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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Metro Fire Rescue Recognizes Emergency Dispatchers as First Responders

Centennial, Colo. — (April 15, 2021) — In conjunction with National Telecommunicators Week, the South Metro Fire Rescue (SMFR) Board of Directors passed a resolution recognizing emergency dispatchers as first responders. SMFR is among the first public safety organizations in Colorado to do so.

In 2019 and 2020 SMFR’s Emergency Dispatchers gave medical guidance to over 33,000 callers throughout SMFR’s District. In addition, 14 SMFR Emergency Dispatchers were recognized for roles in directly saving the lives of 21 people who suffered cardiac or respiratory arrest; and six SMFR Emergency Dispatchers coached nine mothers over the telephone through the birth of healthy babies.

The federal government’s Standard Occupational Classification System (SOCS) sorts workers into occupational categories for statistical purposes, and America’s Emergency Dispatchers are currently categorized as an “Office and Administrative Support Occupation” which includes office clerks and taxicab dispatchers. There is a national effort through the U.S. Congress’s H.R. 1629 and S. 1015 to reclassify Emergency Dispatchers as “Protective Service Occupations” alongside “First Responders” such as police, firefighters, security guards, lifeguards and others whose job it is to protect our communities. SMFR is proud to be on the forefront of that effort.

The work of an emergency dispatcher comes with an extreme emotional and physical impact that can lead to the development of post-traumatic stress. Over the past several decades, the work performed by emergency dispatchers has transformed from what used to be considered a clerical role to what is now seen as a profession that requires lifesaving and increasingly complex tasks. Additionally, ongoing enhancements to public safety communications technology such as Next Generation 911 and public safety broadband will produce even more dramatic changes to the way these professionals communicate with the public and first responders.

To see the full resolution that SMFR Board of Directors passed, recognizing SMFR Emergency Dispatchers as First Responders, please see the [resolution here](#).

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