

Campus police celebrate dispatchers on their week

The Holyoke Community College campus police department celebrated National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week April 12-18, an annual appreciation that honors the dispatchers who answer phones and

radios and coordinate the delivery of emergency service personnel and equipment that can often mean the difference between life and death.

“Public safety telecommunicators — 9-1-1 operators and dispatchers — are

really the unseen ‘first first responders,’” said HCC Police Chief Laura Lefebvre. “They are the first point of contact during emergencies and often go unrecognized.”

Telecommunicators week is sponsored by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International, and celebrated annually during the second full week of April.

“Even in the best of times, dispatchers don’t get enough recognition because most of their work is behind the scenes,” Lefebvre said. “To most people, they are just voices on the phone or radio, but they are essential, and I want the community to know that.”

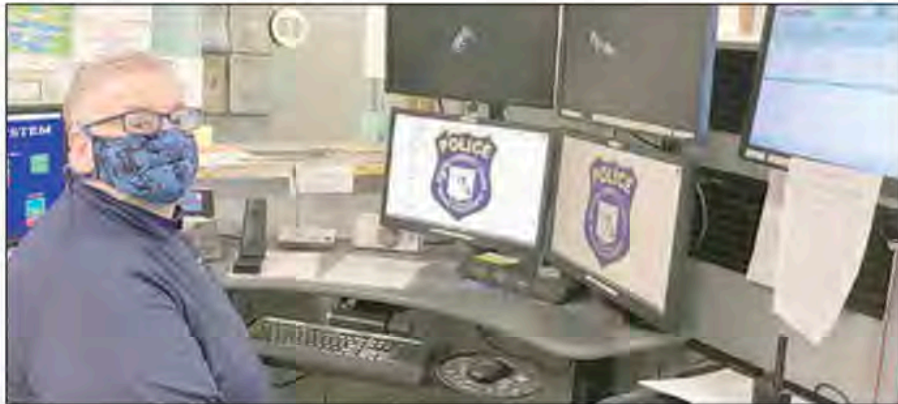
In keeping with military and first-responder tradition, each of HCC’s three full-time and six part-time dispatchers received commemorative coins to mark the occasion. One side of the coin features an American flag and the words “Emergency Communications.” The

other side says “9-1-1 Strong: Honor. Pride. Service. Integrity.”

The department also hung a banner in the station that says, “First 1st Responders, Thank You.”

Lefebvre said she has delivered “some healthy and some not-so-healthy” treats to the HCC dispatchers, a lot of virtual “thank yous,” letters of recognition and appreciation to community dispatch centers that support the college, including Holyoke Police Dispatch, Holyoke Fire/AMR, and the Massachusetts State Police Northampton Control, as well as bags of food.

“I want to not only thank the telecommunications professionals who serve the HCC community, but also extend my appreciation during this time of national emergency to all of our law enforcement partners in the area who answer their phones and radios in times of need,” she said. “Thank you for your dedicated service.”



Dispatch supervisor Jeremie Meyer at his post last month inside the Holyoke Community College Campus Police station. *Submitted photo*