

**DPW – Dispatch
Gameshow**
Palmer Parker
Dispatch Manager

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS (FOR THOSE WANTING A MORE STRUCTURED FORMAT):

1. Briefly describe your role working for Burning Man this year.
DPW Dispatch Manager ~ hire and schedule Dispatch staff, distribute/track/collect radios, radio batteries, and pagers, etc. 2012 was my 10th year as a member of DPW staff, my ninth as Dispatch Manager.

2. In your opinion, what worked well and what didn't this year.
What worked well:
 - 4508 (contains the Dispatch office) was in position in the Depot-To-Be on Fence Day morning even before the first leg of trash fence t-stakes were in ~ thank you Insane and HEaT!! Insane was also kind enough to take us to breakfast – in 4508 - once the Commissary was up and running.
 - Support from the IT department was, yet another year in a row, stellar ~ complete with new (faster) computer, new (it worked!!) printer, all of which, along with VOIP phone, were installed and operational by 2pm on Fence Day. IT staff also checked in on us regularly throughout our time on playa and, when Dispatch called with a question or problem, they responded immediately. It is truly wonderful to be so fully and pleasantly served and supported by that crew.
 - Support from many formerly known as Senior Staff and/or DPW Council of Darkness.
 - The portable radio repeater trailer when it was placed in effective locations. It was moved something like four or five times that I know of, some locations helped and some didn't.
 - Given the increasing degradation of analog DPW 4, the Comm department's providing DPW with almost enough rental digital radios over time to "retire" the analog radios whilst digital channels were active.
 - Training groups of people (whenever possible) in the use of the rental digital radios once they arrived.
 - Dispatch-created (actually Katy-created) laminates sized to be worn on a lanyard that gave zone, channel, and general radio information
 - Dispatchers continuing to reside behind the Depot.

What did not work well:

- Radios

- Sadly this is yet another year's EMBER in which I'm not sure where to begin.
 - Dispatch was expecting to have up to five mobile (powerful) radios programmed correctly and completely installed on Fence Day if not sooner (the radios could've been installed when 4508 was on the Ranch). Dispatch was without even a single mobile radio until Tuesday (Fence Day was Monday so that's essentially two days into Transpo) when I (with permission) went to the Ranch and removed the mobile from the Common Shop and moved it to Dispatch. Two more analog mobiles were installed on Wednesday.
 - The rental brick to rental digital snafu was a horrendous time and energy suck. It set Dispatch back in terms of office organization, staff training, and playa-wide Dispatch services which does not include the amount of work time radio users lost in their part of the swapping process.
 - Channels 4 (primary DPW analog channel) and Channel 911Alt (formerly 912, the brick radio's version of ESD911) were taken down without warning to Dispatch or our users.
 - The more digital radio users there were, the more DPW's primary channel became unusable due to harmonic interference.
 - When 4508 was switched from generator to light tower for power post-event the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) protecting the mobile radios went crazy. Solution was to bypass the UPS (there were no Comm techs on playa or in Gerlach). That would not have occurred if the radios had been powered as requested in last year's EMBER.
 - Radio communication with the Ranch became difficult to impossible once the switch to digital occurred. That presented safety and logistical side effects.
- We were not able to update our annual listing of people/positions/radio channels because so much time was taken by processing the digital radios once they arrived, then swapping out the 140 rental brick radios for them, then processing the returns.
- Snail mail and package transport and distribution from the Gerlach office. I believe the final tally was no packages lost but there were definitely hairy moments including a threatened lawsuit for a package that could not be found (primarily because it had been delivered to the department before that person arrived). Tons (probably literally) of stuff is shipped to the playa via the Gerlach office and it's become way more than what I think Trixie's job description was meant to entail. A Fedexed air conditioner for a crewmember? Theme camp t-shirts? I started doing package runs in an attempt to be helpful but given the problems encountered this year I think I'm done. Playground is aware of the problems and I believe it's on her list to fix as she does so well with so many things.

3. What improvements would you like to see? How should these improvements be implemented?

- DPW analog channel 4 needs to be fixed or be permanently replaced by digital. The fixed part has probably been in every EMBER I've written.
- Dispatch mobiles should be installed and powered appropriately (deep cycle battery with charger) before or on the morning of Fence Day.
- All DPW rental radios ~ digital radios ~ be present in Gerlach by the Thursday before Fence Day with batteries and chargers. No headsets but three headset adapters of the type Weldboy needs.
- Dispatch be able to do an all-Comm across all channels we bear responsibility for. Presently a "manual" all-Comm can range from 11 to 43 different channels.
- A shower key should be available through Dispatch or some other resource for when shower monitors do not arrive on time and, perchance more importantly, for when fuel drivers and the like are contaminated and need to shower during non-scheduled shower hours.

Do you feel that you have the tools, resources, and training that you need to do the job you need to do? If so, how? If not, why not?

With the exception of the supplies, service, and support provided to DPW Dispatch and therefore DPW by ESD Communications, yes. Joseph Pred has said in the past that he does not see DPW Dispatch's job as being life and death. Virtually every year proves otherwise from an unresponsive person in a porta potty to someone intent on becoming one with what is left of the Man burn post-event to a truck hit by a train. The time such an emergency may coincide with failed radio service to the point of a lost life weighs on every Dispatcher's mind.

ESD Communications staff members were largely reactive/responsive in attempting to solve problems created by them, their system, and/or their supplier. Their recovery efforts were appreciated. Jafar (Jeff the tech) was notable in his consistent pleasant, informative, and helpful nature.

2012 Quotes of the Day

Another year of few quotes due, in part, to user frustration with the state of radio service provided by ESD Communications.

Yelling at the shower girl is like spitting on a kitten.

Stand by for Erection...Quiet Earp to Dispatch

Ride that Pony, Ride that Pony, Girlbutt
I don't know what you want but you calling me alone made my day.

We've had a few driving around Station 9.
Harpoon them...overheard on 911

Don't eat the yellow playa...heard on Net 4 channel the morning of the rain

The generally preferred method for disconnecting a high-powered internet-over-radio connection does NOT usually involve a pocket knife.

Where can I face your face?...Customer Service to MOQ

Every time you say "Over & Out", a kitten dies. - MOQ

or Molly-pato... - MOQ

I'll be in heat in about 5 minutes. - Miss Stress

Make Out queer... Wait, that was the 90's. Make Out clear. - MOQ

Can I climb in your box & get some ice? - Man Crush