

# BERRIEN COUNTY PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATION CENTER

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## PRESS RELEASE

DATE: April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

SUBJECT:

Four 911 Telecommunicators Honored at Berrien County Board of Commissioners' Meeting

TEXT:

At the Berrien County Board of Commissioners' Meeting the morning of April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, four 911 Dispatchers were honored for their service. Annually 911 operators from the County Emergency Communication Centers are invited to nominate their peers for consideration for the designation of 911 Telecommunicator of the Year. These anonymized nominations are considered by representatives from the County's 911 Advisory Committee. The presentation was made by Jack Fisher, Executive Director of Medic 1 Ambulance and Chair of the Berrien County 911 Advisory Committee.

The award is presented during National 911 Public-Safety Telecommunicators Week, which is annually recognized in April. 911 Telecommunicators are the Call-takers and Dispatchers, known as the "first first responders" for their integral role in the response to an emergency call, providing pre-arrival instructions over the phone, and mobilizing and coordinating the field response.

The award for Telecommunicator of the Year was presented to Berrien County Dispatcher Tyler Prenkert for his calm demeanor, control, intuition, and ability to reason through complex multi-faceted calls. Tyler's handling of a call last December for a house fire from a resident trapped inside was highlighted. He was able to calm the caller and quickly determine viable options for the woman, who had limited mobility, providing instructions to her that helped aid in her surviving the fire. "This call was just one excellent point in his overall performance, but one that should be recognized for a job well done as a well-rounded telecommunicator and a representative of Berrien County that we are proud to have on staff," wrote the staff member that nominated Prenkert.

Also recognized were nominees Niles Dispatcher Earl Shaffer for his willingness to go the extra mile for callers and his partners, and for his calm demeanor; Berrien County Supervisor Sarah Blurton for her knowledge, adaptability, and going above and beyond for her teammates; and Berrien County Supervisor Cassidie Pointer for her attentiveness to her team and hands on leadership.

"We have amazing, caring, hard-working 911 telecommunicators in Berrien County," said Berrien County Public-Safety Communication Center Director Caitlin Sampsell. "Celebrating them as individuals and their team effort is always one of the highlights of my year."

If you think you have what it takes to provide 911 public-safety services to your community, Berrien County Public-Safety Communication Center encourages you to seek out opportunities and apply.

ATTACHED:

- Picture of Berrien County Dispatcher Tyler Prenkert
- Tips for Calling 9-1-1 (below)

# **BERRIEN COUNTY PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATION CENTER**

## **Tips for Calling 9-1-1**

Know Your Location: Wireless calls to 911 provide location information, but it is not specific to your exact location in most instances. Be prepared to provide detailed location information on where you are so that help can get to you as quickly as possible. If you're not sure of the address, find a piece of mail, look at a mailbox, give close cross streets and a description of the location and/or provide landmarks.

Call If You Can, Text If You Can't: Text-to-911 service is available in an increasing number of communities around the country, including Berrien County. The service benefits individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or in a situation where they cannot speak and make a voice call. However, a traditional voice call, if possible, is still the best way to reach emergency services.

Stay Calm and Don't Hang Up: Tell the call-taker exactly what happened. Answer the call-taker's questions succinctly to the best of your ability. He or she will ask you questions in order to provide information to responders and to determine what you need to do before help arrives. Call-takers will assist you in providing medical attention to patients, such as CPR instructions, before responders arrive.

Stay on the line until you are instructed to do otherwise so that you can provide any necessary information or assistance to the 911 call-taker. Even if you accidentally call 911, don't hang up. Inform the call-taker that you dialed accidentally and that there is no emergency.

Use 911 For Emergencies: If you need police but do not have an emergency please call a non-emergency number so that the 911 lines remain open for callers with life-threatening emergencies. The Berrien County Public-Safety Communication Center can be reached at 269-983-3060; Niles City Dispatch can be reached at 269-683-1313; Van Buren County Central Dispatch can be reached at 269-657-3101; Cass County Dispatch can be reached at 269-445-1205. Many police departments' phone lines also ring into the appropriate Dispatch Center after hours, or if they do not have staff in the office.

More information about local 911 services can be found at [berriencounty.org](http://berriencounty.org) under Public-Safety/911.