

# Annual Report

2009



**APCO International**

*Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials - International, Inc.*

## THE APCO MISSION

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO) is a member driven association of communications professionals that provides leadership; influences public safety communications decisions of government and industry; promotes professional development; and, fosters the development and use of technology for the benefit of the public.

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# WELCOME

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with a great sense of pride and accomplishment that I present the 2009 Annual Report. This document highlights our accomplishments for the year. This has been a very ambitious year for programs and activities, while working within the constraints of a fiscally conservative budget that is a reflection of the current economic climate, especially in the public sector. As in the past, we not only continued to build upon accomplishments of the past, but embarked on new initiatives of interest and benefit to our members and the public safety community at large.

As we develop our budget for the fiscal year, we consider how we continue to support our organizational mission, accomplish our strategic initiatives and provide benefits and support to our members. The details in this report are a reflection of the efforts that were undertaken to accomplish these objectives.

Our executive staff worked diligently to stay focused on insuring that our activities were in line with our objectives for the year and could be supported by our budget. Our financial status was consistently vetted with our Budget and Finance Committee and our cost and revenue projections adjusted accordingly. The Board of Officers was extremely busy, the staff spread very thin and our committees more active than ever before, and yet we continued to represent our members on a variety of fronts and provide the important benefits our members and the industry deserve.

I would like to thank you for your support of our initiatives during this past year and hope you will be pleased with our accomplishments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Fischer, President

# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present to you this annual report of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International for the years 2008-2009.

Year after year, this organization works to improve the quality and state of public safety communications through its many programs and initiatives. The activities outlined in this annual report illustrate how APCO International continued in this fashion. We were able to build upon its accomplishments and also move forward with creativity and purpose as we confronted new challenges.

APCO International held true to the program theme of Learn, Act, Connect, established in 2007, which was introduced as the means by which we position the primary components of the association's programs and services. Our training and professional development offerings – Learn – continue to be at the forefront of the field; our advocacy and regulatory leadership – Act – remains highly sought after by policy makers in Washington, DC and around the country; and our conferences, forums and summits – Connect – are consistently at the top of the field in attendance and value-added content.

We not only found success in aligning our activities with our guiding principles but APCO also aligned financially around learning, acting and connecting. We evolved our business models to address the needs of our members now and into the future. We invested in projects that will help members learn, act and connect in new ways and we built the financial foundation that will help us sustain programs in our core competencies for years to come.

APCO provides a valuable setting for development, discussion and debate in front of a nation-wide and international audience. It is a vital and vibrant component of the public safety communications industry. By working with the Board of Officers and various committees, APCO's members took great strides toward achieving the association's vision and mission.

Thank you for your participation during 2008 and 2009. I look forward to our continued partnership as we serve the nation and the international community. Working together, we can continue to make APCO International the best conduit for public safety communications professionals to learn, act and connect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. S. Rice", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

George S. Rice, Jr., Executive Director

When APCO members invest time in learning it helps them professionally, but it also helps the entire public safety system improve and benefits society as a whole. Through the APCO Institute, public safety personnel can take courses, both in-person and online, to improve in their jobs and gain accreditation. APCO also offers a wide array of self-paced learning opportunities through our publications. Professional development is at the core of APCO's mission and learning is the most important way our members grow professionally.

Everyday, the APCO Institute helps members of the public safety community get better at their jobs. As the official educational arm of APCO, the Institute is the only not-for-profit educational institute that serves the unique needs of the public safety communications industry. Between 2008 and 2009, the APCO Institute conducted over 150 courses both online and in person, teaching nearly 3,000 public safety communications students from across the United States. The Institute is able to offer instruction that is based on the real world experiences of instructors who have worked in public safety communications for years.

APCO Members LEARN and spread their knowledge  
of public safety communications globally.

# LEARN

Using its alignment with the membership of APCO, the Institute is able to respond to the most important issues facing public safety communications professionals with courses that address those issues.

APCO also offers publications that offer educational opportunities to all members and other interested parties in the public safety field. Public Safety Communications, the monthly magazine published by APCO, offers up-to-date information and continuing education articles to help readers stay up to date on the latest in public safety communications operating procedures and technology and offers real world examples of communications work in action. In 2009 APCO introduced a full digital edition of Public Safety Communications.

Because communications personnel make up the nerve center of emergency operations, fielding calls from the public and dispatching the appropriate responders quickly and efficiently, they have a dramatic impact on the performance of police, fire and emergency medical services. During a disaster, communications plays a crucial role in effective response as the public floods the public safety system with calls for help. Whether the caller needs to get a kitten out of a tree, deliver a baby, escape a burning building or survive a major natural disaster, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, public safety communications professionals are using their training to handle the calls for help.

## LEARNING THAT SPREADS THE GLOBE

Every call to 9-1-1 involves numerous complexities beyond public understanding, simultaneously orchestrating the people, technology and policy to obtain a positive outcome. Unfortunately, some of the fundamentals are beyond our immediate control, like technological operability and policy and funding decisions of government. What we can control is the training we can offer our public safety communications professionals as they work to ensure the safety of the world's citizens. Not only is it important for public safety communications professionals to inherit the appropriate tools necessary to perform their everyday duties, but it is important that they share that knowledge with others who are responsible for the public's safety.

In 2009, the APCO Institute provided training to help secure a new university in Saudi Arabia. King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) is being built as an international, graduate-level research university dedicated to inspiring a new age of scientific achievement in the Kingdom that will also benefit the region and the world. Its core campus occupies more than 36 million square meters on the Red Sea, and sits approximately 80 kilometers north of Saudi Arabia's second largest city, Jeddah.

The APCO Institute's goal in this effort is to advance the mission of the University by providing and maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment for the KAUST community. As part of this effort, KAUST will staff a 20-person communications center and utilize all of the APCO Institute's training programs and support software. During construction, an APCO Institute Adjunct Instructor is providing an all-inclusive training program for communications personnel in their new communications center.

The APCO Institute's training of these international communications professionals included the basic telecommunications training through its Public Safety Telecommunicator I, Fire and Law Enforcement Communications, and Emergency Medical Dispatch courses. Further, the APCO Institute provided specialized training on pandemic influenza, dealing with mentally ill and suicidal callers and handling hostage negotiations. And the trainees were able to put their training to use on simulators, allowing the students to experience what it is like to answer, create, dispatch and assign emergency calls as it will soon be like in a working communications center.

Everyday APCO members are called to action to help callers in times of emergency. APCO members also take action advocating for intelligent policy and crucial advancements in equipment and technology used to ensure the safety of the public. Though they are the nerve center of public safety and often are the first to deal directly with the public, often communications professionals are overlooked. APCO is one of the few places people in the field can turn to voice their concerns and interests to decision-makers in a constructive way.

By speaking out on behalf of public safety communications APCO members work hard to ensure that all citizens know how important communications are to public safety and what they can do about it. While crucial communications professionals are literally behind the scenes when it comes to public safety, APCO members must be prepared to perform at their peak no matter what happens. While performance is based heavily on education and preparation, APCO members must also work to ensure that their behind-the-scenes work isn't forgotten when improvements are considered for public safety. Whether advocating for quality communications equipment for public safety personnel or improved communications training for all public safety personnel or reliable radio spectrum for public safety use, APCO members consistently find their voice within the Association.

Every April, APCO forms member committees to examine crucial issues and advocate for strong communications in every aspect of public safety. These committees tackle issues that are important not only to public safety professionals, but to all citizens. In this way, APCO member advocates work on behalf of society as a whole serving to ensure that everyone can be confident in knowing that in an emergency help is just a phone call away, and that phone call will be uninterrupted, handled quickly and the appropriate response will be sent.

But APCO members don't advocate for issues alone. APCO members amplify their voices through working with partners in public safety such as the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), the National Sheriff's Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA) and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), to name a few. Further, APCO has established a Global Alliance working with APCO Canada, British APCO, and APCO Australasia to share valuable insights into public safety communications issues around the globe. Working together with other organizations APCO can ensure that communications is not forgotten and APCO members can provide better services to our communities around the United States and the world.

APCO Members ACT on behalf of public safety communications professionals across the country.

# ACT



## ACTING TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICE

Too often it takes catastrophic events to shed light on the urgent contributions public safety communications work makes to our nation's well-being. During more routine moments, public safety professionals labor well out of the public eye and, often, with limited resources and insufficient support. Typically, employees in communications centers confront difficult, fast-paced and emotionally trying conditions of employment under conditions of chronic understaffing.

Seeking to assess the conditions under which communications centers are employed, APCO established Project RETAINS (Responsive Efforts to Assure Integral Needs in Staffing). Partly based on a national survey commissioned in 2005, Project RETAINS began to establish important baseline data about retention, staffing, and workload issues that loom large in the working lives of public safety communications employees. Project RETAINS also generated a toolkit that provided specific guidelines designed to aid communications center directors as they make decisions about staffing, work load and personnel issues of varying types.

APCO commissioned a follow up to the 2005 study in the fall of 2007, the results of which were released in 2009. This report examined communications centers' retention rates, employees' organizational commitment, and employees' psychological distress. Despite the broad differences between centers of different size, location and type, a number of patterns emerged in this study that hold relevance for the nation's communications centers, including finding that the national telecommunicator turn-over rate has increased three percent since the initial study to 19 percent, higher than the better-known turn-over rates of nurses and teachers.

First, the overwhelming majority (83 percent) of centers have experienced an increase in the number of dispatched calls in the previous three years. In addition, rates of retention are significantly affected by the hourly salary which starting employees receive and the flexibility of work schedules. Further, the findings draw attention to the need that employees express for greater support, recognition, and appreciation, whether from their supervisors and center directors or from the public at large. Finally, communications centers that have used the Project RETAINS toolkit indicated that retention had significantly increased over the past three years.

To address these issues, APCO released the highly sought-after guidelines to estimate the appropriate staffing levels for dispatchers and will be releasing an updated toolkit to assist communications centers with their staffing needs.

Recent events, from terrorist acts to natural disasters, have highlighted the need for public safety organizations to work together. From the smallest chapter conferences to the Annual Conference and Exposition, APCO offers opportunities to network on all levels. As the largest Association for public safety communications, APCO offers great opportunities for its members to network and make lasting connections with others in public safety communications and beyond.

In 2008, the 74th Annual Conference and Exposition offered over 5,000 members of the public safety communications field the opportunity to meet and talk with thousands of their colleagues from around the globe, learn from some of the industry's most knowledgeable speakers and connect with over 350 industry organizations. While the Conference is hosted by a different Chapter each year, APCO Chapters around the country also hold conferences throughout the year, drawing members and attendees together to address issues particular to their regions. In addition, the 6th Annual Winter Summit, held this year in conjunction with the National Emergency Number Association's winter event, focused specifically on technology solutions and discussions.

Also, APCO members celebrate National Public Safety Telecommunications Week, an annual event started by an APCO member in 1981. Every April APCO members come together to hold events that include open houses for the public and recognition for communications personnel. The Annual Public Safety Communications Leadership in Policy Awards Dinner is also held during the week, highlighting the efforts of leaders who advance policies that ensure the safety of us all through improved communications.

All of these events offer opportunities for APCO members to connect, while APCO also offers a wide array of online tools for members who may not be able to attend events to connect, including a member

APCO Members CONNECT  
with others in public safety  
communications and other  
disciplines of public safety.

# CONNECT

discussion forum, a presence on most social networking platforms, including MySpace and Twitter, a National Public Safety Telecommunications Week blog where members can comment and add photos, and an online member directory, job board and buyer's guide. These offerings, in combination with complete coverage of in-person events in APCO's Public Safety Communications magazine, ensure that members have opportunities to connect with each other in many different ways.

While individual professional networking for APCO members is an important force behind these events, APCO members also serve as representatives for the entire public safety communications field connecting with other public safety personnel as well as communications professionals from around the world. As public safety threats require multi-disciplinary responses, APCO is leading the way towards working with other public safety organizations to better serve the public.

## CONNECTING FOR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Issues surrounding the balance between work and personal life have come to the forefront in recent years as more and more demands are placed on professionals and traditional family roles change. For women in the public safety profession, these issues are magnified as they struggle to be good daughters, wives, and mothers while striving to be respected and successful professionals in a field historically dominated by men. While not totally unique to women, these struggles epitomize the importance of professional and personal development through networking.

In 2009, APCO International became the first organization in the industry to hold an event focused on the specific needs of women in public safety communications. The APCO Women in Public Safety Communications Leadership Symposium was held in Orlando in May and brought together nearly 50 women from across the country and from a variety of public safety disciplines. The goal of the Symposium was to intimately discuss the unique challenges women in the public safety industry face, both personally and professionally, from emergency to everyday.

The two-day event started with inspiring remarks from the female Chief of Police for the City of Orlando, Val Demings, who emphasized the need for this type of forum for women in public safety. She also reminded attendees of the progressive work of APCO, noting that it is one of the only public-safety related organizations that has had female leadership. The event continued with presentations from other female public safety industry leaders and focused on women's health, stress management, leadership, and – most importantly – networking. Most of the attendees came to the event as strangers and left as friends.

The anecdotal response to this event was extremely positive and was supported by the survey results, which showed that 100 percent of respondents would not only recommend this event to a colleague, but would like to attend another similar event in the future. Respondents cited the intimacy created by the women-only forum, subject matter and speakers as reason for its success and expressed their appreciation to APCO for taking the lead in hosting this unique event. Plans are already in place for the second annual event, being held April 21-22, 2010 in Orlando.

# The APCO Balance Sheet

# APCO INTERNATIONAL, INC. - CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS OF JUNE 30, 2009 (UNAUDITED)

	International	AFC	Institute	Combined Subtotal	PSFA	Heritage	Consolidated Total
<b>Assets:</b>							
Cash & Temporary Cash Invest	\$ (789,692.54)	\$1,540,554.21	\$3,129,310.97	\$3,880,172.64	\$2,749,690.66	\$ 4,937.65	\$ 6,634,800.95
Accounts Receivable	\$ 384,971.96	\$ 328,247.97	\$ 110,555.71	\$ 823,775.64			\$ 823,775.64
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 413,892.89	\$ 19,995.13	\$ 47,545.08	\$ 481,433.10			\$ 481,433.10
Property and Equipment, Net	\$ 1,418,188.80	\$ 214,804.32	\$ 106,552.43	\$1,739,545.55	\$1,516,422.10		\$ 3,255,967.65
Other Assets	\$ 12,415.67			\$ 12,415.67			\$ 12,415.67
Total Assets	\$ 1,439,776.78	\$2,103,601.63	\$3,393,964.19	\$6,937,342.60	\$4,266,112.76	\$ 4,937.65	\$11,208,393.01
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets:</b>							
Accts Payable & Accrued Expen	\$ 310,332.79	\$ 119,260.59	\$ 105,710.93	\$ 535,304.31	\$ 633,075.07		\$ 1,168,379.38
Intercompany Accounts	\$ (154,001.27)			\$ (154,001.27)	\$ 154,001.27	\$ -	\$ -
Deferred Revenues	\$ 3,505,372.87	\$ 51,554.00	\$ 597,459.24	\$4,154,386.11	\$3,068,427.79	\$ 4,559.00	\$ 7,227,372.90
Bonds Payable	\$ -			\$ -			\$ -
Total Liabilities	\$ 3,661,704.39	\$ 170,814.59	\$ 703,170.17	\$4,535,689.15	\$3,855,504.13	\$ 4,559.00	\$ 8,395,752.28
<b>Net Assets:</b>							
Unrestricted	\$(2,883,461.39)	\$1,932,787.04	\$2,129,609.79	\$1,178,935.44	\$ (41,155.08)	\$(4,180.35)	\$ 1,133,600.01
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 661,533.78		\$ 291,279.31	\$ 952,813.09	\$ 451,763.71	\$ 4,559.00	\$ 1,409,135.80
Permanently Restricted	\$ -		\$ 269,904.92	\$ 269,904.92			\$ 269,904.92
Total Net Assets	\$(2,221,927.61)	\$1,932,787.04	\$2,690,794.02	\$2,401,653.45	\$ 410,608.63	\$ 378.65	\$ 2,812,640.73
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 1,439,776.78	\$2,103,601.63	\$3,393,964.19	\$6,937,342.60	\$4,266,112.76	\$ 4,937.65	\$11,208,393.01

Note: Operating Reserves = 28.6% (calculated on a combined basis as the percent of unrestricted cash and investments compared to the annual operating budget)  
For a copy of APCO International's most recent audit report, please contact Mark Cannon, Deputy Executive Director & CFO/COO, at (386) 322-2500.

APCO members and staff have launched efforts to fully prepare public safety communications professionals for the future, whether it's new course offerings or standards for public safety communications. APCO is at the leading edge of progress in public safety. Just as communications technology is changing every day, so too must the professional association for the people who use communications to ensure the safety of the public. And, in response to the current economic climate, APCO is finding ways to offer its members more for less. Therefore, we are moving forward on some key initiatives to address the challenges of both the field and the association world of tomorrow.

## The Future of APCO

As an association, APCO has taken steps to make a positive environmental and social impact through efforts like minimizing printing by offering a full digital version of its magazine and other printed materials and following green guidelines for the Annual Conference. In addition, APCO is enhancing the ability of its members, and the public safety communications community as a whole, to connect with each other to influence positive progression in our field by creating a social networking platform dedicated specifically to public safety professionals.

Just as the members of APCO work not only to improve in their field, but to serve the public, through efforts like the ones in this report, APCO hopes to not only serve the members of the public safety communications profession, but society as a whole.

## **You Can Support Public Safety Communications**

Everyday APCO members provide peace of mind to the public, proving that help is always just a phone call away. Yet APCO members need support as well. With support from donors, partners and individuals APCO can ensure that the men and women serving in the public safety communications profession have the training and support programs they need. Contact APCO for more information on how you can be a part of the effort.

### **APCO International**

(386) 322-2500

or

(888) APCO 9-1-1



# APCO International

*Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials - International, Inc.*

## **Subsidiaries:**

The APCO Institute

APCO Automated Frequency Coordination

The APCO Heritage Foundation

The Public Safety Foundation of America