



ROBERT LEW PHOTOGRAPHY

# ENGAGING AT APCO 2020

The opportunities to maximize your experience at APCO 2020 are almost limitless.

By Stephen Martini

In 16 years, I've worked in nearly every operational position from telecommunicator to director at ECCs ranging from four consoles to 80 consoles. And the truth is, I'm not that smart. I've been able to navigate through the various roles due in large part to the relationships forged with public safety communications professionals I've met at the annual APCO conference.

I attended my first APCO conference in 2010, sitting in the front row in Houston, Texas, listening as Apollo 13 astronaut Jim Lovell shared his first-hand experience reacting to an emergency resulting in a failed lunar mission. I served with members of APCO's Editorial Advisory Committee to plan content for future issues of *PSC Magazine*. I attended sessions relevant to training methods, quality assurance techniques, and advancements in CAD, phone and radio software. I connected with sales reps, technicians and engineers and partnered with our agency to provide our technical solutions in the exhibit hall. I leaned into my coworkers to better understand who they were, what they wanted to learn, what they could share and where they wanted to take our agency in the future.

And I've been back, year after year, ever since.

No matter where you are on the spectrum of your career, there are low, medium and high intensity opportunities to engage at APCO 2020.

Low intensity opportunities require passive involvement and are open to almost everyone attending. Most of these opportunities center around your sector of public safety communications, whether telecommunicator or technician, call taking or configuration, programming or policy setting. These include attending professional development sessions, listening to keynote speakers, engaging with industry partners in the exhibit hall and attending the annual Block Party.

- **Professional Development Sessions:** Presenters offer new insights and perspectives about tasks you are tackling right now or likely will tomorrow. After a global pandemic, earthquakes along the Rocky Mountains, and tornadoes throughout the Midwest and Southeast, there's a lot to share! The impact of these incidents

and events affects us all differently, and these sessions are the place to hear the lessons learned from people doing your job in another location.

- **Keynotes:** These speakers will shed new light on paths to get where you want to go, through the lens of their unique experiences. During the Opening General Session, U.S. and NATO Special Ops Commander Admiral William H. McRaven will discuss managing risk as a leader while reality television star and endurance athlete Robyn Benincasa plans to inspire attendees at the Distinguished Achiever's Breakfast Tuesday. At Wednesday's Food for Thought Luncheon, Mike Robbins leaves us with some things to think about regarding authenticity and appreciation within the teams we lead.
- **Industry Partners:** The exhibit hall features a plethora of tools, resources and gadgets that can help you hone your craft or expand your skills.
- **The Block Party** is an excellent way to engage with peers and coworkers in a fun atmosphere. Grab some food and a chair and get to know someone better.

Broadening your base surrounded by a group of your professional peers is the core focus of every APCO conference.

Medium intensity opportunities require some effort on your part in order to take full advantage of them. These are offered to everyone but require taking a little extra time to arrive early, stay late and plan your schedule purposefully. These include networking receptions hosted by specific groups or industry partners, chapter leadership seminars, general business sessions, and ECC tours.

- **Networking Receptions:** Some are sponsored by the association, others are sponsored by industry partners connecting existing customers from around the

globe and sometimes engaging new ones. Check with your specific industry partners prior to arriving, connect with them in the exhibit hall or stay up to date through the conference app to learn when and where these events will occur.

- **Chapter leadership training:** Two sessions provide an opportunity to interact with state chapter leadership and understand how you can advance public safety communications at the local level. These sessions are held in the mornings on Sunday and Wednesday.
- **General business sessions** offer a chance for everyone to hear proposed policy changes, meet candidates for vacant leadership positions, and receive updates regarding the association, technology, governance and key professional partnerships. Members will vote on policy changes and candidates at these sessions. Two experienced APCO leaders – Angela Bowen and Mark Pallans – seek the opportunity to serve as APCO's 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president, and the voting results will be revealed at Tuesday's General Business Session.
- **ECC tours** are an opportunity to see technology and policy in action at a variety of communications centers near the host city while interacting with decision-makers and frontline users in a live setting. Participating ECCs include Florida Highway Patrol, Reedy Creek Fire Department, University of Central Florida Police Department and the Orlando Operations Center. For more details, visit [APCO2020.org/program/ecc-tours](http://APCO2020.org/program/ecc-tours).

High intensity opportunities require a significant amount of planning and coordination to engage with association leadership events to dive deeply into your career. At these events, you're seeking opportunities to help grow the association while the association seeks opportunities to develop you. These events are specific to those who have been involved with APCO for a few years and are already engaged with APCO through committee participation, chapter leadership, presenting a professional development session or setting up specific evening meetings with industry partners supporting your agency.



- Committees: Members of APCO committees for the coming year meet Saturday and Sunday to discuss approved goals and objectives to support APCO's Long Range Strategic Plan.
- Chapter Leaders: Executive Council representatives meet on Friday to conduct the business of the association as it relates to membership and involvement, reviewing both bylaws and policies. Chapter officers can engage with other chapters Sunday and Wednesday mornings, Commercial Advisory Members will meet to discuss

the best way to engage all APCO members at the local and regional levels.

- Presenters have an opportunity to engage a room full of professionals about a specific topic and gather critical feedback from those struggling with a similar topic. This offers an amazing opportunity to grow in understanding while developing a network of individuals on whom session attendees can call in the future.
- Evening meetings, whether over a meal, a beverage or a shared event, are excellent ways to better understand the individuals

supporting your industry partnerships and more specifically discuss the best solutions for your agency.

Simply put, there is no right or wrong way to engage with APCO in Orlando this summer, and there's something for everyone. From new employees to experienced veterans – wallflower to extrovert – you will find there's room for you at APCO 2020. ●

*Stephen Martini, ENP, RPL, is Director at Metro Nashville Emergency Communications Center.*

## CDE EXAM #54566

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) There are multiple ways to engage with professionals at APCO 2020.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. True</li> <li>b. False</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) APCO 2020 is most beneficial for only experienced, veteran public safety communications professionals.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. True</li> <li>b. False</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) The article identifies three primary levels of engagement at APCO 2020, which are:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Good, better, best</li> <li>b. Low, medium, high</li> <li>c. One, two and three</li> <li>d. Avoid, preferred, premiere</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) There are opportunities to engage with chapter leaders on which days of APCO 2020?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. First and Second</li> <li>b. Wednesday Only</li> <li>c. Sunday Only</li> <li>d. Sunday and Wednesday</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Which of the following can you do at the General Business Sessions?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. See new 9-1-1 technology</li> <li>b. Hear proposed policy changes</li> <li>c. Plan PSC magazine content</li> <li>d. Discuss ECC human resource solutions</li> </ol> </li> <li>6) Which of these activities does the article identify as a high-intensity engagement opportunity?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committee meetings</li> <li>b. General business sessions</li> <li>c. Professional development sessions</li> <li>d. Block party</li> </ol> </li> <li>7) Who can expect to benefit from engaging with professional peers at APCO 2020?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Everyone</li> <li>b. No One</li> <li>c. Experienced attendees</li> <li>d. New attendees</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8) Attendees can expect to look through the lens of these individual's unique experiences:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committee Chairs</li> <li>b. Executive Council Representatives</li> <li>c. Keynote Speakers</li> <li>d. APCO Conference volunteers</li> </ol> </li> <li>9) ECC Tours provide a great opportunity to see technology and policy in a live setting.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. True</li> <li>b. False</li> </ol> </li> <li>10) According to the article, this level of engagement requires some purposeful planning and a willingness to arrive early or stay late.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Low</li> <li>b. Medium</li> <li>c. High</li> <li>d. Intermediate</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |
|--|--|---|

### FOR CREDIT TOWARD APCO RECERTIFICATION(S)

Each CDE article is equal to one credit hour of continuing education

1. Study the CDE article in this issue.
2. Answer the test questions online (see below for online exam instructions) or on the exam page from the magazine article (photocopies are not required).
3. Add/upload your CDE article information and certificate of achievement in the "My Classes Taken" section of APCO's Training Central at [www.apcointl.org/trainingcentral](http://www.apcointl.org/trainingcentral).

Questions? Call us at (386) 322-2500.

#### You can access the CDE exam online!

To receive a complimentary certificate of completion, you may take the CDE exam online. Go to <http://apco.remote-learner.net/login/index.php> to create your username and password. Enter the "CDE article" in the search box, and click on the "2020 Public Safety Communications Magazine Article Exams," then click on "enroll me" and choose "Engaging at APCO International Conference (54566)" to begin the exam. Upon successful completion of the quiz, a certificate of achievement will be available for download/printing.