



Charleston County News Release

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NOTE TO MEDIA - INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY: Jim Lake will be available for interviews at 11 a.m. today, Monday, Oct. 20, at the Public Services Building (4045 Bridge View Drive in N. Charleston).

See photo of Jim Lake: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/consolidated911.htm>

Director Hired for Future Consolidated 911 Emergency Dispatch Center

Communications expert Jim Lake begins work on Monday, Oct. 20.

A new employee begins work on Monday, Oct. 20, to lead the effort toward moving forward with the establishment of a Consolidated 911 Center in Charleston County.

Jim Lake, of Harrisburg, Pa., was determined to be the best qualified candidate for the new Charleston County's Consolidated 911 Center Director position. Charleston County Administrator Mack Canterbury accepted the recommendation of the interview committee and extended an offer of County employment to Lake, who accepted the position.

The move toward a Consolidated Dispatch Center is spearheaded by a cooperative, multi-jurisdictional Consolidated Dispatch Board that consists of law enforcement, fire and EMS leaders within Charleston County.

Four members of the Consolidated Dispatch Board participated in the interview process. Over 70 applications were received from around the U.S., and 20 applicants were interviewed.

The goal was to find the best possible candidate to oversee the complex process of transitioning the multiple emergency response 911 and dispatch centers into one consolidated center. This process will involve intense planning for technology, design and construction of the center, operational protocol development and employee hiring and training.

Following the establishment of the Consolidated 911 Center, Lake will be responsible for providing the leadership needed to achieve accreditation and the highest professional standards for 911 communications.

"Working together with the Consolidated Dispatch Board, the public safety responders and dispatchers throughout the County, we will establish an efficient Consolidated 911 Center that will provide high-quality service to the public," Lake said.

Lake is a certified Emergency Number Professional (ENP) who has successfully overseen two previous emergency service dispatch consolidation projects. He was the Program Director for the [Massachusetts State 911 Agency](#), where he managed 911 training and public education across the state. In addition, Lake has experience in emergency management and has worked as a police officer, a firefighter and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

Most recently, Lake was a consultant for L. Robert Kimball & Associates in Ebensburg, Pa., where his experience and expertise in consolidating public safety communications was utilized in many parts of the country. Lake is an instructor for the [National Emergency Number Association](#) (NENA) teaching 911 consolidation and other related courses, while also serving on the NENA Education Advisory Board.

“Mr. Lake is very well respected, and we feel honored to have someone join us from a field where there are few professionals with his level of experience and expertise,” said North Charleston Police Chief Jon Zumalt, who chairs the Consolidated Dispatch Board.

The members of the Consolidated Dispatch Board are:

- Chairman: Chief Jon Zumalt, North Charleston Police Department
- Charleston County Administrator’s Office: Lori Lambert, Project Officer
- Charleston County EMS: Don Lundy, Director
- Charleston County Sheriff’s Office: Sheriff Al Cannon
- Isle of Palms Police Department: Chief Thomas Buckhannon
- James Island Public Service District Fire Department: Chief Chris Seabolt
- Mt. Pleasant Fire Department: Chief Herb Williams
- Mt. Pleasant Police Department: Chief Harry Sewell
- North Charleston Fire Department: Chief Leonard Judge
- Sean Kittrell, Assistant U.S. Attorney
- St. Johns Fire District: Chief Karl Ristow

SIDEBAR: Background on Consolidated 911 Emergency Dispatch Center

- Greatly enhanced interoperability and coordination among responding agencies is anticipated to result from the Consolidated 911 Emergency Dispatch Center. Expectations also include fewer errors through standardized call handling and dispatch protocols, better training and certification opportunities for dispatchers, better facilities for dispatchers, and increased retention of dispatchers. Also significant is the goal to attain national accreditation for the Consolidated 911 Center.
- Currently, there are 10 different 911 emergency dispatch operations within the county under nine jurisdictions (Charleston County Government encompasses EMS and the Sheriff’s Office), and each one is answered and operated by its respective governing agency.
- A Consolidated Dispatch Feasibility Study was completed in April of 2007. This study, which was presented to local officials and emergency response leaders, showed that consolidating emergency public safety communications in Charleston County is indeed feasible and will benefit the community.
- A Consolidated 911 Center would eliminate the need for 911 calls to be transferred to other centers within Charleston County, which takes up valuable time. There is a strong desire to eliminate these built-in delays, and provide more efficient and effective County-wide emergency response.
- County Council voted on Oct. 16, 2007, to move forward with building and maintaining a Consolidated 911 Center in Charleston County.
- An intergovernmental agreement was developed by the Consolidated Dispatch Committee to set forth a governing structure and other project implementation details.

Eight jurisdictions signed the intergovernmental agreement in January of 2008:

- Charleston County Government (encompasses EMS and the Sheriff's Office)
 - City of North Charleston
 - Town of Mt. Pleasant
 - City of Isle of Palms
 - City of Folly Beach
 - St. Johns Fire District
 - James Island Public Service District (PSD) Fire District
 - St. Andrews Public Service District (PSD) Fire District
- Staffing projections for the Consolidated 911 Center indicate that there would not be a reduction in the number of telecommunicators (911 phone operators) currently working in the 10 centers, so no job losses are anticipated. There is a distinct goal to hire the individuals already working at the existing dispatch centers.

Agreement details:

- The Consolidated 911 Center will be a Charleston County department that will have operational protocols and procedures overseen by a Consolidated Dispatch Board. The board has been established, and has a similar makeup to the previous Consolidated Dispatch Committee.
- User groups will provide opportunity for input from all agencies that are dispatched by the Consolidated 911 Center.

Visit the Charleston County Web site at www.charlestoncounty.org for news, services and up-to-date information relating to Charleston County Government.