

2023

Annual Report

DAKOTA 911
POLICE • FIRE • EMS





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Director's Message

Change is the only constant is one of my favorite phrases, as it serves as a reminder that we are always a work in progress. This year was a big year of change for Dakota 911, starting with the leadership transition earlier this year when I was given the opportunity to join and lead this great organization. I am so impressed by the team we have at Dakota 911 and the level of service provided to the citizens and stakeholders. It is my pleasure to present you with the 2023 Annual Report.

Staffing

Our people are our greatest asset and always will be. We accomplished some important objectives this year, many focused on ensuring we continue to attract and retain the best talent for Dakota 911. Like many of our public safety agencies and 911 partners, our biggest challenge is recruitment and retention. The stressful and demanding nature of the work involved makes it difficult to find and keep staff interested in a career in 911. In 2023 we adopted a new staffing strategy and aggressive goals focused on raising our staffing targets over the next couple of years. Additionally, in late 2023 we implemented a trial of part-time status positions to help bridge the staffing gap. We look forward to monitoring the value these positions bring to our staffing strategy.

In an industry that sees more than 20% annual turnover, these goals are critical to our success.

Business Efficiency

A couple of key initiatives were implemented in 2023 with business efficiency in mind. A new training and policy management platform was implemented to modernize and streamline Dakota 911's robust training program and the administration of policies and procedures. Also in late 2023, all staff were migrated to the Office 365 platform to support team engagement and collaboration by providing them the tools used in many office settings, like Microsoft Teams and SharePoint. The migration to Office 365 also allowed us to improve our security posture with multifactor authentication (MFA) for all staff.

Director's Message

Enhancing Emergency Response to Calls

Enhancing emergency response to calls for service remains a top priority for Dakota 911.

In 2023 Dakota 911 implemented the Radius mapping platform, a next-generation primary call-taking map to support emergency response. A story on how this technology aided in saving the life of a citizen is featured on page 27 of this report.

Another significant project in 2023 was the migration to new 911 call handling equipment. We are now one of 40 911 PSAPs on the Motorola cloud-hosted solution in Minnesota. The move to a hosted solution strengthens our contingency plans by providing the capability to deploy our 911 call processing equipment from alternative locations in the event contingency plans are activated.

Finally, I take great pleasure in highlighting our heroes behind the headset that save lives every day. You will notice several recognitions and their accomplishments featured in greater detail throughout the report.

We look forward to another great year of progress in 2024!



HEIDI HIESERICH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mission Statement

The mission of Dakota 911 is to serve and protect public safety by providing a vital communications link between the community and their public safety responders. We recognize both as our customers.

In furtherance of our mission, we are committed to:

- The highest standards of integrity and customer service
- Efficient and effective acquisition and dissemination of information
- Accountability for performance and conduct
- Continuous improvement through professional development



Organization Structure





Governance

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR, ROSEMOUNT MAYOR WEISENSEL

The Board of Directors consists of an elected official from each member organization. As representatives of their respective member communities, the Board of Directors provides high level policy leadership on JPA and bylaws modifications, budget approval, and hiring of the Dakota 911 Executive Director.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIR, ROSEMOUNT CITY ADMINISTRATOR MARTIN

The Executive Committee consists of the chief administrator of each member organization. Representatives work closely with the Executive Director to provide direction and oversight of the operations of Dakota 911.

FIRE/EMS OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

CHAIR, FARMINGTON FIRE CHIEF ELVESTAD

The Fire/EMS Operations Sub-committee makes up one half of the Joint Operations Committee. Member Chiefs (or their designee) provide operational feedback and guidance related to fire and emergency medical service response within Dakota County.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

CHAIR, ROSEMOUNT POLICE CHIEF DAHLSTROM

The Law Enforcement Operations Sub-committee makes up one half of the Joint Operations Committee. Member Chiefs and Sheriff (or their designee) provide operational feedback and guidance related to law enforcement response within Dakota County.



Our Dakota 911 Team

Administration

Heidi Hieserich

Brent Anderson

Jen Hildebrandt

Technical Support Specialists

John Sutton

Kevin Sok

Public Safety Telecommunicator Supervisors

Vicki Nelson

Tara Shoemaker

Rachel Keeler

Matt Ausmus

Andy Schoo

Pascale Smith

Jim Zgoda

Kristina Morales

Sarah Wiessner

Public Safety Telecommunicators

Kellie Bailey

LynAnn Vossberg

Mary Watry

Cindy Ryan

Mike Whebbe

Brian Kluck

Dave Chilson

Jenni Buran

Jolene Cemensky

Tiffany Gleason

Gino Messina

Becky Evans

Amy Strese

Tori Bourdages

Mady White

Justine Wernick

Melissa Taibi

Mike Maurer

Max Hiracheta

Lindsey Hubler

Delci Merrell

Alex Babcock

James Mitchell

Taylor Schmidt

Sarah Baker

Jason Beskar

Riley Stevenson

Angela Scrudato

Jenny Melton

Becca Leubner

Melissa Peers

Hannah Elrod

Patrick Koerble

Kat Monjaras

Chris Robison

Peyton Schroeder

Heather Norman

Maya Drusch

Julius Leonard

Alex Beckman

Amelia Dammer

Desirae Hertling

Andrew Matichak

Administration

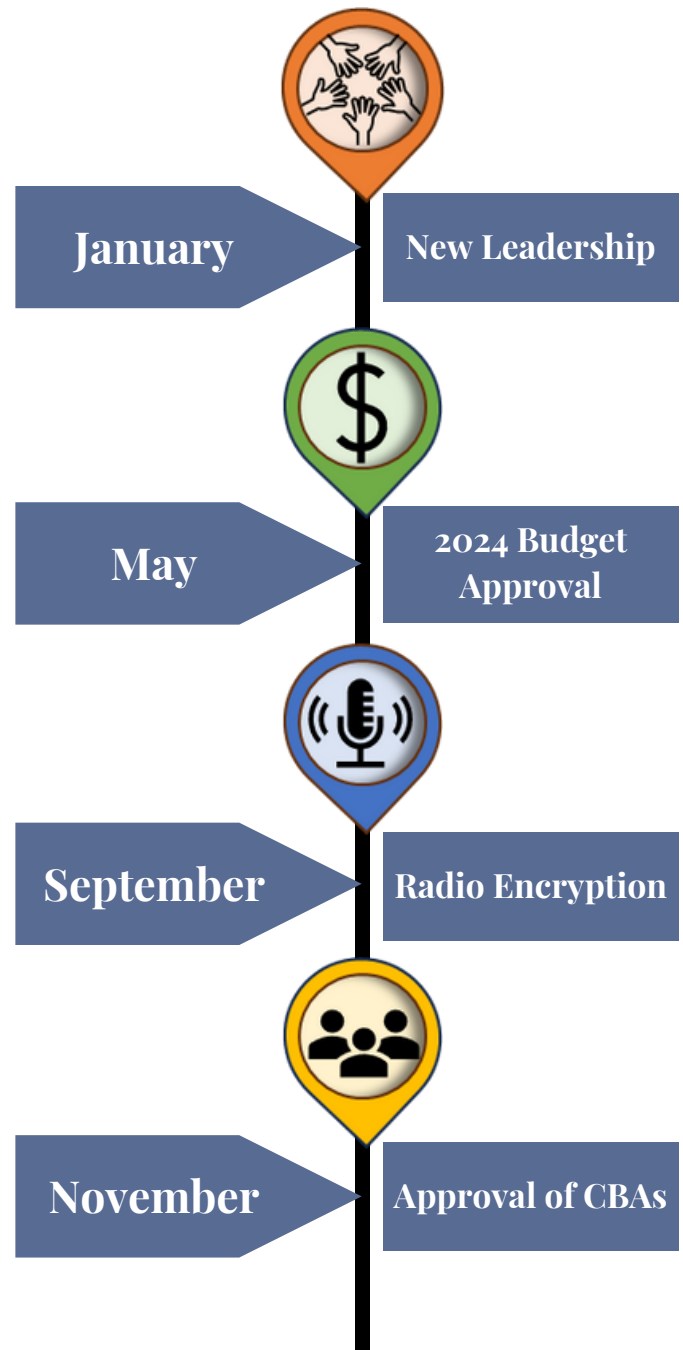
Dakota 911 Administration is a three-person team made up of the Executive Director, the Operations Director and the HR Coordinator/Executive Assistant.

With the start of 2023 Dakota 911 welcomed Heidi Hieserich as its fourth Executive Director. Brent Anderson was six months into his appointment as Operations Director.

Director Anderson worked with the operations committees to address experiences that included increased 911 hang-ups and crisis calls, and to continue to prepare for the move to encrypted communications in September.

Rounding out the administrative team, Jen Hildebrandt was able to put her years of experience to use supporting the new management team through budgeting, hiring and overall organizational administration.

At the close of 2023, the administration team had successfully navigated through a year filled with much change. Collective bargaining agreements had been signed, and efforts turned toward guiding implementation of operational changes for the betterment of the organization, its membership and our communities.



Technical Support

The Dakota 911 Technical Support team is responsible for installing, upgrading, maintaining and repairing all technology hardware and software to ensure optimal communications center performance.

In September, the technical support team returned to full compliment when long-time Technical Support Specialist John Sutton was joined by Kevin Sok.

2023 projects supported by the Dakota 911 tech team included the transition to Office 365 and a migration of the 911 system to the cloud environment.



Supervisors

The 9-person supervisory team is made up of 7 floor supervisors and two supervisors assigned to CAD and quality assurance/improvement (QA/QI) administrative positions.

The Dakota 911 floor supervisory team worked at 71% staffing levels the first quarter of 2023, and 86% staffing the remainder of the year due to staff on leave.

In addition to 24/7 operational supervision, this team also takes on supplemental assignments including staff training, scheduling, and supporting member agencies with audio requests and inquiries.

The CAD and QA/QI supervisors focus primarily on supporting CAD/system configurations, statistical reporting, ongoing training, employee recognition, and ultimately working to ensure the high quality standards our community and member agencies deserve. They also step in to support operations as necessary.



Telecommunicators

Dakota 911 Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs) process emergency and non-emergency calls, and provide public safety communication service for police, fire, and emergency medical service agencies in Dakota County.

Dakota 911 operates a two-stage dispatch center. While PSTs assigned to call taking collect information from callers, PSTs assigned to radio dispatch relay the information to responders and provide incident support. All Dakota 911 PSTs are cross trained to provide call taking and both fire and law enforcement radio dispatch services. Additionally, all staff are certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD), which qualifies them to provide critical lifesaving pre-arrival instructions and support to callers.



Labor Management

The Labor Management Committee (LMC) was established in spring of 2023 and consists of 5 PSTs, 2 supervisors and 1 director. Co-chaired by Operations Director Brent Anderson and PST Mary Watry, the committee discussed the following topics in 2023:

- Overtime assignments
- Formation of a scheduling committee
- Recruitment & Retention of new hires and Trainers
- Implementation of a Lead CTO pilot program
- Creation of a part-time Public Safety Telecommunicator position

2023 LMC Members

Brent Anderson
Matt Ausmus
Jenni Buran

James Mitchell
Tara Shoemaker
Melissa Taibi

Mary Watry
Mandy White



Trainers & Mentors

Communications Training Officers (CTO) are responsible for training and supporting their new PST partners during the first 6 - 9 months of employment. In 2023, Dakota 911 CTOs logged an estimated 4,537 hours of training.

2023 Trainers

Sarah Baker
Jason Beskar
Jenni Buran
Dave Chilson
Max Hiracheta

Brian Kluck
Delci Merrell
Heather Norman
Melissa Peers
Taylor Schmidt

Riley Stevenson
Melissa Taibi
Mary Watry
Mandy White

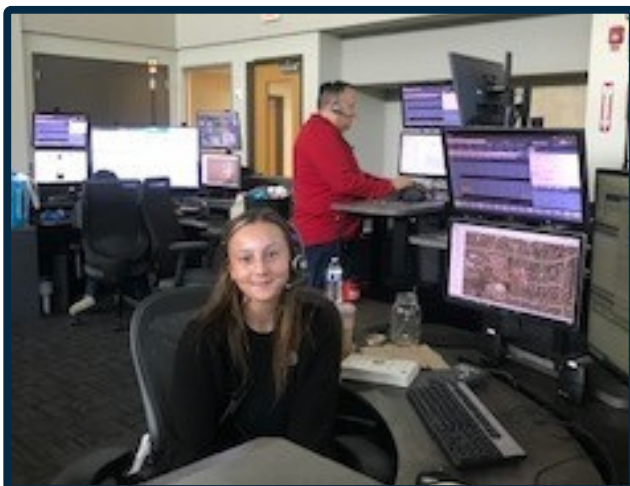
Mentors provide added emotional support and encouragement to new hires as they adapt to this challenging, yet rewarding career in public safety.

2023 Mentors

Sarah Baker
Tori Bourdages
Dave Chilson
Hannah Elrod

Jen Hildebrandt
Becca Leubner
Jenny Melton
Angela Scrudato

Riley Stevenson
LynAnn Vossberg
Mike Whebbe



2023 Training

Dakota 911 staff undergo continuous training and recertification. Twice annually, in the spring and fall, employees convene in small group sessions.

2023 Spring Training Session

The 2023 spring training sessions covered both operational and mental health topics. Along with an ARMER radio refresher, Dakota County Parks/Lakes and Trails reviewed the types of calls they respond to, and available resources, including drone support. Blue Peak focused on mental health and resiliency training geared towards PSTs.

2024 Fall Training Session

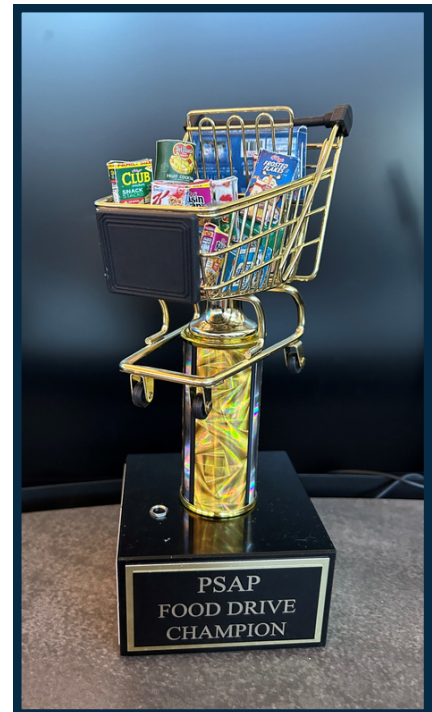
The 2023 fall trainings began with recognitions presented by Directors Hieserich and Anderson. Benefits representatives provided an overview of 2024 benefits, and Burnsville Fire presented a mass casualty training that included an overview of the EMS system, a proposed plan for a universal Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) call type, and resources available to staff in the event of another mass casualty incident like the one experienced during a large-scale funeral in Burnsville earlier in the year.



Events & Activities

Metro Area Emergency Communication Centers

The 2023 holiday season marked the 1st Annual PSAP holiday food drive. Quickly becoming a healthy competition, metro PSAPs had one month to collect items for their selected local charity. At the close of the food drive, Anoka County, Dakota 911, Hennepin County, Minneapolis, Ramsey County and State Patrol PSAPs collected just under 3,000 items. Dakota 911 took home the traveling trophy, collecting 858 items. These items were delivered to the Dakota 911-selected charity, 360 Communities.



Events & Activities

Cookies with Santa

The Dakota 911 team hosted our annual Cookies with Santa event in early December. This event is open to all Dakota 911 staff, member agencies, and their families. Staff and families are invited to enjoy refreshments and get their photo taken with Santa.



Awards

Telecommunicator of the Year - Tiffany Gleason

Tiffany began her public safety career in 2003 as a telecommunicator for Pulaski County Sheriff's Office in Arkansas. After a couple of years, she relocated to Minnesota where she had a brief departure from dispatching. In June of 2006 Tiffany was hired by Apple Valley Police Department where she continued her dispatching career until joining Dakota 911 through the PSAP consolidation in 2007.

Tiffany was recognized by the Rosemount American Legion in March 2023, when she became the 15th Telecommunicator to receive this prestigious recognition since Dakota 911 inception.



PAST AND PRESENT - TELECOMMUNICATORS OF THE YEAR		
2022 - Tiffany Gleason	2017 - Tera Hahle	2012 - Mandy White
2021 - Gino Messina	2016 - Mindy Kaltenhauser	2011 - MaryJo Eilers
2020 - Sarah Wiessner	2015 - Jenni Buran	2010 - Jolene Cemensky
2019 - LynAnn Vossberg	2014 - Mike Whebbe	2009 - Rachel Keeler
2018 - Cindy Ryan	2013 - John O'Laughlin	2008 - Katie Hoffman

Awards

Certified Training Officer of the Year - Melissa Taibi

Melissa Taibi has spent the majority of her 9 1/2 years at Dakota 911 in the training capacity.

In December the Burnsville VFW recognized Melissa as Certified Training Officer of the Year.

“I find the most rewarding part of training to be providing someone with little to no experience a solid base to start their career, allowing them to become a productive and reliable partner. Training is not easy, and it has taught me a lot about patience and problem solving.”



PAST AND PRESENT - CTO OF THE YEAR
2023 - Melissa Taibi

Awards

Telecommunicator of the Month

Each month staff received an internal report that identifies top performers in the following categories:

- Average Dispatch Times for Priority Law Calls
- Number of Training Hours
- Amount of Overtime Picked Up

The report also shares all recognitions received by supervisors, co-workers, member agencies, and the public. Based on the information provided, staff vote for who they feel should receive the Telecommunicator of the Month award.



2023 TELECOMMUNICATOR OF THE MONTH		
January - Alex Babcock	May - NA	September - Alex Babcock
February - Jenni Buran	June - Max Hiracheta	October - Sarah Baker
March - Kellie Bailey	July - Gino Messina	November - Maya Drusch
April - Taylor Schmidt	August - Julius Leonard	December - Jolene Cemensky

Recognitions

The **Award of Merit** is given to an employee for outstanding self-initiated work or for long-term exceptional performance and dedication to Dakota 911 and the public at large. This award may be given to an employee who displays extraordinary service or expertise.

Alex Babcock
Kellie Bailey
Sarah Baker
Jason Beskar
Tori Bourdages
Jenni Buran
Jolene Cemensky
Dave Chilson
Maya Drusch
Hannah Elrod
Tiffany Gleason
Lindsey Hubler
Lauren Irwin
Brian Kluck
Patrick Koerble
Mike Maurer
Jenny Melton
Gino Messina
Kat Monjaras
Kyle Oswald
Cindy Ryan
Taylor Schmidt
Peyton Schroeder
Angela Scrudato
Mindy Soli
Amy Strese
LynAnn Vossberg
Mary Watry



Recognitions

Recognition of Achievement - Andy Schoo

Andy Schoo started his public safety career with Dakota 911 in November of 2010. He became a trainer in 2013 and continued in that capacity until his promotion to supervisor in September of 2019.

In 2023 Andy received his certification as an All Hazards Type III Communications Unit Leader (COML). This FEMA-designated position and program is managed at the state level. To earn his certification, Andy completed training and an extensive task book. Communications planning for incidents and events requires oversight by a state-certified COML. Andy is a resource to all Dakota County agencies and metro partners when it comes to planning communications for incidents and events of all sizes and scope.

If that wasn't enough for a year, Andy went on to earn his certification as an Emergency Number Professional (ENP) through the National Emergency Number Association (NENA). Earning this certification demonstrates mastery of the comprehensive knowledge base required for emergency number program management and demonstrates leadership in 911. The knowledge base is vast and highly technical.

Andy also expects to earn his Emergency Management Certificate through MN-DPS/HSEM in early 2024.

Way to go Andy. We are so fortunate to have you at Dakota 911!



Recognitions

The **Stork Award** is given to a telecommunicator when they coach a caller through child delivery. Recognized by Dakota County EMS Council, employees receive a certificate and a stork pin in the color of the baby's gender. In 2023, 2 telecommunicators helped bring babies into the world.

Melissa Peers

Jenni Buran

The **Lifesaving Award** is given to a telecommunicator when they administer life-saving pre-arrival protocols. For each life saved, a leaf is added to the Dakota 911 Tree of Life. Each leaf identifies the name of the telecommunicator, and the date their efforts helped to save a life. In 2023, two telecommunicators earned a leaf on the Dakota 911 Tree of Life.

Gino Messina

Alex Beckman



Recognitions

For one week every April Emergency Communications Centers and our partners nation-wide celebrate **National PubTelecommunicator's Week**. This week is dedicated to the rarely seen, only heard first responders, Public Safety Telecommunicators.

The week of April 9th through 15th Dakota 911 had a fun-filled week of dressing up, awards and recognitions, games, and food. Telecommunicators also had numerous visitors delivering words of appreciate and treats. These visitors included member governance representatives, numerous fire/EMS and law enforcement responders, and Soldiers 6.

Referred to by some Dakota 911 telecommunicators as “the best National Telecommunicator's Week ever”, the supervisory team upped their game by serving numerous meals for all shifts through the week. This included fresh-baked cookies with an aroma that filled the entire facility. Administration contributed to the event by providing a small token of appreciation, and Director Hieserich brought her family in to stuff “goody bags” for staff.

A series of fun awards were added to NTW festivities in 2023. Voted on by their peers, recipients received trophies in the following categories:

“The Early Bird”, “Cheermeister”, “Super Snacker”, “Everything but the Kitchen Sink”, “Prankster”, “Elephant Memory”, “Camouflage”, “Got Your Back”, “Coffeeholic” and “Center Parent”.

Much thanks to Dakota 911 Supervisors, our member agencies and partners, and everyone who contributed to this great week celebrating some great people.



Community Engagement

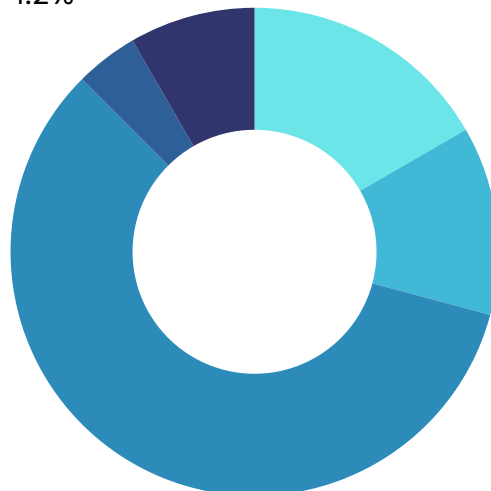
Educating our communities and engaging potential employees is a top priority for Dakota 911. In 2023 staff participated in 24 engagement opportunities ranging from department open houses to metro-wide hiring events.

Community engagement is a high priority for Dakota 911. In 2023 staff participated in 24 events at the local, metro and state levels.



Community Events
4.2%

School Events/Career Fairs
16.7%



Citizen Academies
12.5%

Member Fire/Law Events
58.3%

Partnerships

Crisis Intervention

In June Dakota 911 invited staff from the Dakota County Crisis Response Unit (CRU) onsite to provide an opportunity for both teams to meet and learn more about one another's operations. The visit provided valuable insight for both teams and facilitated conversations focused on strengthening our important partnership. The Dakota 911 team looks forward to having the CRU back again soon to help educate all staff on the crisis response continuum of care.

In 2023 the Dakota 911 team referred 992 calls to the CRU, of which 83% were handled by CRU without law enforcement involvement.

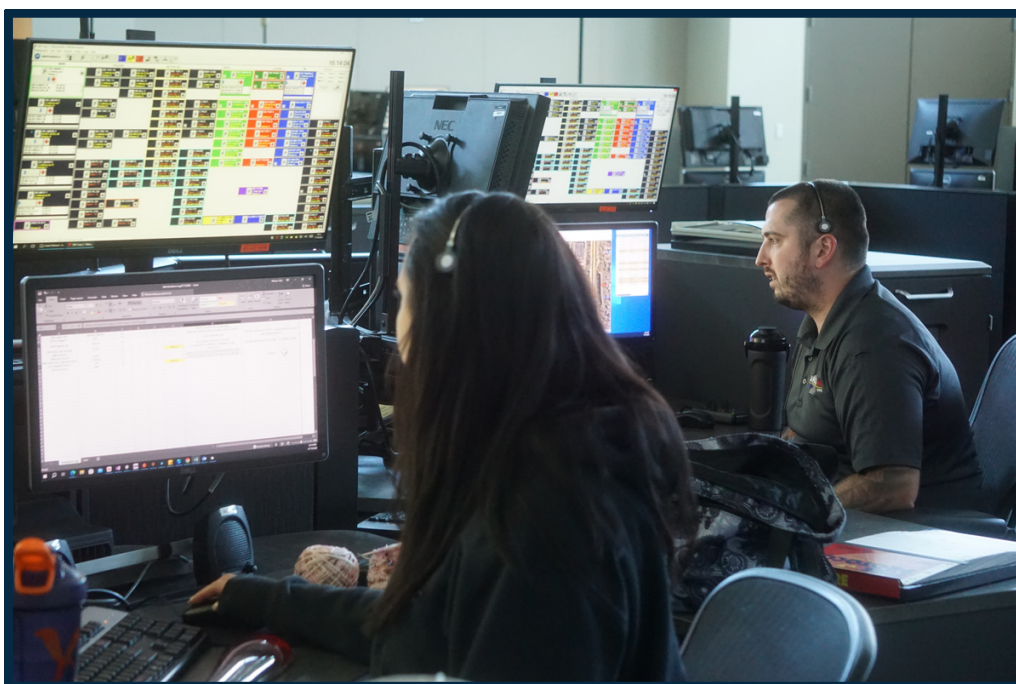
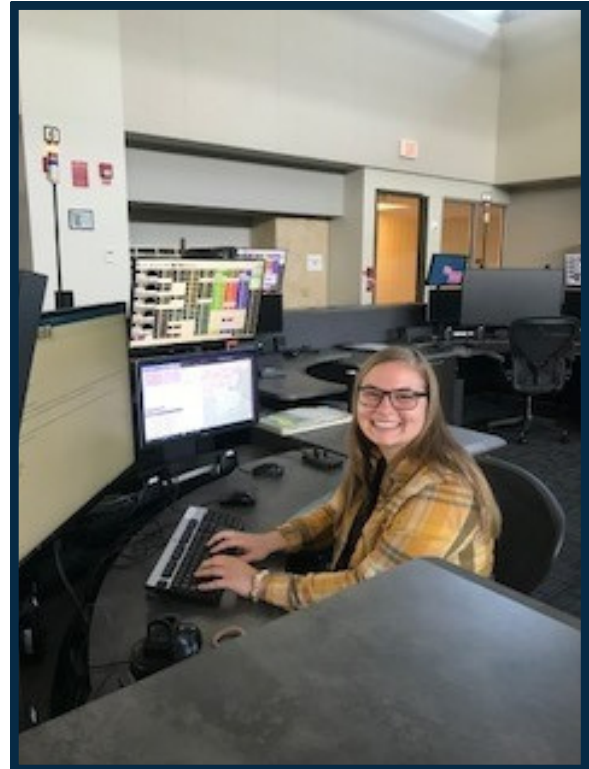
Of the 992 calls, 34% were one-time referrals. Repeat calls (2+ or more) account for 66% of these calls.



Technology

Power DMS

Dakota 911 implemented Power DMS by NEO Gov in late 2023. This training and policy management platform will help modernize Dakota 911's training program by adding efficiencies to the training process and bringing transparency to team performance. The platform is widely used to help manage public safety training programs and supports all phases of new service training delivery and overall training compliance. In addition to training support, Power DMS provides a policy management platform that Dakota 911 looks forward to using to support policy/procedure and resource management for staff.

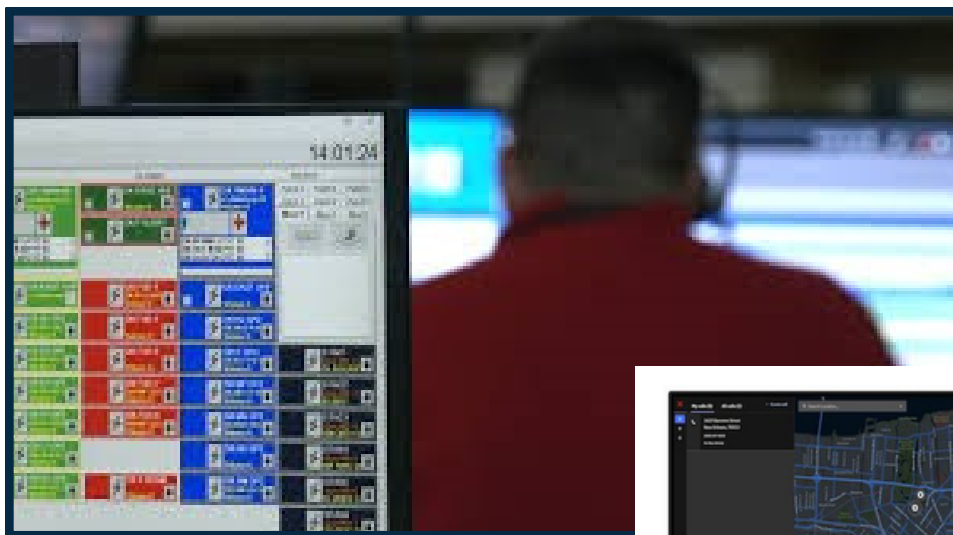


Technology

Rapid Deploy

Rapid Deploy is a Next Generation mapping platform that was implemented in early 2023. It is used to obtain precise location information from 911 callers by using the GPS information provided by their device versus an approximation of their location based on cellular tower signals. The platform also provides public safety telecommunicators with an option to send a link to individuals to request their location and initiate text conversations.

In July, the tool proved useful when Dakota 911 was contacted by an individual requesting emergency assistance for a family member experiencing a medical emergency in a local park. The challenge of this situation was that the caller was not with the person and did not know their location. The PST was able to send the person a link to request their location and get them emergency support just moments before they became unresponsive. Thanks to this technology and the quick thinking of the PSTs handling the call, Gino Messina and Jessica Stanton, this individual received the emergency care needed just in time.



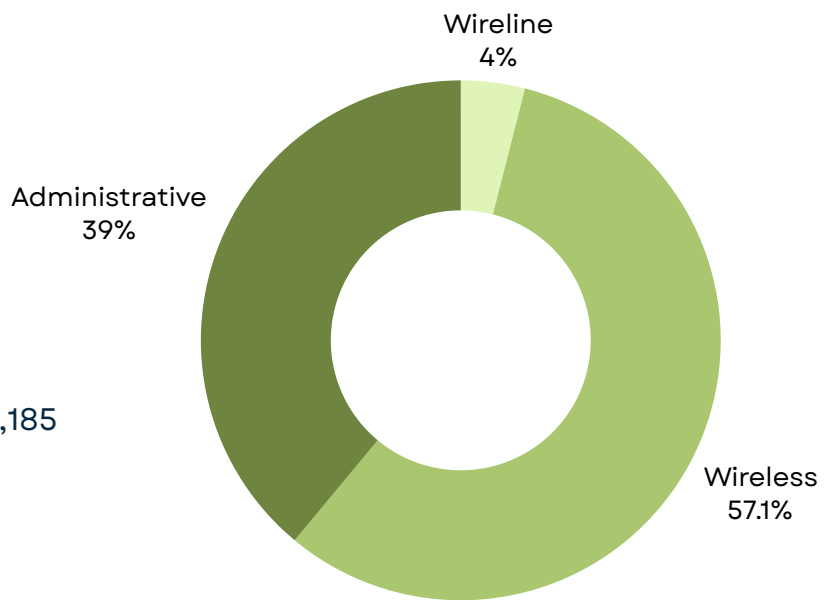
Performance & Analysis

Incoming Call Volume

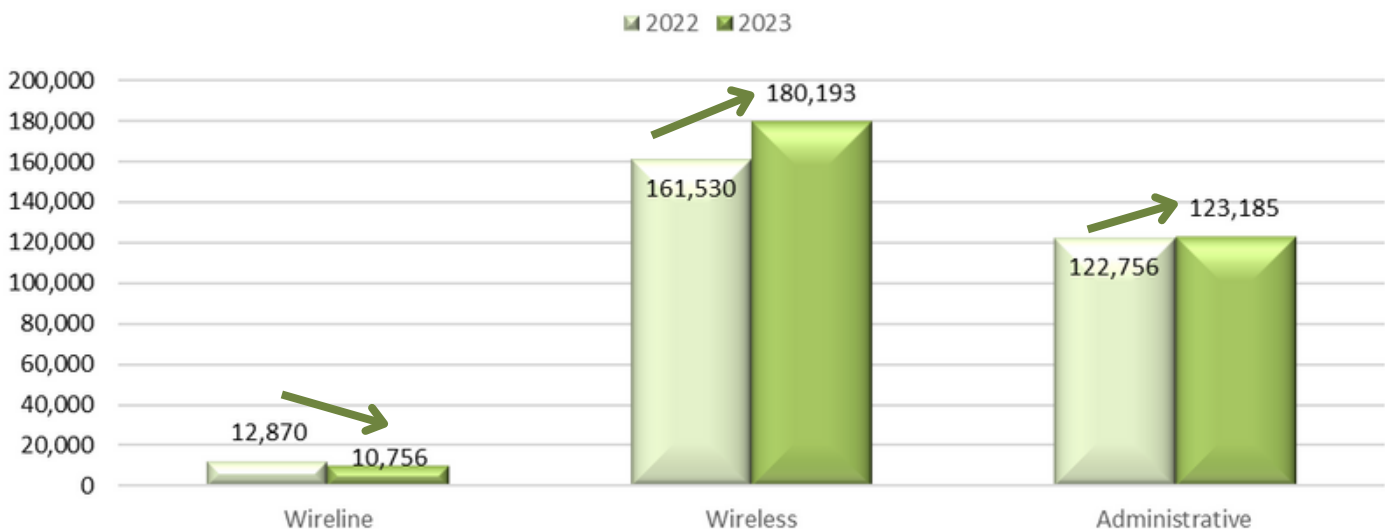
In 2023 Dakota 911 answered 314,134 emergent and non-emergent calls for help. This is a 5.7% increase from 2022.

Incoming Call Breakdown

- 911 Line **61%**
 - Wireline: 10,756
 - Wireless: 180,193
- Administrative line **39%**: 123,185



INCOMING CALLS



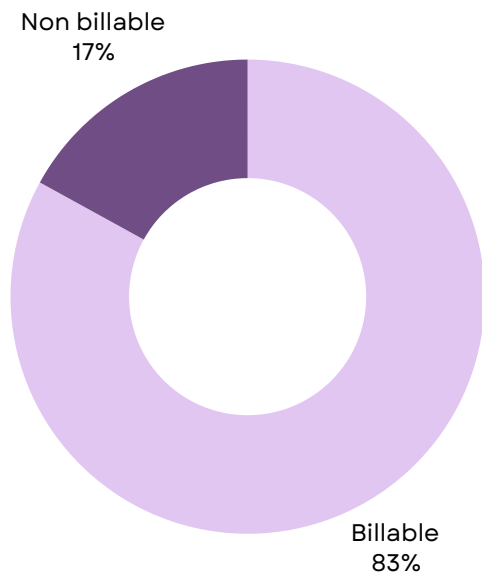
Performance & Analysis

CAD events

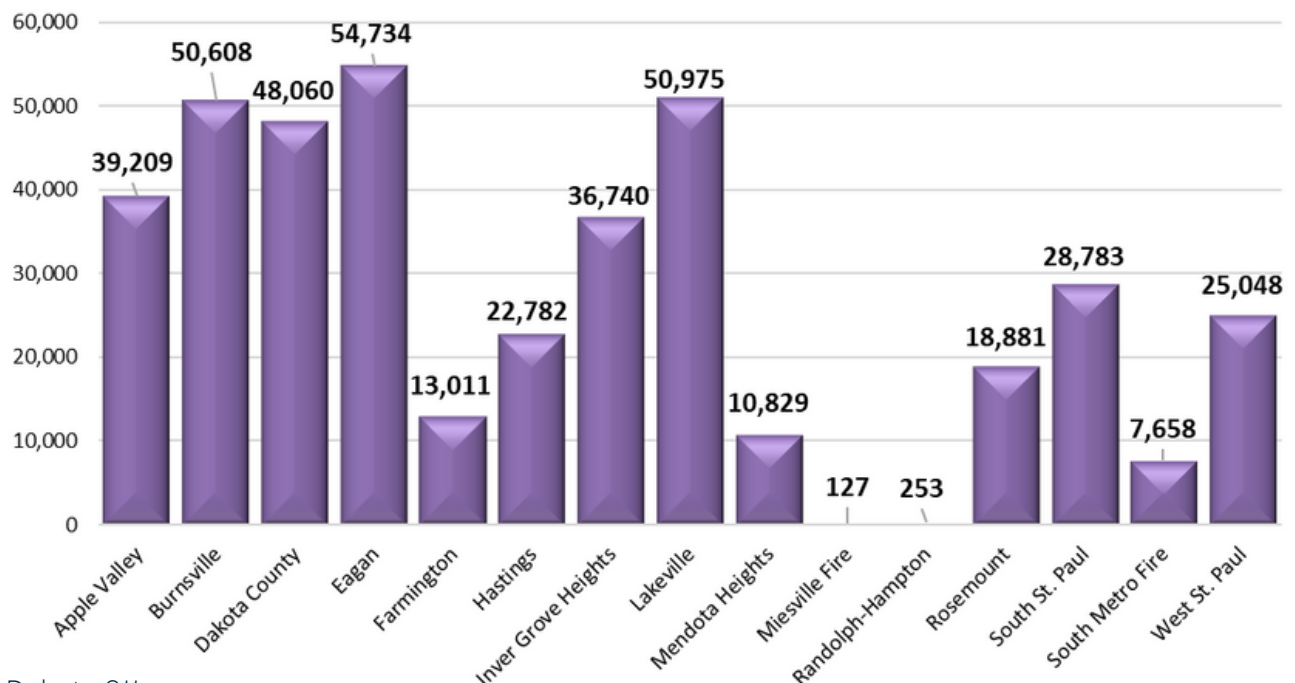
Total CAD events increased 3.2% to 407,698 in 2023. Total CAD events include billable and non-billable CAD activity for fire/EMS and law enforcement disciplines across the county. Because some call types are predominantly self-initiated, governance has directed that they are considered non-billable. Non billable events made up 17% of CAD activity in 2023. Non-billable call types include:

- Civil Service
- Detail
- Follow-up
- Mental Health Aftercare
- Premise Checks

Billable v. Non-billable



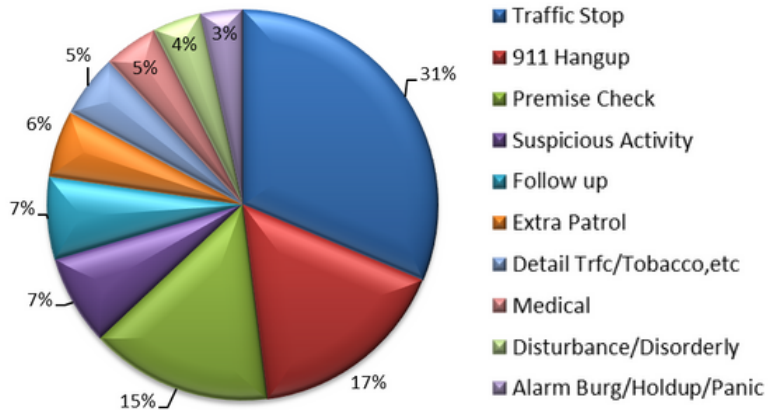
Total CAD Events by Agency



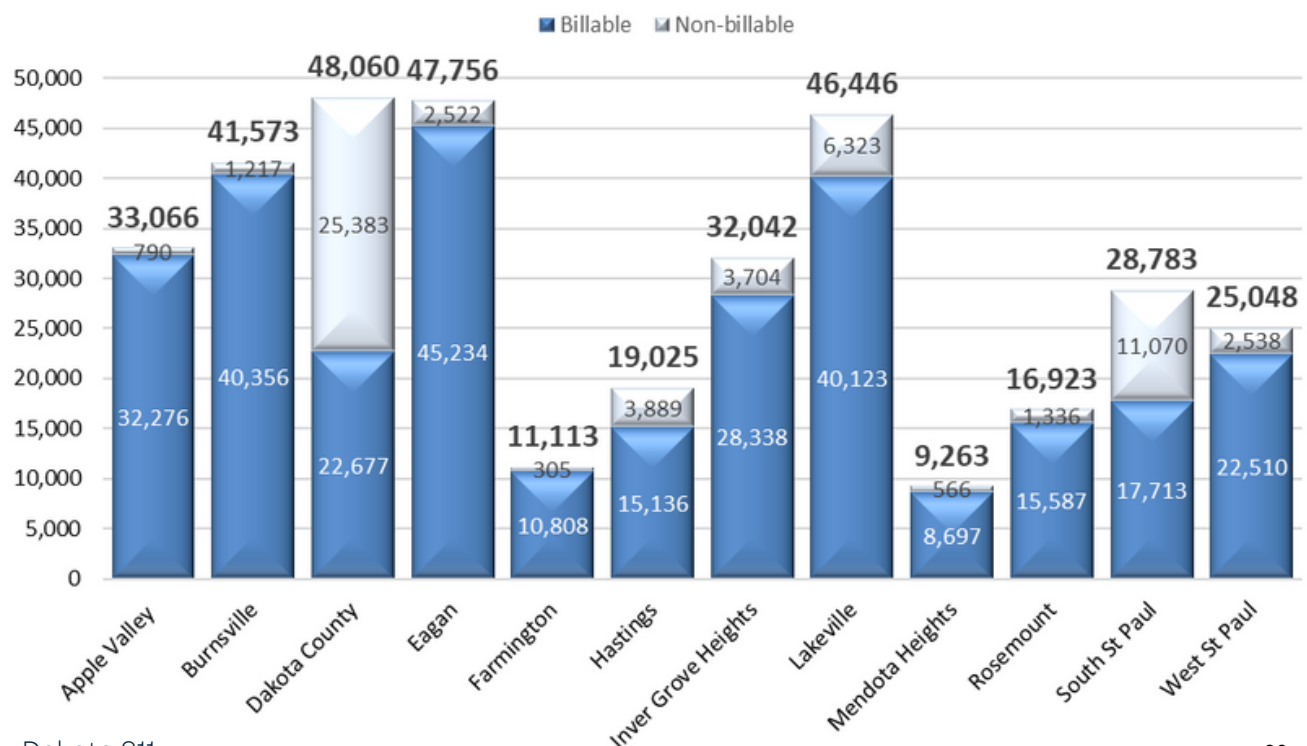
Performance & Analysis

Law enforcement CAD events increased 3.6% from 2022, totaling 359,098. The most commonly occurring events included traffic stops, 911 hang ups and premise checks. The increase in 911 hang up calls is attributed to a global mobile device issue that resulted in accidental calls to 911 via an emergency SOS feature. Dakota 911 saw as much as 100% increase in these calls during the spring and summer months, and a 33% increase for the year overall compared to 2022.

Most Commonly Occurring Events



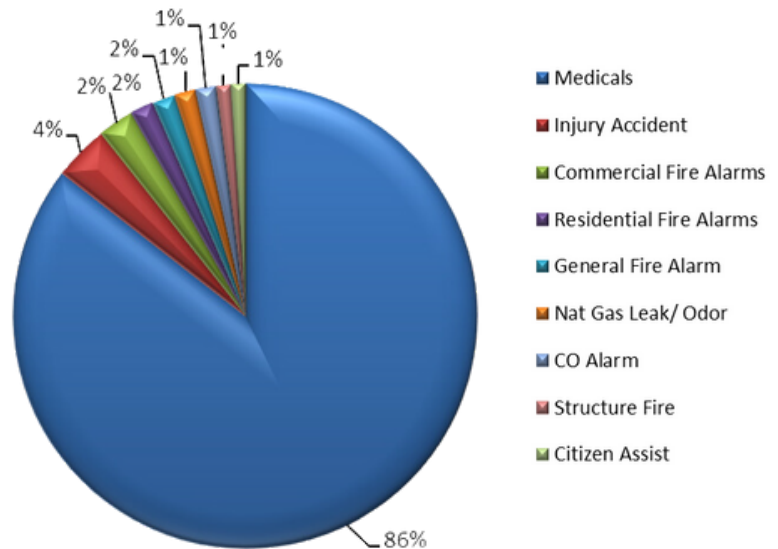
CAD Events by Law Enforcement Jurisdiction



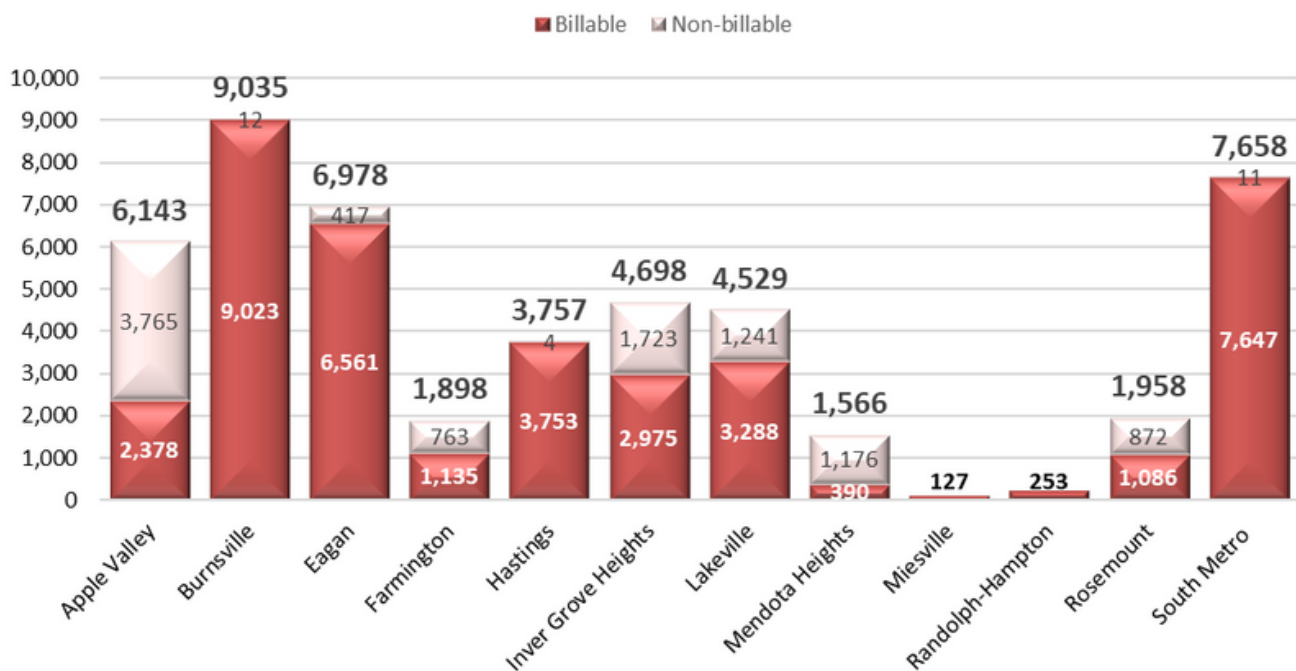
Performance & Analysis

Most Commonly Occurring Events

Fire/EMS CAD events increased .5% from 2022, totaling 48,600. Of these events, the most commonly occurring included medicals and injury accidents.



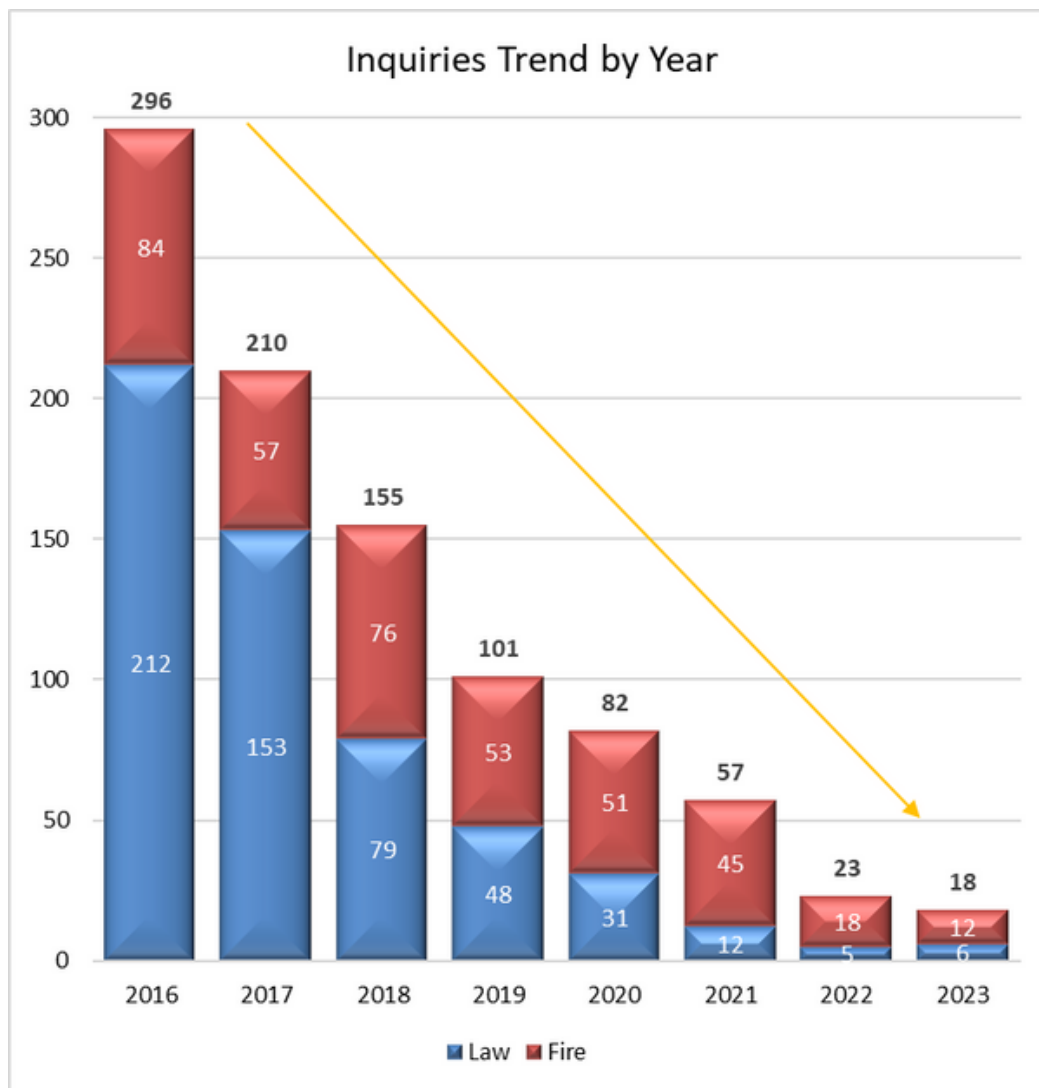
CAD Events by Fire/EMS Jurisdiction



Performance & Analysis

Inquiries

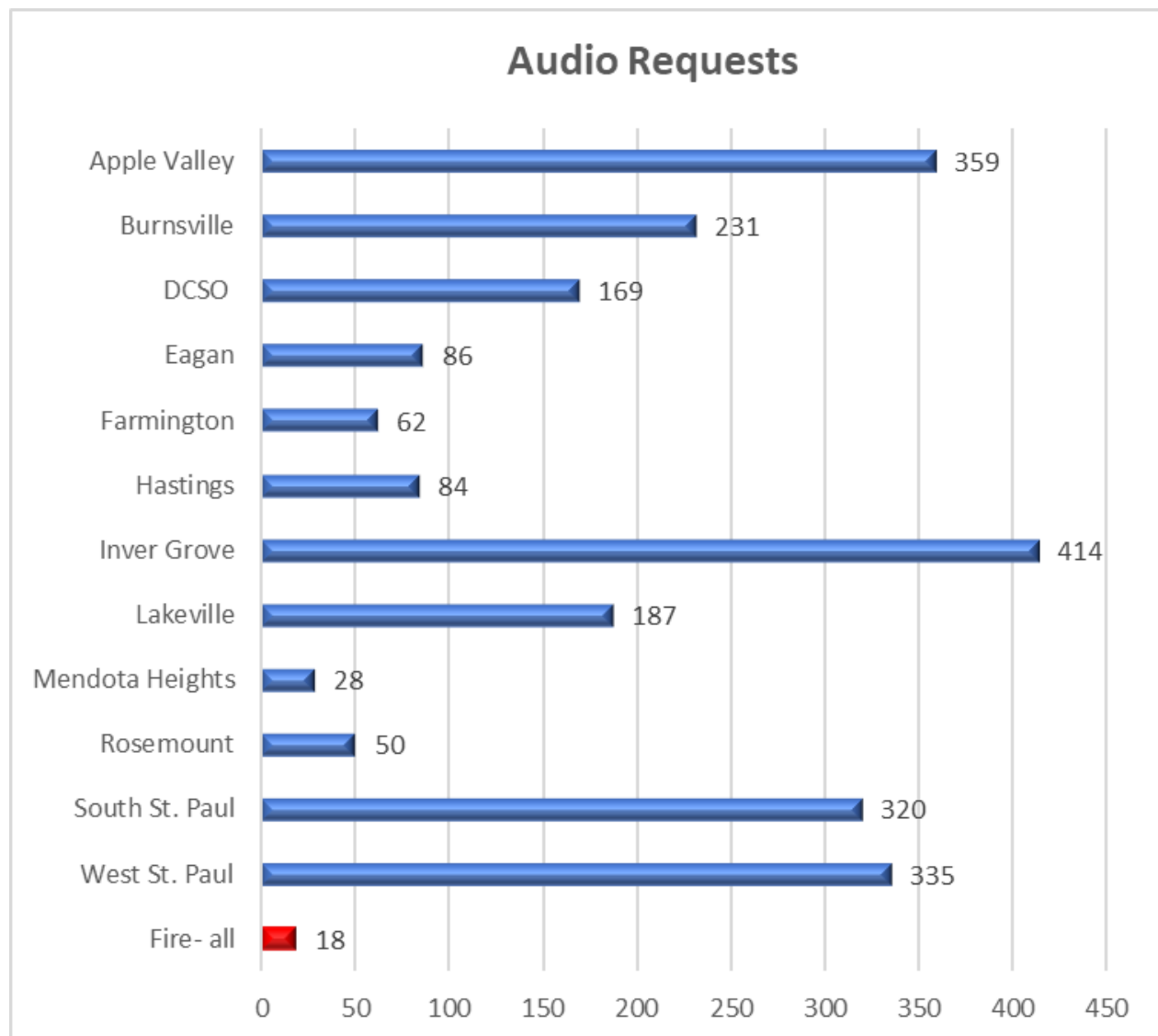
Dakota 911 documents inquiries received from member agencies and the public on a daily basis. Monthly, these inquiries are compiled and reported to membership. This practice has been in place since Dakota 911 formation, in an effort of transparency. Documented inquiries have continued to decrease over the years.



Performance & Analysis

Audio Recordings

The Audio Logging Recorder System (ALRS) records all phone and radio communications. Preparing audio recordings for member agencies is a task performed by the supervisory team. This task can be very time-consuming depending upon the magnitude of the event. In 2023 Dakota 911 supervisors pulled 2,343 recordings for member agencies, an increase of 13% from 2022.

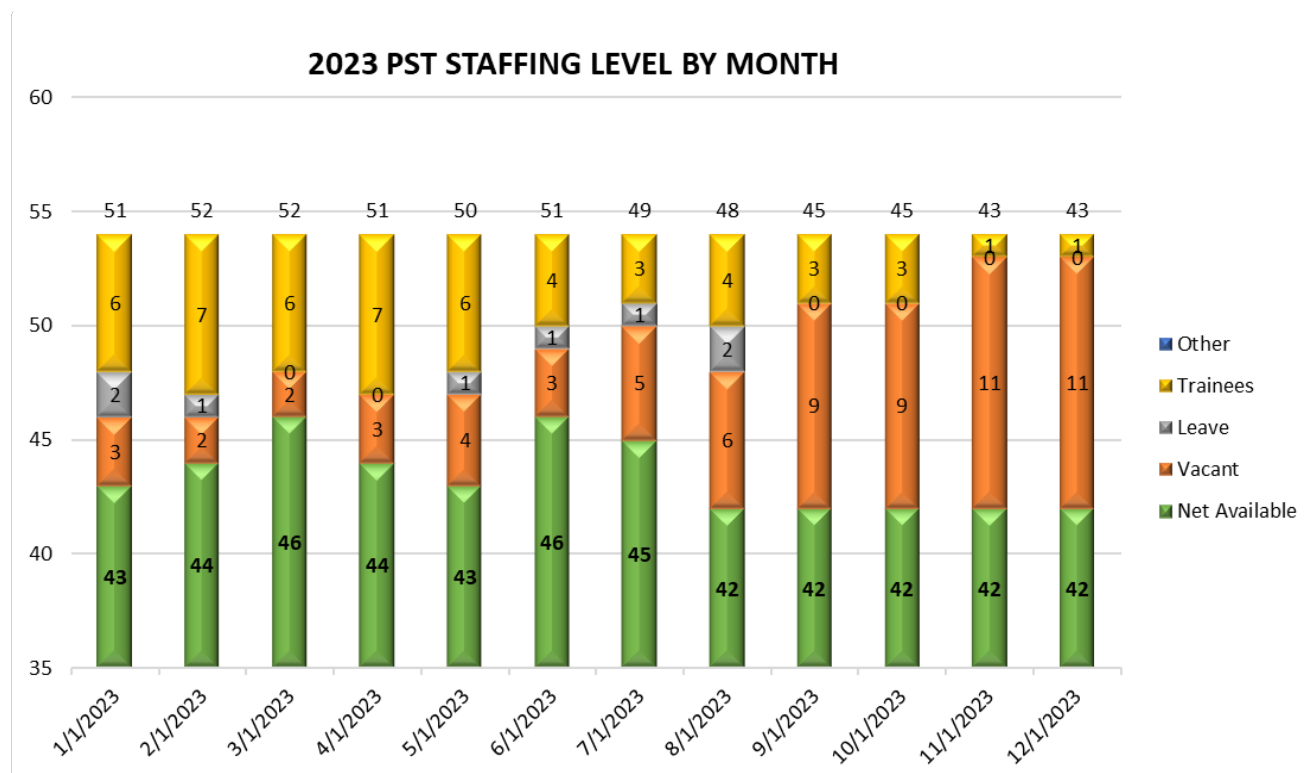


Performance & Analysis

Staffing Report

In 2023 Dakota 911 began implementation of an aggressive staffing initiative in response to continued retention and hiring challenges. This initiative included improvements to the compensation package, increased hiring presence on social media, and the addition of part-time opportunities for telecommunicators with 911 dispatching experience.

One of the top reasons people leave 911 is due to the demands of 24x7 shift work and overtime obligations. The part-time opportunity is focused on attracting experienced personnel looking for flexibility without the overtime commitment. By the close of 2023, Dakota 911 had re-hired four telecommunicators to part-time status.



Financial Report

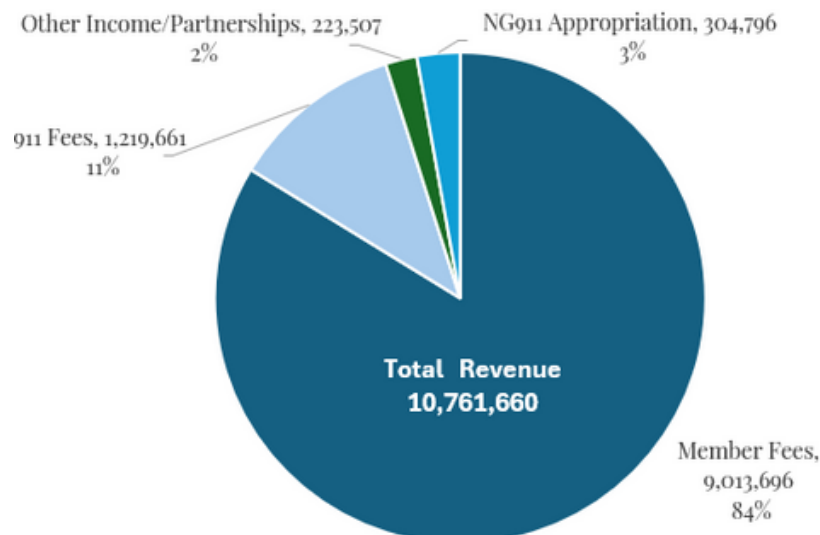
Revenue

Dakota 911's main revenue source comes from member fees. The adopted member fees for 2023 were \$9,013,692, which was a 3.5% increase from 2022. Member fees are allocated based on a 3-year average of computer-aided dispatch (CAD) incidents and cover the general operation.

Other revenue streams include MN E911 contributions, partnership income from Flint Hills Refinery for mass notification alerting, grant income, and interest on investments.

An amendment to the Joint Powers Agreement in 2022 increased the County's contribution towards Dakota 911's fixed costs. Fixed costs are first funded with 50% of the MN E911 funds and the partnership income from Flint Hills. After applying these funds, the County committed to funding 33.3% of the fixed costs in 2023, up from the 16.67% in 2022. The remaining balance is split by member agencies according to the funding formula. The County's fixed cost fee will increase to 50% in 2024.

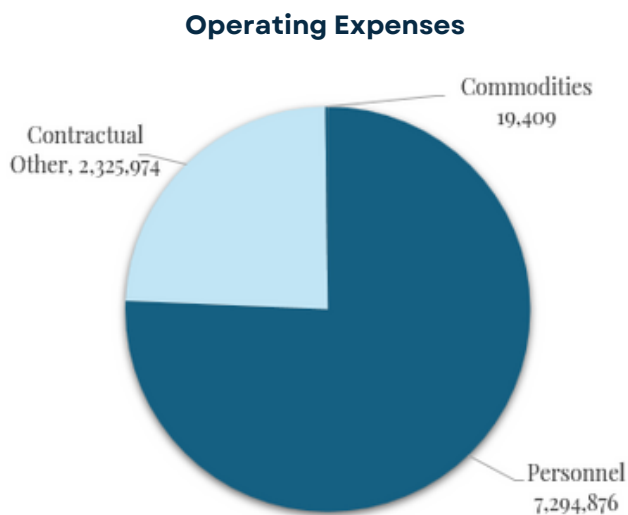
Dakota 911 received a one-time appropriation in 2023 from the MN Department of Public Safety, Emergency Communications Network Division in the amount of \$304,796. All MN 911 public safety answering points were provided additional funding in 2023 to help support the transition to Next Generation 911 technology and service delivery.



Financial Report

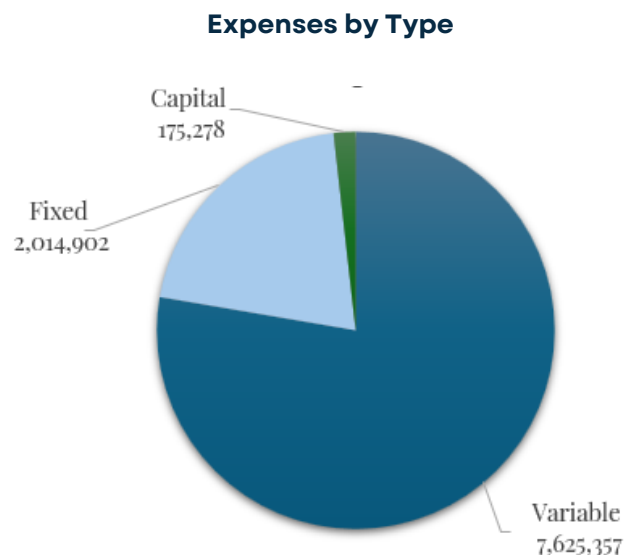
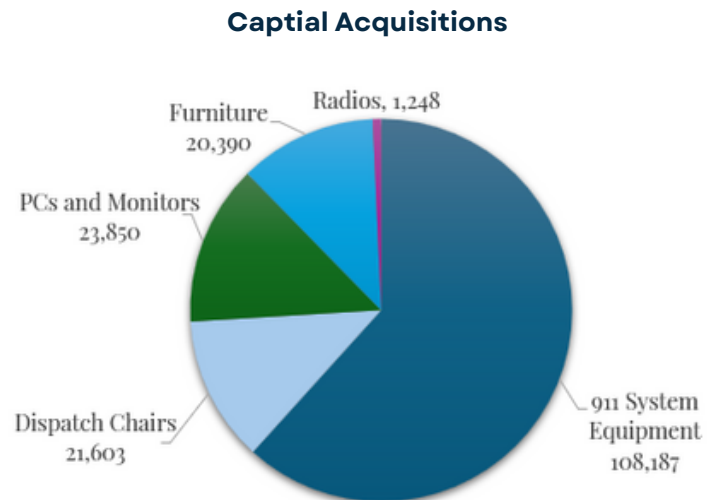
Expenses

The majority of the operating budget (75.7%) was attributed to personnel costs. Facility maintenance, technology, and contracted services are included in the Contractual/Other category and account for 24% of the operating budget. The remaining expenses fall into the commodities category, which accounted for .2% of annual expenses.



Dakota 911's expenses are broken down into fixed, variable, or capital expenses. In 2023 77.7% of Dakota 911's spending was categorized as variable costs. Fixed costs accounted for 20.5% of spending, and 1.8% was spent on capital acquisitions.

Capital acquisitions amounted to \$175,278. For the third year in a row there were no member contributions to fund capital acquisitions.



Contact Us



+651-322-1900



contact@dakota911mn.gov



www.dakota911mn.gov

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