

great opportunity to network and learn more about APCO International and what is involved with being a leader in our industry. The yearlong program is strenuous and challenging, and my suggestion for future students is to 1) be sure you have the time to commit to the program in its entirety and 2) put time and effort into your coursework and interacting with classmates. One of the challenges of any online program is staying engaged in the program, and RPL is no different. The RPL program is comprehensive and you will get out of it what you give into it."

"My favorite course subject was building and facilitating effective teams. I would not be where I am today without the support of some really talented people. From technology to performance standards, and best practices to labor management and economic downturns, our industry faces many challenges, and it would be difficult to face those challenges without having the skills to lead and participate on an effective team."

"RPL is the highest designation offered by APCO and it is becoming an industry standard for anyone who leads in a public safety communications environment. As a lifelong learner, the RPL certification was an easy decision for me and I am glad I went through the program. Not only did I learn necessary skills and information pertinent to my job, it gave me an opportunity to interact with colleagues from throughout the U.S. who have had similar experiences and face similar challenges."



**Margaret Hamrick**, Tampa Fire Rescue 9-1-1 communications manager in Florida, received her RPL designation in September 2009. "Upon learning of the RPL program and what it entailed, I initially decided

not to participate due to working full time and the overall daily responsibilities concerning family and life in general. However, since I have always encouraged my team to go to school and to stay informed on the latest advancements and trends within the 9-1-1 industry, I decided to heed my own advice and submitted my request through my department."

"Each class contained valuable information. Some of the material I already knew, but the most informative aspect of the program was the sharing of information with my online peers. I learned that one must obtain as many facts as possible and weigh each situation on its own merit. I also learned to thoroughly listen before providing my opinion(s). The most valuable thing I learned was, as a leader, we must set the path for others to follow. If we

don't clearly communicate the vision, it will not be recognized."

"Taking the program online proved a little difficult for me, due to the extreme time commitment needed to complete it. In order to get out of the program what you should, you must remain focused, express your opinions and provide suggestions. It was not easy to commit to the time needed to complete the program, nor to always remain focused, but once I made the decision to do so I looked forward to my 'class time' and sharing thoughts and ideas with my fellow classmates."

"I want to be the best leader I can be, because after 26 years I still remember how it felt to come up through the ranks without support, guidance and a mentor. My goal has always been to ensure that everyone does better than the best they can do." |PSC|

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