Ron Diehl Retires After 40 Years at the Department of Public Safety

On Friday, December 2nd, Ron Diehl, Dispatcher #153, ended his final shift in the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center. Ron started with the Department of Public Safety in 1982 and has dedicated 40 years of his life to helping and protecting the citizens and first responders of Montgomery County.

A few minutes after 0600, Ron made his final radio transmission as a dispatcher, ending it with "153 signing off." Ron's wife, daughter, and fellow firefighters from the Pennsburg Volunteer Fire Company traveled to the EOC to greet Ron, congratulate him, and bring him home from Eagleville, one last time.

Ron, thank you for your hard work, dedication, perseverance, and loyalty! We hope you have a very safe, happy, and healthy retirement. Come back and visit us soon!

Special Operations Training Facility Hosts First Class

The new Special Operations Training Facility, also known as "Rescue World," is officially open and has already hosted its first training, a Trench Rescue Operations class held on December 3rd and 4th.

The addition of Rescue World to the Montgomery County Fire Academy’s array of training facilities improves our ability to support technical rescue training, drills, and exercises. It also allows for a greater number of concurrent trainings by providing more space for vehicles, equipment, and personnel to operate.

The dedicated trench rescue prop significantly improves the safety of training for responding to emergencies in trenches, open pits, and similar environments. When conducted in an actual trench, such training is significantly more hazardous.

The props associated with vehicle rescue include a highway-style guardrail, moveable Jersey barriers, a telephone/electric pole prop, and a sloped area to simulate accidents taking place on an incline, which can also be used for low-angle rescue training.
B-Night Shift Wins Holiday Tree Decorating Contest

Congratulations to our B-Night shift 9-1-1 Telecommunicators (far right) for receiving the most social media votes in our annual tree decorating contest! Thanks to everyone who voted and to all of our staff who helped decorate the trees!

Changes Implemented in Montgomery County Email Addresses

Montgomery County is in the process of making two significant changes to all employee email addresses:

- Instead of starting with the employee’s first initial and then either the first seven letters of their last name or full last name (depending on when the employee started with the County), new emails will utilize the following naming convention: firstname.lastname
- Instead of ending with @montcopa.org, emails will end with @montgomerycountypa.gov

When changes are implemented in each County department, the new format will look like this: firstname.lastname@montgomerycountypa.gov. The Department of Public Safety was transitioned on Friday, December 16th, so please utilize these new email addresses to contact Department staff. However, the old @montcopa.org emails will still be able to receive incoming messages for the foreseeable future.

HazMat Team Assists at Fuel Spill in Upper Merion

On Tuesday, December 13th, the Montgomery County Hazardous Materials Response Team responded to assist Upper Merion Township Fire & EMS with a fuel spill on the ramp from US 202 northbound to US 422 westbound after a truck overturned. HazMat technicians worked with firefighters and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection personnel to contain the leaking product and mitigate damage to the environment. This was the ninth full team deployment in 2022, which combined total 29 hours and 16 minutes in service.
Communications Supervisors Attend Active Shooter Training

Over the past several months, police departments across Montgomery County have been participating in joint regional active shooter training sessions to ensure officers from all agencies are prepared to respond in a consistent way, regardless of the jurisdiction in which the incident occurs. These trainings are funded through the Homeland Security Grant Program.

Department of Public Safety Emergency Communications Supervisors attended several of the training sessions as observers so that they could gain an awareness of what officers will be doing in the field and to help them anticipate requests and unmet needs from law enforcement in the event one of these tragic incidents takes place.

Electronic Naloxone Request Form Now Available

Utilizing grant funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety distributes Narcan® (naloxone) nasal spray for use in response to opioid overdoses. First responders and other pre-approved organizations can receive Narcan® through this grant.

To request a supply of Narcan®, approved organizations can click on the link below or use the QR code to the right. After the Department of Public Safety approves or rejects the request, the requestor will receive an email.

Request Narcan® Here

DPS Staff Participate in “No Shave November”

For the past several years, numerous Department of Public Safety staff have participated in “No Shave November” to raise awareness and money for charitable causes.

This year’s rendition benefitted the American Cancer Fund, Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, and National Foundation for Cancer Research. Combined, Department of Public Safety staff donated $1,075 to support these organizations.

Pictured here is Director Vest, with before and after photos taken on November 1st and December 1st. Lookin’ good!
The Montgomery County Fire Academy graduated 34 new firefighters of Class 2202 from the Pennsylvania Entry Level Firefighter program on December 8, 2022.

Thomas J. Garrity, who retired as Director of the Montgomery County Fire Academy this year and serves as an adjunct instructor at the Community College of Philadelphia, was the commencement speaker.

Firefighter John Doherty of the Brookline Fire Company received the Interior Firefighter Award for scoring the highest grade in the class. The graduates of Class 2202 will protect their communities in 28 volunteer and combination fire companies in Montgomery, Berks, Chester, and Delaware counties.

Congratulations to all! Below is a list of the graduates:

Firefighter Patrick S. Amerson, Phoenixville
Firefighter Gabriel A. Baron, Manoa
Firefighter William C. Bochanski, Llanerch
Firefighter Gavin S. Booz, Lower Providence
Firefighter Thomas J. Boran, IV, Bon Air
Firefighter Joseph M. Brach, Conshohocken
Firefighter Michael A. Clancy, Po-Mar-Lin
Firefighter James W. Connolly, Centre Square
Firefighter Mark W. Derer, Sr., Birdsboro-Union
Firefighter John E. Doherty, Brookline
Firefighter Michael A. Estep, Plymouth
Firefighter Colin M. Finn, Goshen
Firefighter Sean T. Gisonda, Penn Wynne
Firefighter Marlo D. Kleinschmidt, Plymouth
Firefighter Adam L. Kluk, Upper Frederick
Firefighter Todd J. Krock, Ringing Hill
Firefighter Michael H. Levy, Union

Firefighter Stephen M. Makowiak, Trappe
Firefighter Lincoln T. Martindell, Perkiomen
Firefighter Clinton R. McCarty, Manoa
Firefighter Mark H. Mcclimans, New Hanover
Firefighter Anthony R. Owens, Springfield
Firefighter Richard C. Perry, Garretford-Drexel Hill
Firefighter Vicente Ramirez, Gilbertsville
Firefighter Daniel M. Schaefer Jr., Perkiomen
Firefighter John G. Simolike, Glenside
Firefighter Prince F. Spalls, LaMott
Firefighter Arlo W. Vooz, Oley
Firefighter Joshua M. Vooz, Oley
Firefighter Owen N. Vooz, Oley
Firefighter Kyle C. Whalen, Centre Square
Firefighter Michael G. Williams, Merion of Ardmore
Firefighter Matthew G. Williamson, Hancock
Firefighter Joseph P. Zapien, Good Will
US&R Team Stays Busy with End of Year Training

As the year draws to a close and despite holiday-related commitments in their personal lives, the members of the Montgomery County Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team have made sure that they always left some time for training with their fellow rescue personnel.

On Thursday, December 1st, the US&R Team was invited by the Upper Salford Fire Company to attend a ski lift evacuation drill at Spring Mountain. Members from Upper Salford and US&R worked together with Spring Mountain personnel to practice removing skiers from lift chairs that had become stuck due to a mechanical issue.

While ground-based rescues are always the first attempt in these situations, the exercise scenario called for the use of other tactics. After two US&R rescue specialists climbed a ski lift tower, one “rode” down the cable to access trapped skiers while being controlled by his partner. The specialist was then able to assess for medical issues, package, and ultimately lower each skier down to awaiting rescuers and medical care providers.

The cold temperatures, darkness, and active snowmaking on adjacent slopes created a realistic training atmosphere for the participating agencies. Training together prior to the opening of the ski slopes ensures that County and municipal responders and Spring Mountain personnel can integrate seamlessly to perform a rescue if needed during the winter season. Thanks to Station 78 for the invite and to Spring Mountain for hosting!

The next day, US&R specialists and several municipal first responders participated in a High-Water Off-Road Vehicle Operations Class in Salford Township. Historically, emergency responders have either waded through flood waters or utilized boats to rescue individuals stranded in their vehicles or homes. While these techniques still account for most rescues attempted in Montgomery County, recently, rescuers have started to utilize a new asset: high-water vehicles. Just like any rescue device, the use of high-water vehicles has created the need for realistic and effective training for the personnel assigned to operate them.

While US&R trains regularly in local waterways completing ground-based skills, vehicle-in-water scenarios, and advanced swiftwater boat operations, Team leadership identified high-water vehicles as a training gap. Working with experts from Houston, they developed an off-road class that teaches students vehicle dynamics in water and requires them to apply their knowledge throughout three skill stations that allowed...
members to drive in narrow, sloping, rough, and non-conventional conditions. Students operated throughout this first-of-its-kind training as they would in the real world: wearing mission-specific PPE and ensuring road and water conditions were suitable for vehicle specifications prior to vehicle deployment. Thank you to the Tylersport Fire Company and two private local landowners for the use of your properties!

Finally, on Tuesday, December 20th, the team held its last drill of 2022, known as the “Rescue Challenge.” This year’s scenario involved a vehicle that was driven off an elevated roadway and landed in the crown of a tree (simulated with branches), with limited to no access from below. The limbs used to simulate the tree were supplied by a local contractor.

Rescuers arrived to find a vehicle (the new car-in-water prop) with two passengers stuck in a tree between two buildings. Members had to devise and implement a rescue plan to gain access from above since the ground was off-limits for conventional rescue techniques. Rescuers then had to safely remove the two subjects from the vehicle and bring them to the ground for medical treatment. Our Rescue Specialists built a rope highline system, stretching from the Fire Academy’s burn building to the drill tower, which allowed a member to be sent out on the system and lowered down to the car. The car prop was suspended in an unstable way to mimic real-life conditions, so rescuers had to account for vehicle movement when shifting the occupants’ weight.

With these three final training sessions, the US&R Team hosted a total of 39 trainings, drills, and exercises in 2022, across 48 days. Montgomery County US&R looks forward to another year of excellent training in 2023!

Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

**Douglas Strayline** is the Department of Public Safety’s new Assistant Facilities Manager. After branching out of a large family construction business as a young man to blaze his own career path, he has worked in facilities maintenance for over 35 years as a highly skilled building engineer/millwright mechanic in commercial office buildings, manufacturing plants, and healthcare facilities. Doug has held multiple titles such as Senior Building Operations Engineer and Lead Manufacturing Millwright Quality Control Inspector and has overseen facilities larger than one million square feet in size. He’s ASME-certified in MIG, TIG, and Stick welding for all metals and alloys and in machining fabrication, and HVAC-certified in the diagnosis, repair, and installation of residential and commercial HVAC/refrigeration equipment. Outside of work, Doug enjoys spending quality time with his family and is also an antique/classic car enthusiast. He likes to build and restore from the ground up classic muscle cars from the late 1960s and early 1970s.

douglas.strayline@montgomerycountypa.gov
(610) 631-6500
Emergency Operations Center
Department of Public Safety Career Opportunities

The Department of Public Safety is seeking qualified applicants for the following vacancies. For more information about the roles or to apply online, visit www.montcopa.org/jobs or click on the links below.

- **The 9-1-1 Telecommunicator Trainee** (multiple openings available) will be trained and certified to be the public’s primary point of contact when requesting a response by public safety resources. They will be engaged in training that requires complete dedication to the course of instruction and instructors. 9-1-1 Telecommunicator Trainees promote the Department’s core values of integrity, respect, and customer service without compromise. **This position is eligible for a sign-on bonus equal to 10% of the starting annual salary. Application deadline: January 6, 2023.**

- **The Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Coordinator** is the primary support role for the Quality Assurance Office in areas including telecommunicator skill set development, correcting deficiencies, and compliance with protocols. Due to the nature of the profession, there will be a need for the position to maintain a flexible schedule that would allow face-to-face interaction with employees assigned to a work group that works nights and weekends. He/she is an effective leader with strong communication and interpersonal skills.

- **The Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Coordinator** will lead the Mobile Integrated Health Program within the Department of Public Safety and work collaboratively with multiple offices of the Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services to address the issues of complex patients who use the Emergency Department. The program uses mobile resources to deliver care and services to patients in an out-of-hospital environment in coordination with healthcare facilities or other healthcare providers. This program additionally focuses on substance use disorder patients to prevent unnecessary emergency department visits and to establish a clear referral pathway from the field to long-term rehabilitative care.

- Utilizing multiple data sources, methods, and analytical platforms, the **Senior Intelligence Analyst** will assist in the collection, analysis, cataloging, and reporting of data related to intelligence and surveillance projects. This position will research and identify trends in the data, develop insight, and collaborate with others within the area of operation. This individual is also responsible for supporting the development of intelligence analysis programs to analyze information lawfully collected by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, internal County departments or agencies, other data sources, and the intelligence community for the benefit of the County of Montgomery.

To learn about the many benefits of working for Montgomery County, visit www.montcopa.org/benefits. Email publicsafety@montgomerycountypa.gov at any time or call (610) 631-6500 during business hours with questions.

Chester County Radio Interoperability Initiative Underway

The Department of Public Safety has finalized the cross-county radio programming initiative with Chester County. We are now able to program the Chester County radio system into Montgomery County fire and EMS radios. We will reach out to bordering agencies once we are ready to proceed with radio reprogramming. In the meantime, there is no need for bordering agencies to contact us.
Department of Public Safety Reflects on Two Years of COVID Vaccine Administration

As the COVID-19 vaccine became available in late 2020 and early 2021, it became evident that many Montgomery County residents would either be unable to visit the large, County-run, brick-and-mortar vaccine distribution clinics or needed expedited access to the vaccine before these clinics came online. On December 28, 2020, after weeks of vigorous planning and preparation, the Department of Public Safety’s Dr. Alvin Wang administered the first doses of COVID-19 vaccine to EMS workers in Montgomery County (left).

Two years later, the Department’s EMS Division, Office of the Medical Director, and Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Team (below) have safely delivered over 10,600 doses of COVID and flu vaccines to Montgomery County’s first responders (6,756), congregate care facility residents (1,819), homebound individuals (1,086), members of the community (526), and other vulnerable populations (490), including individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

The Department of Public Safety could not have achieved this without the assistance and support of the County Commissioners, Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Public Health, municipal first responders, and countless other essential partners including County departments, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations.

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance in receiving a vaccine, email the MIH Team at DPS.OMD@montgomerycountypa.gov or call (610) 631-3079.

Fit Testing Machine Available for First Responder Agencies

As part of the Department of Public Safety’s Health and Safety Development program, police, fire, and EMS agencies are reminded of the availability of the Department’s quantitative fit testing machine. The device is capable of quantitative fit testing soft N-95 or similar respirators, as well as half- and full-face respirators. Quantitative fit testing can provide more accurate results than qualitative fit testing.

In addition, the device is capable of connecting with an agency-supplied laptop to help maintain automated fit-testing records and track respirator pass/fail status. For more information about the device’s capabilities, please visit: https://accutec.com/accufit-9000/. To borrow the device at no-cost, please contact Madison Sehn, Health and Safety Specialist, at madison.sehn@montgomerycountypa.gov for an orientation session.