

APCO

MEMBER CHAPTER SERVICES Committee

Good Bye 2020...

*Happy New
Year!*

Inside This Issue

Hosting a Virtual Conference	2
Silent Key	4
MCSC Tool Kit	4
Membership Information.....	5
Health & Wellness Committee.....	6
Commercial Corner (CAC)	7
NC Conference	8
WRC 2021	8
APCO Announcements.....	9
MCSC Members	10

Hosting a Successful “Virtual” Conference

By John W. Wright, 79th President of APCO International

With the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic early this year, many local and regional conferences had to be delayed or cancelled all together. These events are often the main source of income for APCO Chapters besides APCO dues and their loss could result in a very negative impact to a Chapter’s operations.

The Northern California and Southern California (CPRA) Chapters of APCO traditionally hold Annual Vendor Expo events as chapter fundraisers. These individual chapter annual events, until this year, were held at a local venue with in-person product displays and presentations. With the sudden impact of state and national mandates for social distancing and restrictions on large gatherings, in-person chapter meetings were moved to “virtual” meetings using Zoom.

The Challenge of a Virtual Conference

The two chapters held a joint Zoom meeting to discuss a solution to the loss of the annual vendor events. As a result, the chapters agreed to join together as “California APCO” and develop a 2-day Virtual Public Safety Training and Vendor Expo event using Zoom as the platform.

The challenges to a virtual event were: how to have attendees pre-register for the event to provide a contact list; how to support multiple training tracks simultaneously; how to allow an attendee to see multiple presentations across multiple session tracks (allowing an attendee to roam between sessions); how to access the handout materials; how to create an interactive program guide; and how can donated door prizes be awarded?

The Solutions

As with any chapter event or conference, having dedicated volunteers is the key to success. The event was broken out into assigned tasks: (1) Zoom account management - creating a dedicated event Zoom account (monthly basis) and assigning Zoom “hosts”; (2) Program – soliciting and selecting program training and keynote sessions; (3) Exhibits – developing deliverables and exhibitor / event sponsor signup; (4) Program Guide – assigning training sessions, exhibitor sessions, keynotes, and creating the event “Program” as an interactive PDF document; (5) Promotions – advertising the event and promoting attendee and exhibitor participation.

The majority of the challenges were solvable using the Zoom platform.

To create multiple “tracks” (in this case 5 tracks) an event Zoom Pro account was created on a monthly basis and five (5) hosts were added. Zoom only allows one meeting at a time to be scheduled per Host, so having 5 registered Hosts allowed for five simultaneous all day Zoom meetings to be scheduled on the same dates. The Zoom account manager created the five meetings listing them as: “Auditorium”, “Classroom”, “Exhibit Hall A”, “Exhibit Hall B”, and “Meeting Room” as shown in the Program and assigned a registered “host” to each. A Zoom Pro account allows for 100 attendees per hosted meeting, but since it was anticipated that several hundred attendees could register for the event, additional 500 Attendees per Host were added to the account. Creating the Zoom account on a by the month basis allowed for the cancellation of the account upon closure of the event.

To have attendees pre-register for the event, the main zoom meeting (Auditorium) was setup in Zoom as a registration required meeting. Once registered, the attendees were then sent the full program with the individual Zoom meeting logins for all tracks. The attendee registration can be setup in Zoom to require Name, Agency or Company, Phone Number and Email that could be downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet by the Zoom Account Manager, thus creating a master attendee contact list.

The master event program was created using Microsoft Excel, and then printed to Adobe PDF. Using Adobe Professional to edit the created PDF Program allowed the insertion of embedded hyperlinks to provide a single click on an exhibitor's company logo to take the attendee directly to their website on the exhibitor's page. To allow an attendee to easily roam from one track or presentation to another can be done by embedding the Zoom direct meeting HTML link in the PDF program document for each presentation listed in the program. Using the Zoom direct HTML meeting link takes the attendee into the selected meeting directly without the need to enter a Zoom meeting ID or passcode. Attendees select a presentation in the PDF program and enter that meeting, when done, they leave the meeting and go back to the PDF program and select the next meeting or track they wish to attend.

Sharing of exhibitor literature, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc. during their presentation can be easily accomplished in the Zoom Chat feature. When the initial meetings (Tracks) are setup by the Zoom Account Manager, turn on the Chat feature and the File Transfer feature in Settings. This allows the presenter to post the desired documents into the Chat and attendees simply select "Download" under the posted document in Chat to download it to their computer. The "Share" Zoom feature should also be on in the Settings to allow the presenter to show their presentations.

During their presentations, several exhibitors used a Zoom background with company logos or had a camera setup with the presenter standing in their company's exhibit booth just as if attending a live exhibit hall booth at a conference.

Several exhibitors donated "Door Prizes" for the event – these were in the form of gift cards or logoed items. The exhibitors gave a list of their "donations" and were given the name and email of the "winner" after the door prize drawings were held. The prize donor then reached out to the winner to arrange sending their prize. A free software program "Wheel of Names" was used to select the winners. The virtual "Wheel" was populated with the names from the registered attendees Excel spreadsheet. Zoom Share was used to show the wheel and the name of the winner to the attendees live. All door prize drawings were done in the "Auditorium" meeting track during lunch breaks and the event closing session.

The Results

The full 2-day virtual event had 502 registered attendees, 40 exhibitors, 3 keynote presentations, 10 training sessions, and 5 program tracks. Sessions and exhibitor presentations were recorded by the individual meeting (track) hosts resulting in 63 presentation videos being uploaded to a dedicated event YouTube channel (open to all).

Corporate event sponsorships included 2 Diamond sponsors, 1 Platinum sponsor, 4 Gold sponsors, and 7 Silver sponsors.

Total expenses: \$350 for Zoom hosting fees

Note: Based on current Zoom fees, expenses would be the same for a 1 to 5 day event with the same 5 all day meeting tracks. Adding additional Zoom meeting hosts to the event account can add additional "tracks" to an event if more tracks are desired.

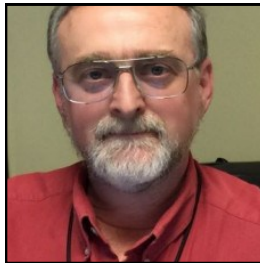
To see the event report, program and posted videos, visit the Southern California Chapter's (CPRA) website at www.cpra.org and follow the "2020 Training & Vendor Expo" link or the Northern California Chapter's website at www.napco.org and follow the "News" link.

John retired from the City of Riverside, California with 37 years of service. He has been a member of APCO for 30 years, served on the APCO International Executive Committee and was APCO International's 79th President in 2015. John currently serves as the Southern California Chapter's Treasurer and PIO and is Fellow with the Radio Club of America.

Silent Key



Peggy Roger Glaze
Georgia APCO, NENA



John Moyers
Tennessee APCO



Ian Thompson
British APCO

Chapter Officer Toolkit

APCO Membership Services have been working diligently to update the Chapter Officer Toolkit. The Toolkit is located in the Membership section on the APCO International Web Page. The Toolkit contains resources for chapters. This month we want to highlight a new resource for virtual conferences.

Under the Chapter Events Tab we have added the information from the Chapter Leader Workshop last month. The presentation given by Jennifer Kirkland of the Colorado Chapter, as well as the 2020 Colorado APCO/NENA Virtual Conference Guide have been posted. We thank the Colorado Chapter for being so willing to share their after action review.

The last resource in this category is the ability to send promotional items directly to your attendees. The Chapter can choose and personalize promotional items to be sent to each of their virtual attendees.

Have you had a virtual conference or event? We would love to share your experiences with other chapters. Share your information with your Member and Chapter Services Representative for publication.





Membership Information

Member Type	12/1/2019	12/1/2020
Associate Members	3,122	2,646
Full Members	4,979	4,658
Full Group Members	6,797	8,376
Online Group Members	19,501	19,391
Commercial Members	544	512
Commercial Group Members	299	233
Total Number of Members	35,232	35,816
Total Number of Group Agencies	1,176	1,292
Commercial Groups	56	46



APCO Membership Renewal

Your membership will expire on **December 31st**. Log into myapcointl.org, click on My Invoices, to print or pay your invoice.

Health and Wellness Committee

Reviving the First First Responder: A Renewed Focus on Telecommunicator Life Through Health & Wellness

Let's begin without controversy: A career in the 9-1-1 industry will wreak havoc on one's health. It is a trade secret, openly discussed on the dispatch floor, and offered as forewarning to prospective applicants who sit along in centers. Working forty-plus hours each week at odd, often changing times, surrounded by the blue light of monitors, practicing poor posture, subsisting on microwave meals, vending machine rations, or if it's payday and you're fortunate, takeout. Telecommunicators are known to survive on inconsistent sleep and short naps which often occur during daylight to the soundtrack of the neighbor's lawn mower or worse, roofers. The psychological and physiological health effects are prevalent and inevitable. The sentiment is widely understood when a coworker says *"I'm a totally different person than when I started"* or even, *"I'm dead inside"*. These outcomes are predictable and anticipated. Gordon Graham often reminds the industry, "If it's predictable it's preventable," yet our cycle continues utterly unprevented.

Lawmakers design government programs to address mental health, physical disability, and early retirement for first responders, but depending on PSAP location, these programs are often withheld from emergency dispatchers. As an industry, our intervention is mostly vague public service announcements regarding health and wellness. In the face of real financial constraints, agencies address health during onboarding, issue a general warning about health-impacts to new hires, and provide a list of third-party resources through Employee Assistance Programs as much for agency liability as for employee health which are available to employees in the likely event that warnings do not suffice.

New hires have all of the warnings, much of the current information, and none of the context. They also tend to have more workplace constraints than anyone else: frequent schedule changes with little time to adjust, limited experience eating and sleeping at odd hours, and no camaraderie or peer support. Tenured employees commiserate about poor health and frequently discuss new diets and exercise routines. Veterans of the industry, proven survivors, have developed many coping skills, but generally the worst tricks are the most contagious, and as is the case with drugs and alcohol sometimes the most addicting. When telecommunicators feel there is lack of support at work they often turn to the support of their families as a respite from the dispatch world. Few families, however, have been equipped with specific tools to help telecommunicators cope.

It is essential to understand that our collective shortfalls are systemic. Aristotle observed that which is common to many suffers common neglect (*Aristotle. Politics*, II.3, 1261b20). Like a traffic crash near jurisdictional boundaries, no one wants to take primary responsibility for telecommunicator health. Instead we have openly accepted our unhealthy culture. Poor health has become a source of unity and an industry tradition. It happens to all, is witnessed by all, and allowed by all.

The controversy lies in our collective inaction. Recognizing that addressing our telecommunicator wellness crisis is a shared need, APCO has created the Health and Wellness Committee. With representatives from across the public safety communications world including PSAPS of all sizes, line dispatchers, trainers, supervisors, managers, directors, technicians, and industry leaders, the Committee was founded to promote a positive change in health outcomes industry-wide.

We are working with experts in their fields – licensed counselors, psychologists, nutritionists, fitness trainers to create research-proven resources designed to equip and empower telecommunicators as they address an array of health needs. Our intended audience includes personnel from new hire to retiree, administration at all levels, and telecommunicator families. Our goal is to survey our research utilizing a

...Continued from Health & Wellness Committee

whole body approach.

Let us be clear though, the solution to better industry health is not a committee. The solution lies only in our collective action. It is our hope that the initiation of the Health & Wellness Committee will inspire government leaders and agency administrators to promote and prioritize the health and wellbeing of telecommunicators. In turn, we are optimistic that telecommunicators and their families will engage in and benefit from an effectual change in a drastically impacted culture.

By Noah Juarez
Editorial Division, Health & Wellness Committee

Commercial Corner

Let's face it; times are tough. Remember just a little over a year ago, we were starting to hear about a literal viral threat that was starting to spread around the world as if it were some evil plot line in a movie? Fast forward over the following months and we've seen unimaginable changes to the way we go about our daily lives with saddening numbers of losses and a seemingly endless string of financial calamity all leading to a collective spirit of not letting this thing beat us. Sure, we're beaten up, we're tired, cynicism is rampant, and yet, we fight on for ourselves, our families, our colleagues, and our communities.

Those in public service can write chapter and verse on how the pandemic has impacted their operations. From fallen comrades to reduced resources to working from home with kids suddenly home-schooling to loss of budgets; life in that sector has probably never been so challenging. Yet, *you* fight on.

And then there are those who support those answering the call of duty; the companies, the people, the vendors. Many have been fortunate to weather the financial uncertainty as projects are scaled back or pulled from the table. Some are not as fortunate and they go on to seek other opportunities. I've written about this before; Commercial Members and Corporate Sponsors are the life blood of APCO. They understand and are the experts in the business and operations of all aspects of public safety communications like no other; present company excluded. Many have lived it, most have learned it, all have answered their own call to support those who support their communities. With funding sparse, projects delayed, and extenuating circumstances affecting nearly all manner of work, *we* fight on.

Supporting the Commercial Member community is as important today as ever. As Commercial Members and Corporate Sponsors provide support to the Association in a myriad of ways, we ask that they be remembered by considering your business transactions with this important segment of the membership. (In addition, are you asking your vendors if they're APCO Commercial Members and inspiring them to join if they are not? At the Chapter level, many go by the adage "*Support those that support us*" and work to get that message to the Individual agencies the best they can. To help ensure healthy engagements for all; partner with and encourage Commercial Member involvement at local meetings and conferences, assist in brand/service awareness, and stress the value to the general membership (i.e. familiarization with operations, technology, personnel, etc.). Finally, Commercial Members have access to many of the same membership opportunities as well through higher levels of service with participation and leadership at events, on committees, attaining Senior/Life Member status, etc.

By: Ron Lyons
CAC Associate Member



Upcoming Conferences 2021

North Carolina State Conference & APCO WRC—Idaho



Registration is NOW Open!

Join us in Boise, Idaho March 31st-April 2nd, 2021.

We are busy planning excellent training tracks and events.

Do not miss out on the Early Bird Pricing! APCO Members see PSCONNECT for discount code. <https://www.2021apcowrc.org>

Special Room Rates \$137 will go fast:

[APCO Western Region Conference Block](#)

Call for Papers will be out shortly. Do know a great speaker? Send them our way.

Travel discounts also available on our website.

Questions? IdahoAPCOWRC@gmail.com



APCO Announcements

Scholarship Program Opens January 1

The Commercial Advisory Committee and Silent Key Scholarship Program will begin taking applications on January 1. Scholarship funds may be used for all APCO Institute courses, as well as the Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL) and Certified Public-Safety Executive (CPE) programs. Scholarships are available to Full and Associate APCO members. [Learn more.](#)

Awards Program Opens January 1

The PSAP Awards and Technology Leadership Awards open for submission on January 1. The PSAP Awards recognize public safety communications personnel who have demonstrated the highest levels of personal and professional conduct and performance in the line of duty. Categories include:

- Telecommunicator of the Year
- Communications Center Director of the Year
- Line Supervisor of the Year
- Trainer of the Year
- Team of the Year
- Radio Frequency Technologist of the Year
- Information Technologist of the Year

The Technology Leadership Awards recognize communications centers that use technological advancements to benefit their center, employees and customers. Examples of projects include but are not limited to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), radio, 9-1-1, public safety IT, broadband, electronic crime reporting, mapping and GPS to name a few. [Learn more.](#)

APCO Seeks Comments on New Standard

Beginning December 18, APCO will seek comments for the candidate American National Standards (ANS) Crisis Intervention Techniques and Call Handling Procedures for Public Safety Telecommunicators. This standard will identify training requirements for handling calls involving emotionally distressed individuals. The public may [review and comment](#) on this candidate standard from December 18, 2020, through February 1, 2021, on the APCO website.

Exhibit at APCO 2021

Spaces are still open to exhibit at APCO 2021, taking place August 15-18 in San Antonio, TX. APCO's Annual Conference & Expo is where the public safety industry goes to discover innovative solutions for NextGen 9-1-1, cybersecurity and much more. Exhibiting at APCO 2021 will connect you with decision makers across the industry. [Learn more](#) about exhibiting today – prices increase on January 1.

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