



## GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY Administration/Board of Commissioners

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*Grand Traverse County provides mandated and necessary services that ensure safety and add value to our community.*

**\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\***

### **County Staff and Departments Receive Awards**

November 6, 2015

**Traverse City** – Two Grand Traverse County departments and employees recently were recognized for their outstanding service following the August 2, 2015 storm which devastated the region.

During the annual meeting of the Michigan Emergency Management Association in October, County Emergency Management Supervisor Gregg Bird received the association's "Emergency Management Coordinator of the Year" award for jurisdictions with a population of over 60,000.

"I am honored to accept this award on behalf of our entire emergency management team, which performed admirably and worked tirelessly in the aftermath of the storm," said Bird.

Bird also was nominated by his peers, invited to apply, and chosen along with 24 other individuals from around the nation to attend the National Emergency Management Advanced Academy, four intense, week-long critical thinking sessions held over 18 months' time. The County's Emergency Management Supervisor just completed the first session, held at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in late October. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) pays for attendees' tuition, and lodging is free.

"This was an incredible opportunity to learn from outstanding instructors," said Bird, "then bring back an advanced level of emergency management education to help contribute to the emergency preparedness of our community." Another benefit, said Bird, is the access he now has to a "collective brain trust" of the other academy participants. "Because of this shared experience," said Bird, "we stay connected, and can draw on each other's knowledge, skills, and best practices for years to come." Bird's time spent at the academy requires a final thesis, a project he intends to research and develop to specifically assist our community.

Employees of another County department, Grand Traverse 911, also received a prestigious state award for their outstanding collaborative efforts and teamwork during the August 2 storm.

Every year, the Michigan Chapter of Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Chapter solicits nominations for various communication awards, including “Telecommunicator of the Year,” “Director of the Year,” and “Public Safety Communications Team” award.

This year, dispatchers from Grand Traverse 911, and dispatchers from the counties of Leelanau; Benzie; Kalkaska; Antrim; and Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet (CCE), were nominated to receive the Public Safety Communications Team award. The award honors two or more individuals from the same public safety communications agency who worked on the same incident, event, or project. During the August 2 storm, 38 dispatchers from these counties collectively answered an estimated 2,500 911-calls, and dispatched nearly 1,700 events.

According to Jason Torrey, Deputy Director of Grand Traverse Central Dispatch/911, he and his team feel privileged to have been selected from the five nominated county teams to receive the award.

Torrey’s team members named for the award are: Dispatch Supervisor Leah Hornacek, Dispatch Supervisor Amy Jensen, Dispatch Supervisor Patrick Andresen, Dispatch Supervisor Jason Mayersky, Dispatcher James Domagalski, Dispatcher Tom Ramsey, Dispatcher Greg Lenon, and Dispatcher Joe Miller.

Torrey and two of the eight staff awardees traveled to Frankenmuth in late October to accept the award during the annual APCO Awards banquet.

“We are honored to be the recipient of this team award,” said Torrey, and I am proud of our team’s immediate and calm responses during the storm. They provided exceptional service in an unprecedented weather event.”

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