

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BLAND COUNTY PROCLAIMS APRIL 12 THROUGH 18, 2015 NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

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(The County of Bland, Virginia) – April 12th through 18th is designated National Telecommunicators Week in the County of Bland. The Bland County 911 center is operated 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. The center's 6 Public Safety Dispatchers (PSDs) handle over 7,000 emergency 911 and non-emergency telephone calls each year. They dispatch and coordinate the county's sheriff's department, fire units, rescue squad, and emergency services.

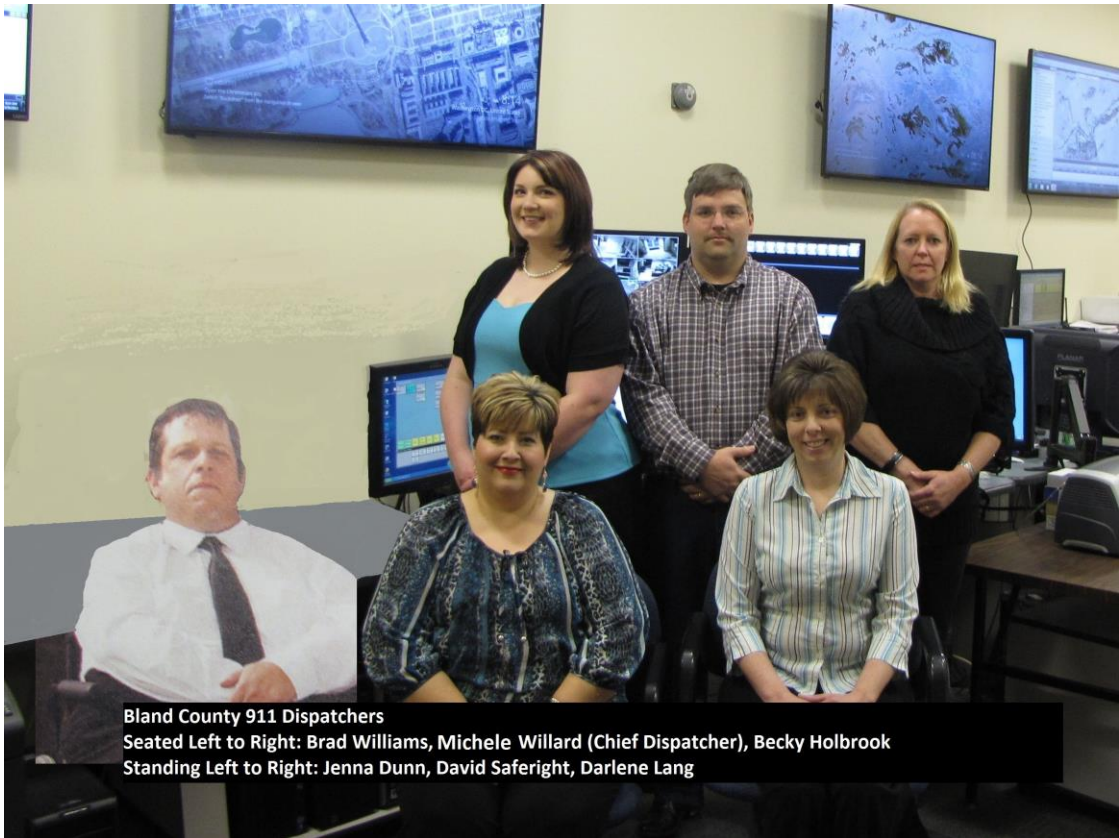
“The public commitment of telecommunicators is an unseen service. We are proud of the dedication and assurance to public safety of the Bland County 911 dispatchers”, states Karen Hodock, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. “Whenever citizens are in emergency need, it is important to have a trained and dedicated individual on the other end of that 911 call.”

The Bland County 911 Center underwent a significant upgrade to its mapping and addressing capabilities in 2015 with \$130,000 in grant assistance from Virginia Information Technologies Agencies (VITA) Public Agency Answering Point (PSAP) grant. The grant funds provided much needed improvements to the software and hardware in the 911 center. “The improvements in the center assist the dispatchers in improving the quality of 911 communications, thus improving the safety and well-being of citizens and visitors of the County of Bland,” stated Michele Willard, Chief Dispatcher.

National Telecommunicators Week was first conceived by Patricia Anderson of the Contra Costa County California Sheriff's Office in 1981 and was observed only at that agency for three years. Members of the Virginia and North Carolina chapters of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) became involved in the mid-1980s. By the early 1990s, the national APCO organization convinced Congress of the need for a formal proclamation. Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) introduced what became H.J. Res. 284 to create "National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week." According to Congressional procedure, it was introduced twice more in 1993 and 1994, and then became permanent, without the need for yearly introduction. The official name of the week when originally introduced in Congress in 1991 was "National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week."

---(<http://www.911dispatch.com/info/ntw/>)

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