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### CRESA is

the regional public safety agency that provides 9-1-1 dispatch, emergency management and ambulance contract oversight for Clark County, Washington.

CRESA also serves as the host agency for the Washington State Region IV Homeland Security Office.

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## Anna Pendergrass Appointed as Director

On December 1st, the Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency executive board named Anna Pendergrass, a 35-year veteran of the emergency services field, director of the regional public safety agency.

Pendergrass has served as the agency's interim director since the June retirement of Tom Griffith, who held the position for 11 years. Her appointment is effective today; a final employment agreement is pending.

Pendergrass' lengthy experience, ideas and understanding of the agency, its first responder partners and the community's needs made her appointment the logical and fiscally prudent choice, said Don Chaney, chair of the agency's executive board.

Her proposals for enhancing public services and ability to immediately step into the position will provide the agency and community with continued stable, high-quality and reliable emergency services, he said.

"Anna's experience, intelligence and bearing qualify her for this appointment," Chaney said. "She projects and acknowledges a passion for service to the Clark County community. She has our full confidence."

As director, Pendergrass will be responsible for all aspects of emergency management and homeland security, technical services and administrative duties.

Among her duties, she will continue to seek grants and other financing for agency services and cost savings and regional cooperation in matters such as upgrading the agency's radio and telephone systems.

Board member Ben Peeler, chief of North Country Emergency Medical Service, said

Pendergrass taking the helm of CRESA will be "a seamless transition."

"From a responder's perspective, she has the historical knowledge, knows all employees and has great rapport with the partners and responding agencies," he said. "She'll do a great job."

CRESA recruited and hired Pendergrass as operations manager in 2004. In that position, she oversaw the day-to-day functions of the emergency dispatch center, where 9-1-1 calls are received and from where operators send police, fire and medical experts in response.

She also oversaw employee training and continuing education programs, as well as performance quality assurance and accreditation for the agency and dispatchers.

Earlier, Pendergrass – a certified Emergency Medical Technician – served as supervisor of American Medical Response's regional dispatch center in Portland. She also worked as AMR's communications director, securing National Academy of Emergency Dispatchers certification for the center.

Pendergrass began her career in Grant's Pass, Oregon as a dispatcher for Josephine County. During her 23 years with the county, she also served as the sheriff's administrative assistant, managing employees and a \$12 million budget. She later was administrator for the records and dispatch divisions as well as interim 9-1-1 director.

Congratulations Anna!



# EMS System Re-Design - Where do you want to get to?

by Doug Smith-Lee, EMS Manager

**"Cheshire Cat-- Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"**

**"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.**

**"I don't much care where," said Alice.**

**"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.**

**"--so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.**

**"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."**

**-Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll**

The first time I read this exchange in Alice and Wonderland I thought this weird cat is of no help to Alice. Later, I realized the Cheshire Cat was only reflecting back what Alice wanted. If you don't care where you go then it doesn't matter what direction, or path you take. Unfortunately, EMS in this nation has doggedly been going down the same path to "Somewhere." It has become abundantly clear we are making no progress due to having no vision.

This article provides an overview of our current healthcare environment and the efforts of Clark County EMS District #2 to develop an EMS system strategic plan to ensure we have the right vision and sound road map towards where we want to get to.

## Current Environment

One of the most succinct explanations I've recently read about the current healthcare environment specific to EMS comes from an article in the Journal of EMS (JEMS). It highlights a lecture by Jerry Overton at the Pinnacle Conference. Jerry is regarded as an international expert on EMS system design.

Jerry points out the emphasis for EMS throughout the United States since its inception in the mid-60s, has been on life-threatening emergencies. These life-threatening emergencies are referred to as the "first-hour quintet": cardiac arrest, severe trauma, chest pain, stroke and respiratory distress. Yet these patients only represent 15-20% of all out-of-hospital patients. In addition, most EMS systems' response time standards are designed around the cardiac arrest patients that represent around 1-2% of all out-of-hospital patients. Historically, EMS has thought that getting a paramedic on every fire first response unit to the scene within four to five minutes, running two paramedics on every ambulance, then transporting all EMS patients to an overcrowded emergency department was the solution. Jerry stated this type of system is not only inefficient – "it's absurd!"

## From Prehospital Emergency Providers to Out-of-Hospital Healthcare

Throughout the world, EMS has been seeing a growth in the demand for non-emergency healthcare as the patient population ages, becomes more obese and is more under/uninsured<sup>1</sup>. Countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada are adjusting to meet this non-emergency demand by shifting from being just prehospital emergency providers to being part of the out-of-hospital healthcare system. Yet unlike our counterparts in other countries, EMS in the United States is still responding in the same way to achieve unrealistic response times and levels of care for all EMS patients with no scientific basis. In the JEMS article, Jerry states "We need to reorient ourselves to achieve outcomes that include providing a different clinical endpoint for the patient, delivering care closer to home and higher patient satisfaction. We're doing none of those, and as a result, we're clearly not outcome focused."

The shift from not just being emergency providers, but healthcare providers is starting to be recognized in these other

countries and a few places in this nation with call centers "hearing and treating" and EMS "seeing and treating." Using scientifically based protocols, trained emergency medical dispatchers are "hearing and treating" by identifying non-emergency patients and coordinating alternate healthcare services (i.e., nurse advice, physician consult, poison control, scheduling a clinic appointment, or home healthcare). EMS is "seeing and treating" by having paramedics with additional critical care/assessment training provide assessment and prevention services for at-risk medical patients.

## "Medical Necessity" Based on Transport

The challenge for EMS in the United States is due in part to payment for services being totally based on transport. Take for example EMS responding on a disoriented 9-1-1 patient suffering from diabetes. If the patient is treated by the paramedics and decides against transportation to the emergency department, his or her insurance company will not pay. In other words, the current system for EMS reimbursement is designed to reward unnecessary ambulance transportation and the additional costs at an already overcrowded emergency department.

*...Continued on page 3*



# Tech Updates...

## CRESA to install Sharepoint Servers

Michelle Jackson and Katy Myers are busy preparing to design, install, and administer CRESA's very own Sharepoint server. With the addition of the new server and software CRESA will be able to implement a wider variety of Sharepoint features and functions. The hardware and software have been purchased and will be received prior to the end of 2011. Both Michelle and Katy have attended training specific to Sharepoint design. Michelle will attend another training course in January that is targeted to network and site administration.

## Green and Blue lights in dispatch

Soon the green and blue lights on the dispatch

stacked lights will become operable. These lights are designated to respond to radio traffic – either incoming or outgoing. The additional lights should reduce untimely interruptions by those who are unaware the dispatcher is either listening to or talking on the radio.

## I/Mobile for Law Enhancements

Enhancements are set to be delivered on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Technical staff will bench test the product before releasing it to the Subject Matter Experts for field testing. Training on the new product is tentatively scheduled for January with general deployment to follow. The entire scheduled is dependent on acceptance testing at each deployment phase.



## **EMS System Re-Design continued from page 2...**

### **Local Effort to Create An Integrated Healthcare System**

While some of the nonsensical ways our health care system has evolved in the United States is decided at the federal level, there is work going on locally to try and create a healthcare system that is fully interconnected to ensure each patient receives the most appropriate care, at the most optimal location at the right time.

One such effort involves Clark County Community Services working to implement the Southwest Washington Regional Health Alliance (RHA). Their purpose in part is to develop one or more integrated delivery systems called Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) in Southwest Washington for the states safety net/Medicaid population.

The ACOs would be designed to ensure all providers (public health, mental health, social services, physicians and hospitals) are working together to meet the needs of the patient.

While the RHA is focused on the Medicaid population, it stands to reason Medicare and other health insurers will want to fund such a system (i.e., "if you build it they will come").

What role will EMS play in this changing health-care environment? Nowhere, if we keep doggedly going down the same path to "Somewhere." For this reason, the District is embarking in a strategic planning effort to ensure we have a sound road map towards the future for EMS locally.

As an update, we recently signed a contract with JLA Public Involvement, Inc. to assist in this planning effort. Over the next six to seven months, you or someone from your agency will most likely be asked to participate in helping develop the District's EMS strategic plan. This participation is vitally important if we are to achieve a clear vision on where we want EMS to go. If it doesn't much matter which way you go, then EMS is sure to get "Somewhere," and I'm afraid it will be no tea party.

### **Endnotes:**

1. Aging Population—The age group 65+ is estimated to increase by 102% from 2000—2020 in the Portland/Vancouver area. Growing Obesity—Obesity is the fastest growing cause of disease and death in America. Two out of three Americans are overweight or obese and one out of every eight deaths in America is caused by an illness directly related to obesity. Growing Under/Uninsured—14% of adults ages 19 through 64 are underinsured and 28% were uninsured for part or all of the year in 2007. As a result of these trends EMS is seeing more: falls, diabetes, hypertension, strokes, and overall demand as the under and uninsured forego essential medical services and medications.



## CRESA TECHNICAL STAFF

Who's who...

### **Keith Flewelling**

**Technical & Support**

**Division Manager**

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- CAD maintenance, changes and programming

### **Stacey Fritz**

**CAD/E9-1-1 Administrator**

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- E9-1-1
- CAD changes
- Public education

### **Michelle Jackson**

**Senior Technical Support Specialist**

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- WACIC
- User Accounts for CAD, I/Mobile and Netmotion
- I/Mobile Support

### **Jim Cole**

**Radio Systems Technician**

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- System Infrastructure Maintenance
- Radio Subscriber Programming

### **Jeremy Millman**

**Radio Systems Technician**

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- AVL
- I/Mobile Support
- Radio Subscriber Programming

### **Kirstin Cole**

**Technical Services Coordinator**

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- Radio Charges
- Billing
- Subscriber Programming



## EOC Staff “Shake Up” to Prepare!

October and November were busy months in the CRESA Emergency Management program with a number of exercises aimed at preparing our community to be ready to respond to emergencies.

### October 15th

The “Lethal Vapor” exercise took place in East Clark County which was an excellent opportunity for volunteers across a number of agencies to prepare to respond to a significant hazardous materials event. Our Amateur Radio, Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) along with fire and EMS agencies throughout East County & Skamania participated in this field exercise.

### October 27th

Elected & Policy Officials within Clark County participated in a tabletop exercise, centered around an earthquake response. Following this exercise, Clark County representatives met via video-conference with policy officials in Cowlitz, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties to discuss the regional impact of this earthquake scenario.

### November 3rd

Emergency Managers from Clark, Cowlitz and Multnomah counties participated in a large exercise, hosted by British Petroleum (BP) regarding a significant oil spill response. This event occurred at the Hilton and brought together a number of federal, state and local

participants to discuss what would occur in a large pipeline-related incident.

### November 3rd & 8th

On both of these days, CRESA hosted activation exercises of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Staff from a variety of agencies were paged through the notification system and practiced coming together for a significant earthquake event. Both of these exercises resulted in great lessons learned which are always important to catch before the next emergency occurs.

### November 29-Dec 1

CRESA Duty Officers participated as observers in the Mass Casualty Incident Drills which occurred at the old Vancouver City Hall. Firefighters throughout the area were practicing their protocols for responding to an incident involving many hurt & injured people. This observation gave CRESA staff a great ability to “see” the response first hand as we usually are coordinating without a direct view of the scene.

Exercising and practicing is always important to keep skills refreshed and to maintain a good understanding of expectations during a crisis event. Dates have now been set for our next EOC Activation exercises on **February 29th** and **March 13, 2012**. Contact Cindy Stanley at [cindy.stanley@clark.wa.gov](mailto:cindy.stanley@clark.wa.gov) or 360-992-6285 for more information about exercise and training.

## How Will You Hear from CRESA During Emergencies?

### Know the 4 Ways!

#### Emergency Alert System

The EAS System is broadcast over radio, television and NOAA Weather Alert radios. This system includes the loud tones with voice instructions to follow.

#### Emergency Community Notification System

The ECNS system is a telephone outdial system which calls you when there is geographically targeted alert like a hazardous materials threat or a police action in a neighborhood.

This system includes landline phones, but cell phones and VoIP phones must be manually added by their owners. In all 5 counties of the Portland metro area, register your phones by going to [www.PublicAlerts.org](http://www.PublicAlerts.org)

#### Flash Alert News

Flash Alert News is how CRESA and many public safety agencies send their press releases to the news media. You can sign up to receive press releases directly from agencies to your email, cell phone or pager at <http://flashalert.net/>

#### Social Media

CRESA also uses 3 primary social media sites which include our blog at [www.cresa911.blogspot.com](http://www.cresa911.blogspot.com), Facebook Fan Page at [www.facebook.com/cresa.911](http://www.facebook.com/cresa.911), and on Twitter by following [@CRESA](https://twitter.com/CRESA) which is for alert info only and [@CRESATalk](https://twitter.com/CRESATalk) for both alert & preparedness info.

## Hazard Mitigation Planning Kicks-Off in December

Most people are familiar with emergency response, rebuilding or recovering from a disaster and preparedness education, but hazard mitigation is often much less understood.

Basically, hazard mitigation means “taking action which minimizes a vulnerability to a hazard.” For example, if in an earthquake, things are prone to shake and fall over, strapping large objects to the wall is an example of a mitigation strategy. For houses prone to flood, elevating a structure above typical flood levels is another example of mitigation.



Clark County will begin updating our countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan this December with a group of stakeholders under the leadership of Emergency Management Coordinator, Scott Clemetson. There will be opportunities for public comment and participation throughout this process.

The timeline for this plan update targets completion by late spring for submission for approval to the State of Washington and the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). For questions, contact, Scott, at [scott.clemetson@clark.wa.gov](mailto:scott.clemetson@clark.wa.gov) or 360-992-6289.

## Leading the Way...

Did you know that CRESA currently has two state association presidents within its management team?

### **APCO-NENA**

**Keith Flewelling** serves as the President of the Association of Public Safety Communication Officers & National Emergency Number Association for Washington State. His term will expire in June 2012. More information about APCO can be found at [www.apcowa.org](http://www.apcowa.org)



### **WSEMA**

**Cheryl Bledsoe** serves as the President of the Washington State Emergency Management Association. Her term will expire in September 2012. More information about WSEMA can be found at [www.wsema.com](http://www.wsema.com)



*Wishing you a safe, happy and peaceful holiday season and best wishes for 2012!*

## Faces of CRESA

Get to know a few of our fine CRESA employees

### **JANETTE ANDERSON**

*Office Assistant hired Nov. 2011*

#### **What did you do prior to working at CRESA?**

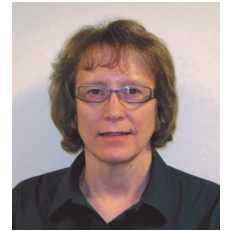
I spent the past 16 years with the Evergreen School District; my last position was as a Discipline Clerk.

#### **Hobbies and outside of work interests?**

Baking, BBQing, working in the yard and watching high school athletics

#### **Interesting "Fun Fact" about you?**

Born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska; came to Washington in 1992. Married (Andy) with two children (Matt 25, Kelly 21)



### **KATY MYERS**

*Training & QA Manager, CRESA employee since 1995*

#### **What did you do prior to working at CRESA?**

Started my working career as a food counter clerk at a movie theatre in Medford, then landed a job at Target as a retail "shoe specialist" aka grunt. Fell into a job as a dispatcher in Medford, Oregon, moved up to Vancouver and worked as a Domino's Store Manager – hated that job and was lucky enough to get hired at CRESA just after I quit.

#### **Favorite things about your job?**

The people! No, really, I mean it! The people here are smart, fun and dedicated - it's a privilege to be a member of the team.

#### **Hobbies and outside of work interests?**

Scrapbooking & swimming. I am learning the basics of beading. I like to camp in the summer with the fam, work in the yard and do small upgrades to the house – except for painting – ugh.

#### **Interesting "Fun Fact" about you?**

I have what JR calls "lyrical tourettes" because I frequently bust out in song with my own made-up lyrics.



### **LISA DRAKE**

*Dispatcher since 1988*

#### **What did you do prior to working at CRESA?**

I worked for 4 years at the Vancouver Mall Meier and Frank store and then 2 years at Clackamas Nordstrom. My (then) boyfriend was a volunteer firefighter and I became interested in the dispatching behind his date-interrupting pages!

#### **Favorite things about your job?**

My job is NEVER monotonous. The officers sometimes ask us if we are kidding when they are dispatched on strange calls, and our answer is always the same, "We COULD NOT make this stuff up!" The people here are more like a family than friends; we know all about each others' kids, families and lives, probably because we spend more time here with each other than we do with our families!!

#### **Hobbies and outside of work interests?**

I find great relief in post-shift bargain shopping, much to my husband's dismay. I also like cruising the Goodwill and thrift stores in the area for cheap "re-purposing craft supplies" like wreaths made with vintage Christmas ornaments. Lately, my passion is making custom cakes and cupcakes for friends and family, kinda like the "Cake Boss" does. I have a lot to learn, lol!

#### **Interesting "Fun Fact" about you?**

Fun facts? I have been with CRESA for almost 24 years. I just served my first year as a Guild Secretary, and it was an eye opening experience for me! There was a lot to learn, especially with it being a contract negotiations year. Personally? I have a strange fear of clowns, bears, log trucks and baby corn or mushrooms. And I think bananas should be consumed prior to 10 am.

