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BETST To Reimburse APCO Membership

Jackson, Mississippi, October 12, 2004 — The State of Mississippi Board of Emergency Telecommunications Standards and Training (BETST) approved today the reimbursement of membership dues for the Mississippi Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO-MS) and its parent organization, APCO International.

The move acknowledges APCO's contributions to public safety education and reputation for quality, affordable training. APCO is the leader in public safety communications training, offering initial training, continuing education, higher education and degree programs, and other educational opportunities.

"I'm ecstatic," said Brenda Gowdy, President of APCO-MS. "This wonderful partnership between BETST and APCO-MS will make it much easier for the telecommunicators in our state to get the quality education they need, and will help their agencies to stay within their education budgets."

Gowdy presented the benefits of APCO membership at the October 12 BETST meeting in Jackson, Mississippi, and described APCO as an "easy sell". "BETST has long recognized APCO quality and effectiveness, and has used APCO's Public Safety Telecommunicator I course as a standard for training new telecommunicators for some years. Both of our organizations want Mississippi telecommunicators to be the best in the nation, and our shared goal of excellence through education makes us perfect partners."

The news has already been cheered by telecommunicators across the state, many of whom are employed by public safety agencies with very tight budgets. One telecommunicator described the news as "a sure sign that Mississippi is going in the right direction."

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A telecommunicator with Lee County Communications in Saltillo, Mississippi elaborated on the benefits that APCO membership would bring to agencies in the state. “A lot of our agencies are suffering under very tight budgets, and they just don’t have the money to offer the best education to their telecommunicators. APCO is a godsend for those agencies, and gets them top-quality training at an affordable cost. By reimbursing membership in APCO, that cost drops even lower. Members can get APCO training at a reduced cost, and can even offer it individually in their own agency. The education that APCO offers is incredible, and telecommunicators will finally have access to the full range of learning that (APCO) makes possible.”

Gowdy said the offering would have other benefits for the state as well. “Having an APCO member in your organization is a positive influence. APCO membership shows your commitment to excellence and professionalism, and APCO people are some of the most sought-after in our profession. APCO does a great job in increasing productivity, reducing liability, and keeping telecommunicators at the top of their profession. Public safety in Mississippi will improve thanks to this wise decision, and that translates into more lives and property saved.”

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International is the world's oldest and largest not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications. With more than 16,000 members around the world, APCO International, Inc. exists to serve the people who manage, operate, maintain, and supply the communications systems used to safeguard the lives and property of citizens everywhere.

The Mississippi Chapter of APCO-International, Inc., APCO-MS, focuses on the public safety professionals in Mississippi, providing them with information and education to encourage their growth in their important occupation. The work of APCO-MS has the ultimate goal of saving more lives and property.

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