

## SPECIAL BULLETIN #24-096

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**TO:** ALL PERSONNEL **FROM:** Michael Wodnick, Division Manager  
Fire Communications

**SUBJECT:** 2023 DISPATCHER AND SENIOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS **DATE:** April 18, 2024

**DISPOSITION:** Retain and post at the worksite until 10/17/2024, then discard.

**ACTION:** Battalion Chiefs and Company Officers to review with personnel under their supervision

**PURPOSE:** Topic – Informational

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### PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Each year, the San José Fire Department recognizes outstanding performance by way of declaring a “Dispatcher and Senior Dispatcher of the Year” within Fire Communications. This recognition coincides with National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, which is being celebrated April 14-20, 2024. This is a national, week-long event, established in 1981 by Patricia Anderson of the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office in California, as a time to acknowledge and thank those who dedicate their lives to serving the public.

### DISPATCHER APPRECIATION ACTIVITIES

Department personnel are welcome and encouraged to call or visit to express appreciation. There will be a week-long celebration filled with fun games, decorations, food, and gifts. Thank you to all who signed up to provide food throughout the week!

### 2023 SJFD DISPATCHER OF THE YEAR: SCARLET DARMOUSSEH

Scarlet Darmousseh was selected as the 2023 San José Fire Department Dispatcher of the Year.

Scarlet is an invaluable member of our dispatch team and truly does what she can to make things better for all. She consistently performs her job well by executing her call taking and radio dispatcher duties with great skill and diligence. Not only are her concrete performance attributes worthy of dispatcher of the year, but she also takes it to the next level and goes beyond standard work duties for her peers.

Scarlet is thoughtful and there to assist her co-workers. She will regularly work shift substitutions for others so they can have days off and volunteers for overtime. She will ask questions and seek answers to clarify or maybe identify an area that could be improved and appropriately pursue a way to suggest and implement change that would be beneficial for all. Through her chain of command, she has brought forward suggestions for overtime, various schedule options, training, recruitment, policy, and other useful ideas. Scarlet is also an MEF steward and director.

Scarlet is a consistent presence in the training unit and repeatedly volunteers to assist with academies year after year. 2023 was no exception and she regularly helped with scenarios and instructed various courses. She is also a significant part of the Communications Training Officer (CTO) team. In 2023, she was an engaged CTO that spent over 400 hours training new personnel.

Scarlet volunteered multiple times throughout the year with recruitment and hiring process efforts. In 2023, she contributed to two department public education social media videos as a speaker on camera representing fire communications. Not only does she volunteer for fire comm recruitment efforts, in 2023 Scarlet also volunteered to lead a fitness station at the Department Women’s bootcamp.

Since Scarlet joined us in 2016, she has been a supportive peer and mentor to many while she gets the job done with a pleasant and positive attitude towards her work, peers, supervisors, line personnel, allied agencies, and the community.

### 2023 SJFD SENIOR DISPATCHER OF THE YEAR: MELISSA MCANDREWS

Melissa McAndrews was selected as the 2023 San José Fire Department Senior Dispatcher of the Year.

Melissa joined our team in 2013 and has remained dedicated since; she demonstrates this through her support, advocacy, and leadership during emergencies and day-to-day operations. She fosters a positive and cohesive work environment seen through her team-building efforts.

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Melissa is known for her crafting and regularly coordinates shift meals when working holidays with her team. Melissa provided team-building activities for her shift during the Christmas week which helped bring joy to the team during the holidays. These personalized tokens of appreciation not only demonstrate her creativity but also her genuine care for her people including a fun annual be-on-the-lookout broadcast for Santa and his reindeer each year on Christmas Eve. This has brought wonder, joy, and magic to dispatchers and their families.

Melissa regularly works overtime and when she is tasked with sending out mandatory overtime notification texts, she adds fun and funny facts to help ease the notification.

Melissa is polite and professional as a leader, call taker, and dispatcher. She remains calm during significant working events and provides her team with a calm and supportive presence, regularly checking in on their needs as they work together to mitigate emergencies. She supports trainees on her shift and the CTOs training them. She encourages her team to seek answers and have productive conversations about policy and procedure.

Melissa creates opportunities for her team to recharge, relax, and connect, ultimately contributing to a more positive and cohesive work culture. Her continued efforts to incorporate fun and skill-building for her team show her commitment and leadership.

### **CONCLUSION**

San José Fire Communications dispatchers consistently provide excellent customer service with high levels of accuracy under high-stress situations. We are proud to celebrate them all year and especially during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

*APPROVED FOR POSTING:*



**MICHAEL WODNICK**, Division Manager  
Fire Communications

ALL PERSONNEL SHALL READ

A-SHIFT

B-SHIFT

C-SHIFT

40-HR.