions that may be necessary. Sustained complaints that are determined to be caused by employee performance are handled with the appropriate level of disciplinary action. Any performance that requires further investigation is referred to the Fire Chief who makes the determination if an internal affairs review is necessary.

In 2013, twenty-one (21) Action/Event Reviews were conducted and are categorized below:

Complaint Description	Total	Unfounded	Sustained	Findings of Sustained Complaints			
				Training Issue	Employee Performance	Equip	Other
Dispatched Incorrect Unit/Agency	3	2	3		3		
Dispatched to Incorrect Address	5		5		4	1	
Delayed Dispatch	1	4	1		1		
Improper Notification	1		1	1			
Unprofessional	2	3	2		2		
TOTALS	12	9	12	1	10	1	

Citizen Complaints

Complaints or concerns from the citizens or visitors to Caddo Parish are taken very seriously by Communications Center Management Staff. Each complaint received is documented. The citizen is provided with updates throughout the process and a written response to the citizen defines the findings of the investigation. Two (2) citizen complaints were received in 2013. The results of these complaints are listed below:

Complaint Description	Total	Unfounded	Sustained	Findings of Sustained Complaints			
				Training Issue	Employee Performance	Equip	Other
Delayed Dispatch							
Failure to Dispatch							
Rudeness / Unprofessional	2	2					
TOTALS	2	2					