WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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APRIL 8-14 IS NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

Each year, the second full week of April is dedicated to the men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators. It 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 and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) became involved in the mid 1980's. By the 1990's, the national APCO organization convinced Congress of the need for a formal proclamation. Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) introduced what became H.J. Res. 284 to create "National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week." According to Congressional procedure, it was introduced twice more in 1993 and 1994, and then became permanent, without the need for yearly introduction.

"I have often said the most challenging job in our Sheriff's Office is that of dispatcher," said Sheriff Fred Newman. "It is often a thankless job and most citizens do not realize the work they do and the tremendous amount of stress and pressure that they are under. Our communications officers dispatch calls for our Sheriff's Office, three town police departments, as well as thirteen fire and rescue agencies. Last year they answered 134,982 calls, 52,811 of those being emergency 911 calls. I want to thank each dispatcher and their supervisors for the dedicated service they provide to our law enforcement, fire and rescue personnel, and to the general public."