

# Double Gold Award Nominee



Joshua Nemec, Brandon Rodgers, Lauren Heminger, Lisa Howard, Taylor Mount, Todd Swinehart, Nate Bryan, Daniel O'Flaherty, Faith Sayer, Tawna Lowe, Brian Bick, Dreama Cline, John Fortner, Eric Albright, Darin Anders, Katie Lowe, Brandy Thompson, Ashley Decker, Kenneth Schenk, Kathleen Novak, Lt. Chad Carson, Lt. Daniel Loper, Sgt. Jeff Hartford

## Licking County Regional Communications Center

**NOMINATED BY:**

**ROB TERRILL**

Licking County Regional Communications Center (LCRCC) is a small to medium size Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) located on the Appalachian Plateau in Heath, Ohio (Land of Legends). Our team dispatches for 22 Fire/ EMS Departments and 13 Law Enforcement Agencies.

It is an honor to nominate the Licking County Regional Communications Center Dispatchers for the 2020 Ohio Double Gold Star Award. They were steadfast in their competence and proficiency in the execution of their duties during a time that effected thousands.

In the early morning hours of Friday, March 20, 2020 heavy rains would wash away drainage culverts, a four-lane highway and end up swamping communities, roadways, interstates and overwhelm our waterways throughout the County, closing down 55 roads in total making it a navigational nightmare for our First Responders. During those morning hours the 911 Center took 1570 calls for help from flood victims and an estimated 14,016 push to talks on the MARCS radio system. LCRCC would orchestrate the movement of 19 different Dive and Rescue Teams (DART) on seven (7) different Licking County operational radio channels and three (3) MARCS XECOMM radio channels. LCRCC soon became overwhelmed with DART request and called out to our surrounding Counties for help by activating the Ohio Fire Chiefs Emergency Response Plan. LCRCC was also called upon to be the radio relay between our First Responders and Emergency Management operations during the coordination efforts in the evacuation of thousands of Licking County residents in the midst of the early stages of the Coronavirus pandemic.

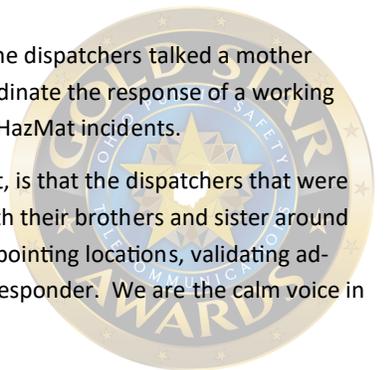
Over several years, the Licking County Regional Communications Center has seen its share of highwaters, flooded waterways and road closures calls. However, March 20, 2020 would be measured on a whole new scale. Depending on the person or expert you talk to, Licking County water levels meet or exceeded the 500-year flood stage. These waters were swift and rapid moving, and would challenge our First Responders throughout the day and would wreak havoc on our residents, their homes and our roads.

As the rains subsided around 0430 the National Weather Service soon alerted the Southeastern part of Ohio of flash flooding. At 0528hrs, 911 lines started ringing and never let up until 1303hrs. Night shift dispatchers would be forced to stay because of the overwhelming call volume and radio traffic. Our first call gave us a hint that Mother Nature flexed her muscles, it was a Chevrolet Suburban crashing into a culvert that gave way under State Route 79, a four-lane highway, and that suburban would plunge some 30 feet to the bottom of the washout just moments after the occupant was pulled to safety. Calls would come in from all over the County, homes were flooding, cars were washing away downstream and an emergency "Mayday" radio broadcast would echo across Licking County XFD450PS3. A Law Enforcement Officer in distress in rapid waters, would capture everyone's attention after his boat sank and firefighters reported that the officer was clinging to tree tops.

LCRCC dispatchers, just like so many dispatchers nationwide, did more than the secretarial jobs our elected official believe they do on this day. They managed 22 of their own Fire Departments and an additional nine (9) Fire Departments and ten (10) additional DART Teams from our surrounding Counties and their 13 Law Enforcement agencies. They coordinated buses, HazMat responses, gas and power shut offs, shelter drop off locations, downed power lines, flooded roads and even screened call of possible COVID-19 patents to try and keep our First Responders, Doctors and Nurses safe. LCRCC Dispatcher's conducted move up operations of Fire Department and apparatuses to ensure the "Land of Legends", Licking County, was covered for the next emergency leaving no void in coverage.

During the chaos dispatchers were also tasked with handling the domino effect of this type of weather event. The dispatchers talked a mother through CPR when she found her toddler in flood waters. With limited resources, dispatchers were able to coordinate the response of a working house fire. Dispatchers, maintaining the big picture in mind, were able to arrange for the responses of multiple HazMat incidents.

In closing, this is just a snapshot of what transpired on March 20, 2020. What I can honestly say without a doubt, is that the dispatchers that were working in the Licking County Regional Communications Center saved lives this day just like every day, along with their brothers and sister around the world. They may have not been in the boats pulling people to safety, however they were on the phones pinpointing locations, validating addresses and monitoring radios in those moment when the world turns upside down and goes South for a First Responder. We are the calm voice in the dark and behind the scenes.





# Double Gold Award Nominee

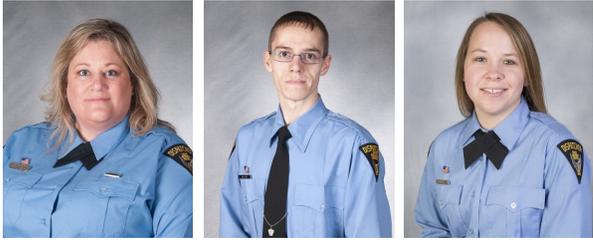
Mike Frisky, Haleigh Collins, Haley Rankins, Jordan Vanichek, Kathy Biecheler, and Tannya Brotherton

Erie County Sheriff's Office

**NOMINATED BY:**  
GREG KRUMNOW

Our department did a CAD upgrade the morning of August 25, 2020. We were running off of our old CAD system for the first time instead of using cards. At approximately 07:38 hours, we were attempting to switch back over to the new CAD but there was an issue where no one could log in. The 911 board started to go off and the callers were reporting an accident on Route 8 NB where a car was hit and forced underneath a semi tanker filled with fuel. Everyone immediately flipped back over to "old CAD" and started putting the call in. Everyone in the center kicked into high gear: everyone had a job and they did it with professionalism and without asking. The tanker eventually exploded. Streets had to be shut down, houses had to be evacuated. Fire spread to houses, grass and the Cuyahoga River. Several outside agencies came to assist including the Ohio State Patrol, University of Akron PD, Summa Police, the sewer department, the highway department, metro RTA, the EPA, Red Cross, and every officer who was inside of the station who was ordered to go out in the area and knock on doors to evacuate residents within a half mile radius. All the while they were still taking calls and still dispatching runs, never missing a beat. (On a personal note, I walked around to every position and asked what I could do. And every technician said that they were good. It was like a symphony in the room, there was no shouting, no one "freaked out". Everyone had a job to do and chipped in to help where needed! This is truly one of my proudest moments I have had in the center.)





# Double Gold Award Nominee

Rebecca Canavan, William Mason, Kaylee Huhn  
Ohio State Highway Patrol

**NOMINATED BY:**

JENNIFER MORAN

On Sunday May 24, 2020 a 20 year old female driving on Interstate 77 in Washington County called in stating her gas pedal was stuck and her vehicle would not slow down or stop due to a mechanical malfunction. Dispatcher Kaylee Huhn spoke to the female for nearly 15 minutes keeping her calm and gave her many suggestions on how to stop the vehicle. The female was instructed to press the brake, try putting the vehicle in neutral, and to press the start button to stop or slow down her 2011 Dodge Journey SUV. None of these suggestions were working and her speeds were only accelerating. Dispatcher William Mason dispatched troopers to her location on IR77.

Dispatcher Mason and Dispatcher Rebecca Canavan researched different ways her to attempt to stop the vehicle, still nothing was working. Troopers positioned themselves around the vehicle to warn traffic. The caller stated she had 40 miles to empty showing on her fuel gauge. They were going to attempt to ride it out. The caller was advised to turn her air conditioning on high to help use up the gasoline. Traffic started to pick up and there were several close calls on vehicle not being able to get out of the way. On one occasion she drove into the median to avoid a semi that could not get over to allow her to pass. By this time, her speeds have reached over 94 mph. She had tried several more times with pressing the brake and attempting to put the SUV in neutral and it still wasn't working. By this time the caller was hysterical and Dispatcher Canavan got on the phone with her and advised her to slowly pull up on the emergency brake as a last attempt to slow the vehicle down. This worked and the vehicle slowed into the median.

With the suggestions from the dispatchers, actions from the troopers, and the driver remaining focused on her driving the situation ended in the best way possible.

The quick reactions and clam demeanor of Dispatchers Huhn, Canavan, and Mason the female driver made it back home to her husband and kids unharmed.





# Double Gold Award Nominee

Lori Fishell & Amy McCleese  
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Lebanon

**NOMINATED BY:**

CHUCK O'BRYON

On July 18, 2020, Dispatcher Lori Fishell and Dispatcher Amy McCleese were working the dayshift at the Lebanon Dispatch Center for the Ohio State Highway Patrol. The dispatch team received a call reference a semi operating recklessly on Interstate 75 in Warren County. After dispatching the call to road troopers, Trooper Valentine located the vehicle. Trooper Valentine attempted to stop the semi for traffic violations, but the semi failed to stop and a pursuit ensued.

During the pursuit, the driver called 911, and he advised he was not going to stop. The 911 call taker contacted Dispatcher McCleese so they could relay information provided by the suspect. The Dispatchers could also hear a woman screaming for help in the background while talking to the suspect.

The pursuit continued while Dispatchers Fishell and McCleese contacted multiple agencies reference the pursuit, all while still talking with the suspect and handling the pursuit radio traffic.

Dispatcher McCleese continued to talk to the Hamilton County Dispatcher and the suspect during the pursuit. Dispatcher McCleese was able to relay statements made from the suspect to Dispatcher Fishell, who relayed the information to the road troopers. The Dispatchers assisted in convincing the suspect to release his wife, whom he was keeping in the vehicle against her will. The suspect even used his wife as a shield at one point as he unhooked his trailer from his semi.

The incident lasted for 3 hours and covered 50 miles. The pursuit traveled through three counties and the City of Cincinnati. The incident involved 10 agencies in addition to the Ohio State Highway Patrol, all of which were contacted by Dispatchers Fishell and McCleese. The incident finally came to conclusion with the arrest of the suspect by the Cincinnati Swat Team.

The incident would not have ended successfully had it not been for the dedication and team work displayed by Dispatchers Fishell and McCleese. Their ability to work together and remain calm throughout the extended duration of this incident is a testament to their skills as Dispatchers.





# Double Gold Award Nominee

Melissa Rath & Jennifer Moran  
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Cambridge

**NOMINATED BY:**  
JAMES FAUNDA

On January 9, 2020 Dispatcher Melissa Rath was dispatching for both the St. Clairsville Post and the Steubenville Post. Dispatcher Supervisor Jennifer Moran was at the dispatch center helping out Dispatcher Rath when needed. While performing a check of the rest area, Trooper Jeff Herink ran a plate on a Ford Expedition out of Pennsylvania that returned stolen. Trooper Herink attempted to make contact with the vehicle and the driver took off pursuing away. Dispatcher Rath immediately dispatched back up officers to start towards Trooper Herink. Being that Trooper Herink was in the resident county, Monroe, his OSP back up was coming from Belmont County and good 40 plus miles away from him. Dispatcher Rath contacted Monroe County Sheriff's Office and had deputies start his way as well. Dispatcher Supervisor Moran called New Martinsville West Virginia and Morgantown West Virginia Police Departments in case the vehicle that was travelling northbound on SR 7 would take the bridge over into WV.

Dispatcher Rath worked with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the Belmont County Sheriff's Office dispatchers in attempting to get spikes set up. Due to the speed of the vehicle spikes were not able to be used right away. The pursuit lasted over 40 minutes and speeds have reached over 100 mph. There were several troopers enroute for back up as well as several units from multiple agencies. Dispatcher Rath even had units from Steubenville heading down SR 7 to make sure they were in position, should it get that far. Sergeant Brian McFarland, OSP, was able to get into position and the vehicle was spiked. After travelling a few more miles it ended up crashing into a guardrail. The driver stated her leg was hurt and she could not get out of the vehicle. There was a backseat passenger that could be seen in the vehicle but he was not cooperating with commands. A standoff started between the driver, occupant, and the troopers on scene. Dispatcher Rath had placed a squad on standby. About 10 minutes into the standoff the passenger exited the vehicle holding the female driver hostage in front of him and a gun to her head. Shots were fired by units on scene at the suspect and he was pronounced dead at the scene. The hostage had a laceration on her shoulder, but otherwise was not injured. There were no injuries to any law enforcement units on scene.

The teamwork between Dispatcher Rath, Dispatcher Supervisor Moran, and all the units involved worked seamlessly and ensured the safety of all units involved. At one time there were over 10 different law enforcement agencies involved in the pursuit and the communication between all involved was flawless.





# Double Gold Award Nominee

Kayla Hilderbrand & Jessica Smart  
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Wilmington

**NOMINATED BY:**  
STANLEY JORDAN

On December 7, 2020 the Wilmington Dispatch Center received a BOLO from the Richland County S.O. indicating that a silver, 2008 Honda Pilot was travelling south on IS71. The Honda was occupied by 6 children ranging in age from 8 to less than 1 year old who had been taken by their non-custodial Mother, who had stated to Child Protective Services that the children would never be found. Dispatchers Kayla Hilderbrand and Jessica Smart worked together to direct Troopers into a position to intercept the Honda while simultaneously speaking with Richland County Sheriff's Office and monitoring the position of the Suspect's cell phone pings. After the vehicle was located, Dispatchers Hilderbrand and Smart continued working together to resolve the high-risk traffic stop and direct back-up officers and supervision to the incident. Dispatchers Hilderbrand and Smart then handled multiple LEADS requests, missing/endangered hits and confirmations on the children as well as warrants for the suspects. Dispatchers Hilderbrand and Smart also coordinated information and response with Richland County S.O., Clinton County Protective Services, and Richland County Protective Services regarding recovery and disposition of the 6 recovered children.

Dispatcher Kayla Hilderbrand and Dispatcher Jessica Smart remained calm, processed large amounts of information from multiple sources, directed officers, and maintained excellent communications while working as a team to ensure the recovery of 6 missing / endangered children and the apprehension of the suspects. Their professionalism and teamwork are worthy of recognition and a direct reflection of their dedication.





# Double Gold Award Nominee

Megan Miller, Zach Cyrus and Brittany Randolph  
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Hub



**NOMINATED BY:**

KRISTIN WICKMAN

On December 4, 2020, a Motor Vehicle Inspector Unit marked out at the YMCA in Pataskala, Ohio. After he was done working out he returned to his work van and keyed up the radio. Dispatcher Cyrus could see he was keying up but didn't understand him. The unit tried again and Dispatcher Cyrus still couldn't understand him. At first, he thought maybe he was having radio issues. Dispatcher Cyrus tried calling the unit again on the radio. This time, the unit could be heard but he wasn't making sense. A few more radio transmissions and Dispatcher Cyrus recognized the signs as symptoms of a stroke.

Dispatcher Megan Miller called the Pataskala YMCA and asked one of the employees to check on the unit, still in their parking lot. The employee was familiar with this unit and went to check on him. Dispatcher Miller called EMS and had a squad dispatched.

The Columbus Communications Center was busy with other units signing on duty and phone calls. Dispatcher Brittany Randolph managed to handle the phone calls and units, while the other two dispatchers worked to get help to the unit.

Dispatcher Cyrus kept radio contact with the unit, reassuring him, help was on the way. With each radio transmission, the units' symptoms appeared to be worsening.

Within six minutes, EMS was on scene and transported the unit to a nearby hospital. It was later confirmed, the unit suffered a stroke.

Due to Dispatcher Cyrus's past experiences as an EMT and his keen observation skills, he was able to determine this unit was in a medical emergency. It took team work to get help to this unit as fast as they did, possibly saving his life.





# Double Gold Award Nominee

Kathryn Anderson, Kaitlyn Caldwell, Josette Colwell,  
Dawn Daniel, & Traci Webb

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

**NOMINATED BY:**

BETH LAINHART

On March 28, 2020 at approximately 1003 hours Trotwood Police Department responded to a person shot. Civilian Dispatcher Kaitlyn Caldwell received the call and updated it with suspect and vehicle description. At 1027 hours Miamisburg Police Department located the vehicle and a pursuit was initiated on Southbound I75. Civilian Dispatcher Dawn Daniel handled the pursuit along with dispatchers Kathryn Anderson, Josette Colwell, Traci Webb and Kaitlyn Caldwell. During this pursuit the victim expired and the call was upgraded to a homicide. Miamisburg PD continued the pursuit with Ohio State Patrol, until it crashed at the Ohio/Kentucky state line. During the chase a bag was thrown from the passenger window and located around MM23. The dispatchers did an excellent job of working together and getting pertinent information in and out of CAD, contacting various agencies along the route and updating them. They also switched to other radio channels due to the radio traffic being out of range and stayed on the phone with OSP to be updated. No radio traffic was missed due to the officer being out of range.





# Double Gold Award Nominee

Elizabeth Johnson, Darlene Eisele

City of Akron Safety Communications

**NOMINATED BY:**  
STACECY STANAR

On September 10, 2020 at 13:18 hrs, our dispatch center began receiving calls for a "shoot out" at Splash Car Wash at 1264 Copley Rd. Technician Johnson received a call from a citizen who happened upon one of the vehicles involved and said that there was a five year old girl who was shot in the head. Johnson poured her heart and soul into this call, giving instructions to the caller on how to control bleeding, as well as how to calm the mother who was in the vehicle as well. At the same time, Technician Eisele received a call from the mother who was pleading with her to tell her what to do while she is telling her dying daughter that she knows that it hurts, but everything will be alright. When the mother became inconsolable and asked Eisele what to do, Eisele told her "just keep telling her that you love her..." She remained calm and level headed and was by this mother's side while she held her daughter in the last moments of her life, never wavering.





# Double Gold Award Winner

Karla Dembek, Janice Tretera-Rodriguez, Denise Balog, Cindy Hays, and Melissa Mackiewicz

Chagrin Valley Dispatch - Brecksville

**NOMINATED BY:**

LISA DAVET

Saturday July 25, 2020 started like a normal summer day in Valley View, Ohio. That is until the phones in the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Center – Brecksville location starting lighting up with callers reporting shots fired and people down at a gas station in town. Immediately, Dispatch Supervisor Karla Dembek, Dispatch Supervisor Jan Tretera-Rodriguez, Dispatcher Denise Balog, Dispatcher Cindy Hays, and Dispatcher Melissa Mackiewicz began rolling cars from 3 of their jurisdictions to the gas station to assess the situation. Within 2 minutes of receiving the initial call, an officer arrived on scene reporting multiple parties down and that he had multiple suspects at gunpoint. It was then that he made a request, using the phrase that will always make their dispatcher's hearts stop, he requested for his units to "STEP IT UP!" The dispatchers took it upon themselves to get a few more departments rolling that way just in case.

Two male victims were located on scene, one with a gunshot wound to the head and the other with a stab wound. Multiple ambulances were dispatched due to the severity of the situation, and both males were transported to the level one trauma center in downtown Cleveland. While the victims were in route to the hospital, more and more people started arriving on scene. It was then determined that this was no ordinary "shots fired" call. This was a full on gang shooting between the Hell's Angels and the Mongols, in Valley View, Ohio and members of the rival gangs were beginning to flow onto the scene. The Hell's Angels began posting at a Burger King across the street while the Mongols posted on scene at the Shell Gas station. It was then that the officer in charge requested more departments on scene just to keep the two group separated.

In addition to handling the insanity at the scene, the dispatchers were also coordinating with the hospital, and Cleveland Police as some of the gang members on scene admitted that they were headed to the hospital to "finish the job". The crowds at both the scene of the crime as well as the hospital became so large that Cleveland PD's gang unit was called in, in addition to the local SWAT team to assist at the initial scene.

Throughout the duration of the 7 hour incident, the platoon worked tirelessly maintaining accurate logs which included keeping tabs on the 22 different officers from 5 of their cities that were on scene, running criminal histories on numerous gang members, coordinating efforts between multiple jurisdictions and multiple law enforcement and federal agencies, all the while still continuing business as normal for the 8 other cities that they dispatch for. This incident was by far the biggest incident that has happened in this area in quite some time, and the teamwork and dedication shown that night by the dispatchers was nothing short of amazing.

