9-1-1 Dispatcher Marks 30 Years of Service

This week, the Emergency Communications Department (ECD) honored Kimberly Breton on the occasion of her 30th anniversary as a public safety Communications Dispatcher II.

In appreciation and recognition of her extraordinary accomplishment, Kim was presented a reserved parking space within the ECD parking area and the sign to mark her spot. Kim is an experienced and highly skilled dispatcher who has provided excellent service to the community for three decades. Celebrating 30 years in any profession is remarkable, but in such a high stress profession, staying on the job that long is extraordinary. Kim tells us about her career and thoughts about the future.

Q. How did you get started in Emergency Communications?
I was interested in a law enforcement career when I was younger and several friends I knew with the Sheriffs Office and Salinas Police Department suggested I apply at dispatch. I took their advice and got the job.

Q. What aspects of this career that have kept you on the job for so long?
I like the fact that even though you go to work at the same place every day, the details and issues you face are constantly changing. No two days are ever the same. Sometimes you go home with a feeling that you've really helped someone and made a meaningful contribution and other days you end up feeling devastated. I also enjoy the interaction with our user agencies. I like to assist them as efficiently as possible any way I can to make their difficult job a little bit easier.

Also, job security has always been very important to me. I have worked so long at this job to support my family and to ensure they have the means to pursue their dreams. The least favorite aspect of the job is that it is very time demanding.

Q. Describe how technology has changed your profession.

When I first started in 1984, we were answering phone calls and writing and tracking all the information on cards. There were no computers to track units or find information with, no phone systems with a caller’s name, location and address, no GPS or state of the art mapping system. We had a phone, a radio, a pen, a map and a phone book. Things have definitely changed.

Q. You’ve handled thousands of calls over the years, is there one that stands out?

One of the incidents that left a real impression on me happened while I was still in training. There was a report of a woman being forced into a car and kidnapped. Salinas Police spotted the vehicle and went in pursuit. They were able to stop the vehicle and save the victim, but in the process, Officer Dennis Pardini was shot several times and was seriously wounded. That one detail made me realize how important our job really is – what we do affects people’s lives.

Q. Are you going for another milestone on the job?

I’m aiming for 55, that’s retirement age.
Child Support Services says WOWEE! to Outstanding Staff

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is adding a little zing to its employee recognition efforts. In establishing a new way to recognize outstanding work, the department has come up with a name for an award that not only describes it, but the response to such good work: WOWEE! WOWEE! stands for What Outstanding Work; Employee Excellence. Child Support Officer Joan Mills gets the credit for the name of this new program and a special acknowledgment goes to Lisa Ortiz, CSS Managing Attorney, for development, coordination and implementation.

WOWEE! awards will be given twice a year. The first presentation was held last month, and honors staff nominated from January to June 2014. The winners are: Kristina Morales, Child Support Officer II; Suzan Wurz, Accounting Supervisor; Bertie Simon-Rich, CSO/CSA Legal Compliance; Yolanda Cortez, Account Clerk.

“Because of our talented staff, we needed to have a more formal way of recognizing those who contribute to the objectives and mission of DCSS,” explains Director Stephen Kennedy. “Staff members have come up with great ideas and methods of running a lean operation and improving our customer services while at the same time reaching all-time high collection totals.”

Honorees are selected by the Recognition Committee which is comprised of managers and supervisors who submit candidates.

Criteria for nominees include: creativity in new and innovative methods and procedures, productivity, superior performance, initiative, excellent internal and external customer service, positive attitude, exemplary attendance, team player, safety achievement and volunteering for outreach.