

# E9-1-1 Institute Honor Awards 2008 Winners

## Citizen in Action Award Tony Sharpe

This year's Citizen in Action Award goes to a remarkable young man from North Pole, Alaska. Four year old Tony Sharpe was home alone with his mother when she collapsed and lost consciousness during a gall bladder attack. Seeing that his mother was incapacitated and in need of help, Tony picked up the phone and called 9-1-1. He said: "Mommy is sick. Mommy needs an ambulance. Mommy fell over. She is sleeping." Tony was able to describe the apartment building where he lived to the North Star Volunteer Fire Department who received the 9-1-1 call. Firefighters arrived soon thereafter to provide first aide to Tony's mother, Courtenay, essentially saving her life.



Tony learned how to call 9-1-1 from a book his grandmother (Deidre Savarino) gave him called [It's Time to Call 9-1-1: What to do in an Emergency](#). Tony's story reminds us all of the critical importance of 9-1-1 education. Parents, grandparents, and teachers should not underestimate the critical role even a 4-year old can play in saving a life. As we see in the

case of Tony Sharpe, teaching a child about 9-1-1 could save someone else's life.

Tony has received many honors and awards for his quick thinking, including a appearances on national television, a T-shirt, and a ride on a fire engine. We hope that the award we are giving Tony tonight means something to him, but we will understand if his favorite award is still the 8-month Labrador puppy his parents gave him for his heroism.

## **Industry Leader Award Kevin Murray**

The Industry Professional Award honors an individual or organization in the commercial sector that has demonstrated exceptional contributions towards the advancement of emergency 9-1-1 communications. This year's



award winner is certainly no exception.

Kevin Murray has 23 years of experience working with Public Safety Communications Systems. As a Senior Vice President for L. Robert Kimball and Associates, a firm dedicated to planning and

implementing emergency communications systems throughout the country, Mr. Murray has become widely recognized as an industry leader and is active with NENA, NASNA, and APCO. His work has gained him the deep

respect of the public safety community. Mr. Murray has also become a highly positive force to help public safety advance emergency communications policy issues.

Mr. Murray has led the development and implementation of numerous local and regional Enhanced 9-1-1 voice and data networks since 1980. He has also played significant roles in the development of NASNA's Model State 9-1-1 Plan as well as in the design and delivery of IP-enabled networks for 9-1-1 and emergency services. According to one of his colleagues, "what sets Murray apart is an ability to channel his vision into good, sound business decisions...to advance and improve 9-1-1 service for the benefit of the public."

## **State Government Leader Becky Berger**

The Local Government Leader Award recognizes the individual who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to advance the capabilities of 9-1-1 emergency communications at the state or local government level. This year, we are honoring Becky Berger, 9-1-1 Program Manager for the State of Montana.

Ms. Berger manages a small office which bears large responsibilities. She and her staff serve as the 9-1-1 Program Office



for the State of Montana – the fourth largest state in the Union geographically speaking. There are 57 public safety answering points (PSAPs) covering a population of about one million people spread out over a land mass of about 147,000 square miles. Montana PSAPs and the wireless carriers serving the state face some of the most significant challenges to implement Enhanced 9-1-1. Ms. Berger and her team have worked diligently to secure funding to upgrade PSAPs and work effectively with the wireless providers to upgrade all but 9 PSAPs in the State.

Becky Berger has been in the center a highly successful effort over the past few years to implement E9-1-1 in one of the most rural settings in the country.

## **Call Taker/Dispatcher Award Patricia Michaels**

The Call Taker/Dispatcher Award honors the “First Responders”—the 9-1-1 call-takers and dispatchers who are on the front line every day. This



year we are honoring a 22-year veteran from St. Clair County, Illinois who is known for the drive and determination she brings to her work.

Patricia Michaels received a frantic 9-1-1 call at 4:43 am on March 29, 2007. The call was from a VoIP (voice over Internet protocol) phone

from a woman who was being assaulted by her husband armed with a scissors. Although the ALI (“alley”) information on the call suggested that the call was coming from O’Fallon, Illinois, Patricia was able to determine, from interviewing the caller in the midst of this crisis, that the call was actually coming from Seoul, Korea. It turned out that the abused woman was making the 9-1-1 call over a computer from an apartment near a U.S. military facility. There was an 18-month old child in the home and the woman was trying to call for help in secret out of fear. Imagine the situation of the caller, desperate for help and in fear of her life, and her fate is in the hands of a call-taker half-way around the world.

Fortunately for the caller, that call-taker was the skilled and persistent professional of Patricia Michaels. Ms. Michaels quickly conferenced in a secondary PSAP in St. Clair County, Illinois which is Scott Air Force Base. The Air Force Base was able to help identify the Army base from which the call was coming from. The caller and her family had been placed in off-base apartment housing only 2 days prior to the 9-1-1 call. Thus, the caller was not very familiar with her surroundings and the fact that she was located off the military base, meant that the South Korean National Police needed to be engaged.

Patricia Michaels managed to coordinate a dizzying array of military and South Korean police personnel to respond to this serious domestic disturbance from her post in St. Clair County, Illinois to get assistance to an abused woman half-way around the world. Patricia demonstrated great skill and dedication to assist someone in a circumstance where others may have

given up. But, Patricia put her years of experience and dedication to work when the occasion required a remarkable effort.

## **9-1-1 Technician Award William Boyd**

The 9-1-1 Technician Award is a new award category this year. The purpose of this award is to honor the quiet leaders whose work is largely behind-the-scenes, yet essential to make 9-1-1 voice and data networks reliable and effective.

Without their work, the calls would simply not go through.

William Boyd is being recognized for his extraordinary work to develop the State of Washington's advanced 9-1-1 infrastructure and preparing the state for



implementation of the next generation 9-1-1 platform. Washington's network is one of the most advanced in the Nation and this is due, in large part, to the work of Mr. Boyd.

Mr. Boyd skillfully facilitated government and industry coordination, defining tactical development and strategic plans for 9-1-1. He is credited with saving the state taxpayers more than \$1.5 million a year in database charges. His colleagues applaud his leadership skills, collaborative style, and technical expertise.

## **Outstanding Call Center Award Minneapolis Call Center, Minneapolis Minnesota**

The Outstanding Call Center Award recognizes a state, regional or local 9-1-1 program for its excellence in key emergency communications areas ranging from the handling of emergency situations reported to 9-1-1 to



the deployment and management of new technology. This year, we honor the Minneapolis Emergency Communications Center for their heroic response to one of the most serious bridge collapses in the Nation's history.

On August 1, 2007, the Interstate 35W Bridge spanning the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota collapsed, sending dozens of vehicles into the river and resulting in 13 deaths and 86 injuries. This catastrophe on a major transportation artery during the afternoon rush hour tripled the normal 9-1-1 call load on the Communications Center with many of the calls coming from victims and witnesses on the scene. The rapid and effective response to this serious emergency has been widely heralded as a model response – this is due in no small part to the role played by the team on hand at the Minneapolis Emergency Communications Center on that day.

The disaster tested the new computer-aided-dispatch system, which features a new GPS-supported automatic vehicle location system,

implemented by the Communications Center less than 6 months prior to this event. The system and the team proved worthy of handling the dramatic spike in calls caused by this major crisis. In addition, the new CAD system allowed the responders to view extensive details of the dispatch prior to arriving at the scene, which greatly enhanced the efficiency of the rescue effort. The combination of wise technology adoption, professional training, and dedicated individuals and leaders allowed the Minneapolis Emergency Communications Center to rise to the occasion when one of the largest transportation catastrophes in U.S. history struck their community.

## **Federal Leader Award Laurie Flaherty**

The Federal Leader Award recognizes extraordinary leadership to advance the capabilities of 9-1-1 emergency communications at the federal level. This year, we are recognizing Laurie Flaherty with the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Laurie is an emergency room nurse with 20 years of clinical experience. She brings her health care background to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration where she manages the Next Generation



9-1-1 Initiative for the Office of Emergency Medical Services. Laurie is

widely recognized throughout the public safety community and telecommunications industry as one of the key leaders in the Federal government on 9-1-1 issues.

The public safety community has enjoyed Ms. Flaherty's leadership on the USDOT Wireless E9-1-1 Project and implementation of the ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004. Many of us in this room know very well that the Next Generation 9-1-1 system of the future is going to reflect the dedicated work of Ms. Flaherty. Because of her leadership and engagement in this critically important effort, we know that the future of 9-1-1 is in good hands.

Her life and service embody the best of public service. Please join us in honoring Laurie Flaherty as this year's Federal Leader Award recipient.

## **First Responder Award Glenn J. Winuk**

The First Responder Award recognizes an outstanding individual that



is called upon during a 9-1-1 emergency— first responders are members of Law Enforcement, Fire Rescue or are Emergency Medical Service providers. Their professionalism, initiative, creativity, bravery and diligence in assisting those in need often play a part in whether lives are saved or lost. This

year, we are honoring a remarkable individual who gave his life assisting

victims of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the World Trade Center in New York City.

For more than 19 years Glenn Winuk was a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician in his hometown of Jericho, New York. He was also a partner at the law firm of Holland & Knight in New York City. Glenn was at his law office located just a few blocks from the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center when terrorists attacked there on September 11, 2001. He died in the rescue effort when the South Tower collapsed.

Glenn Winuk was not a typical lawyer working in downtown Manhattan. He was a highly trained public safety officer, specially certified in building collapse rescue training and for numerous other hazards. Glenn was always quick to aid someone in danger. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, he ran from his evacuated office building to Ground Zero moments after the attack to help the victims as others fled for safety. Because of his close proximity to the World Trade Center, he was likely one of the first public safety officers on the scene.

In 1993, Glenn did the very same thing when terrorists set off a bomb in the basement of the World Trade Center – he ran *toward* danger to help those in need. This time, however, he would join the other fallen heroes who gave their lives to help save others.

Being a volunteer firefighter and EMT who doubled as a lawyer, Glenn's honor became clouded in an unfortunate and lengthy legal battle with the federal government as to whether or not he was covered under a

**federal compensation program designed to honor fallen emergency workers and assist the families of public safety officers killed in the line of duty. The U.S. Justice Department argued with Glenn's family over a technicality about his status as a member of the Jericho Fire Department at the time of his death. Glenn's fire department, and many other officials, including the New York State legislature and NY Governor George Pataki, on several occasions certified Glenn as a line of duty death. Finally, following a June 2007 federal court judge ruled overwhelmingly in Glenn's favor, the U.S. Department of Justice dropped all further appeals this past January. Glenn is now formally recognized by the United States as a first responder who died in the line of duty and qualifies as such under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act.**

**Glenn's service is certainly no less heroic or deserving than any other first responder. Indeed, his service is even more admirable in light of the fact that he was not on duty – he was a trained volunteer who chose to respond when help was needed. He was not the kind of person who waited for an assignment to provide help.**

**We are honored and grateful for the opportunity to grant a posthumous First Responder Award to Glenn Winuk to be received by his brother Jay Winuk, who led the family's battle against the Department of Justice for Glenn's honor. By honoring Glenn Winuk, we are not only recalling his individual heroism and sacrifice, but we also honor all the first responders and volunteers who have had to fight for health care and pension benefits, and struggle to receive recognition for their service to their country on September 11<sup>th</sup>.**