CJCC Newsletter

A quarterly publication to foster communications and promote coordination within the criminal justice system of Northwest Ohio

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CJCC Veteran Reflects on Last Decade

by Sandy Isenberg, Outgoing President
Board of Lucas County Commissioners

As I began packing up the office I have called a second home the last seventeen years, I couldn't help but reflect on all the wonderful people I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with during a wonderful career we call public service.

Among my favorite people will always be the men and women who make the criminal justice system work here in Northwest Ohio, many of whom have sacrificed family time, meals at home, and vacations in the name of equality, fairness, and justice for all.

"A wonderful career we call public service"

As I leave public life, I salute each and every one of you.

As a Lucas County Commissioner, I had the privilege and pleasure of serving on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for the last decade.

Commissioner Bill Copeland and I are walking out the public service door together after many years, which has prompted many news reporters to request interviews and ask us many of the same questions. One of those questions happens to be: what do you think are your favorite accomplishments?

For me, one of the answers to that question is the work that has been done on behalf of children in our community, especially abused and neglected children.

There are results that are both visible and invisible to the public. Of course, the Lucas County Juvenile Justice and Detention Center is the largest and most visible.

However, the wonderful and tireless work performed by volunteers and staff in the Court-Appointed Special Advocate program is one of those unseen jewels that could and should make the public proud. Our colleagues have seen the value of CASA, awarding it a National Acts of Caring Award in 2001.

Those programs that provide alternatives for people with problems are valuable assets that I hope will grow and continue to prosper in our community. One such program, Lucas County Family Drug Court, will expand thanks to a large federal grant over the next three years.

These kinds of innovative programs are the work of many dedicated and creative people I have had the pleasure and privilege of serving alongside over many years on boards such as the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, COMPASS, Children's Trust Fund, and Family and Child Abuse Prevention Council.

Sandy Isenberg, Commisioner, Lucas County

I am also proud of the inter-agency cooperation where issues related to children are concerned. The Lucas County Sheriff's Office, Prosecutor's Office, and Child Support Enforcement Agency all deserve many congratulations for child support

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roundups, wanted posters, and other public education initiatives.

I extend a special thanks to Lucas County Prosecutor Julia Bates and her entire staff for their tireless and often emotionally-draining work on behalf of witnesses, crime victims and their families.

I don't know yet what my future holds, but rest assured I shall continue to advocate when and where possible for the welfare of our community's children.

As Commissioner Copeland and I leave office, it is my hope that we have left a legacy in the area of criminal justice that will benefit generations yet to come.

We have truly tried to lay the framework for the future with an aggressive building program that put much of the infrastructure in place for an improved criminal justice system.

As I mentioned, the JJDC is open and operating. A state-of-the-art emergency communications system is functioning well. The new Ohio 6th District Court of Appeals is nearing completion.

Of course, there is still much more work yet to be done. Studies are now finished for proposed renovations to the Lucas County Courthouse and needed changes to the Lucas County Correctional Center. I will be following the progress of those issues with interest.

Thank you all for the privilege and pleasure of working alongside you these many years. Please continue to keep the best interests of our citizens in mind in everything you do. That is the hallmark of a good public servant and a guiding principle of my 30-year public service career. Good luck and God bless all of you.

Safe Haven For Newborns

Safe for Mothers - Safe for Babies

by Julia Bates, Lucas County Prosecutor

April 2001 the Safe Haven for Newborns law became effective in Ohio. This legislation provides complete anonymity and immunity for a parent who surrenders an unharmed infant 72 hours of age or less to a specified safe haven location: to police, fire or rescue, or to hospitals.

Julia Bates, Lucas County Prosecutor

While the purpose behind this law – to prevent unwanted newborns from ending up in the trash – is laudable, the implementation and enactment was fraught with unresolved issues and frustrations. Of primary concern was the method whereby those young women who would most benefit from this law are made aware of it. As with many legislative enactments, this one came with no fund for public awareness or education, and no agency or office was charged with the responsibility for same.

> "How do we get the information into the hands of those who would most benefit from it?"

Lucas County responded to this law with multi-disciplinary training and a multi-agency press conference coinciding with the effective date of the bill. Posters and brochures were printed outlining process and procedure; a 24-hour hot line was established and staffed by the Children's Advocacy Center; the Prosecutor's web site featured the Safe Haven locations.

And then, in October 2001, a newborn infant was found abandoned in a Sylvania dumpster. The reality of this tragedy reminded us of our initial concern: how do we get the information into the hands of those who would most benefit from it?

With renewed fervor (and still no funds) Lucas County began a countywide effort to inform and educate; partners included prosecutors, police, social service, media, educators, clergy, medical, and most importantly, youth and Youth Leadership Toledo. We put articles in high school newspapers, posters in high school bathrooms, and public service announcements on T.V. and radio. At present we are working on publicity at movie theaters and malls.

Has any of this made a difference? If one baby is spared death in a dumpster – or one teenage-mom is spared prosecution – it most definitely has. Join our effort and tell someone about this law!

> "Join our effort and tell someone about this Law!"

Improved Police Communications Bureau

by Louise Eggert, Captain, Toledo Police Department

Captain Louise Eggert, TPD

The Toledo Police Communications Bureau functions as the direct line of communications from the public to officers in reporting calls for service. The bureau has undergone many changes. Five years ago, it was staffed by 36 police officers providing police dispatch and a non-emergency phone line. In 1998, the addition of 911 call taking functions and the introduction of civilians doubled operations. Dispatch training for civilians began in 1999. The civilianization process is partway complete, but these changes have been far reaching.

"In 1998 the addition of 911 call taking functions and the introduction of civilians doubled operations"

Training has become more formalized and celebratory. On January 26, 2001 the first 911 Academy graduation ceremony was held with almost two hundred attendees. The graduates added to the number of operators, while sworn officers were re-deployed to field operations. Procedures were also up-dated beginning with employee-input workgroups. They incorporated civilians and CALEA accreditation. Uniforms, based on the recommendations of an employee committee, were provided to civilians in 2001.

"Emergency communications is a stressful occupation"

TPD Communications has begun to be recognized for individual initiatives and team efforts. In February 2001 three communication trainers received the Toledo Silver Teamwork Awards for their efforts towards civilianization through training. Over the past two years at the Association of Public Safety Officials (APCO) conference in Columbus, Officer Fred Janiszewski, long-time police dispatcher, and Operator Sandra Sutter, former Lucas County 911 supervisor, were recognized in the Ohio Gold Star program for their commitment to emergency communications. In addition, the Afternoon Shift was recognized for their teamwork during two weather-related emergencies, the first being a lightening strike to the communications site in 2000. Three other operators were recognized in 2002 for their life-saving response to separate suicide calls.

On July 19, 2001 years of work were culminated when TPD Communications moved from the Alarm Building to the newly renovated Emergency Communications Center at 2144 Monroe. The new PC based environment with ergonomic workstations was a great improvement. When Toledo Fire Dispatch moved later in the year, the major emergency communication functions within Lucas County were all housed together. The operations floor was dedicated to the late Elizabeth Pierson, long-time Blockwatch leader and police department supporter.

An internal awards program was implemented this year. The program provides for peer nominations, along with citizen, law enforcement, and emergency communications award categories.

Like most emergency communications centers nationwide, Toledo has experienced some employee turnover. Emergency communications is a stressful occupation. There are currently 50 operators, with a future total of 72. A ten-member class will be hired in December 2002. Plans to complete hiring in 2003 have begun. Next year civilian supervisors will also be implemented. This provides a career ladder for operators. A series of leadership classes have been conducted during 2002 to help prepare those interested in the supervisor role.

TPD Communications remains committed to improved service and teamwork within the emergency response community. As our logo shows, quality communications and the service we provide is made only through work with others.

Working together to protect and serve
TPD Comm
TOLEDO POLICE COMMUNICATIONS

Criminal Justice
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Executive Director's Desk

As we enter a new year, it is appropriate to provide an introspective reflection on criminal justice issues from three prominent criminal justice system practitioners. I have had the honor and privilege of working with each of these women during my career. They not only command the respect of everyone in the criminal justice community but they have earned our attention to their position on issues. As I'm sure you will note in their articles, all three share a passion and vision that has certainly enhanced our efforts to improve the quality of life in this region.

The primary mission of the CJCC is to promote better coordination and cooperation between all components of the criminal justice system. We can't accomplish that mission without your input. If you would like to contribute articles of interest or present issues that impact criminal justice efforts in Northwest Ohio, please contact Barbara Huy at the CJCC either by telephone (419) 244-5819 or email Barbara.huy@NORIS.org.

Nathanael Ford
Executive Director