The Board of Directors of the Utah Chapter of The National Emergency Number Association is proud to present the award for Incident of the Year to the St. George Communications Center during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week 2022, for their handling of the critical officer-involved shooting and kidnapping incident that occurred on February 17, 2022. Their nomination summarized the following:

Washington City police units had been looking for a subject that was wanted for a no-bail warrant for kidnapping and multiple incidents of brandishing. The officers advised they would be at a residence in St. George. The suspect left the residence in a vehicle and officers tried to stop him.

The suspect stopped at the church, kicked a female out of the vehicle, and then took off. There was a baby inside the vehicle, and officers saw that he was holding a gun to the baby's head. This prompted a multi-state and jurisdiction pursuit and manhunt.

While he was being chased, with a gun to the head of the baby's head, the suspect called 911 from a 911 cell phone. One of our supervisors got the phone call. The suspect indicated many times he would “kill this baby” “shoot myself” "I will shoot myself, wreck, and kill this baby," "I kidnapped this baby, and “I'm not going back to prison." Several times, he was transferred to a hostage negotiator who attempted to get him to pull over and drop the baby off somewhere.

During this time, he crossed thru several different cities with multiple police agencies joining the chase due to the severity of the incident. About 15 minutes into the chase the suspect fired shots at pursuing officers. He continued driving into oncoming traffic and went into a rural area with very poor to no cell phone reception.

The suspect called 911 a few more times, and was transferred, when he could be, to the negotiator but since it's a bad area the service wasn't good.

The suspect entered Arizona and finally said he would pull over and let the baby out. He pulled over, took the kid out, and then held a gun to the child's head again. He then went fox trot in the bushes with the kid and the gun. At this point, snipers tried to end the situation. He was shot, but
still able to move. He crawled with the baby on his back, gun still in one hand and phone in the other. The designated sniper shot him again and this time ended the manhunt. The baby was ok!

During this incident, dispatchers had to coordinate with several agencies: St George Police, Washington City police, Santa Clara Ivins Police, and Washington County Drug task force. Due to the area the suspect fled to, they also had to contact Cedar Dispatch, Iron County Helicopter, Nevada Hwy Patrol, Mohave County, Mesquite NV Dispatch, Flagstaff Dispatch, AZ DPS, and Beaver Dam Fire/Rescue. Keeping everything updated without radios due to multi-state coordination can be difficult, but these dispatchers went above and beyond!

From the shift supervisor “This incident had all of us tensed up waiting for the moment we knew this poor baby involved was safe, and thanks to all these great dispatchers we have working here - he is!!! I would not have traded out anyone in this crew during this incident. They were great and deserve whatever recognition we can give them.”

Thank you, St. George Dispatchers, for your outstanding performance and your continued professionalism and dedication to your community, first responders, and the 9-1-1 profession. We apologize that the entire board couldn’t be present to present this award to your center this year.

Sincerely,

The Utah NENA Board of Directors
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