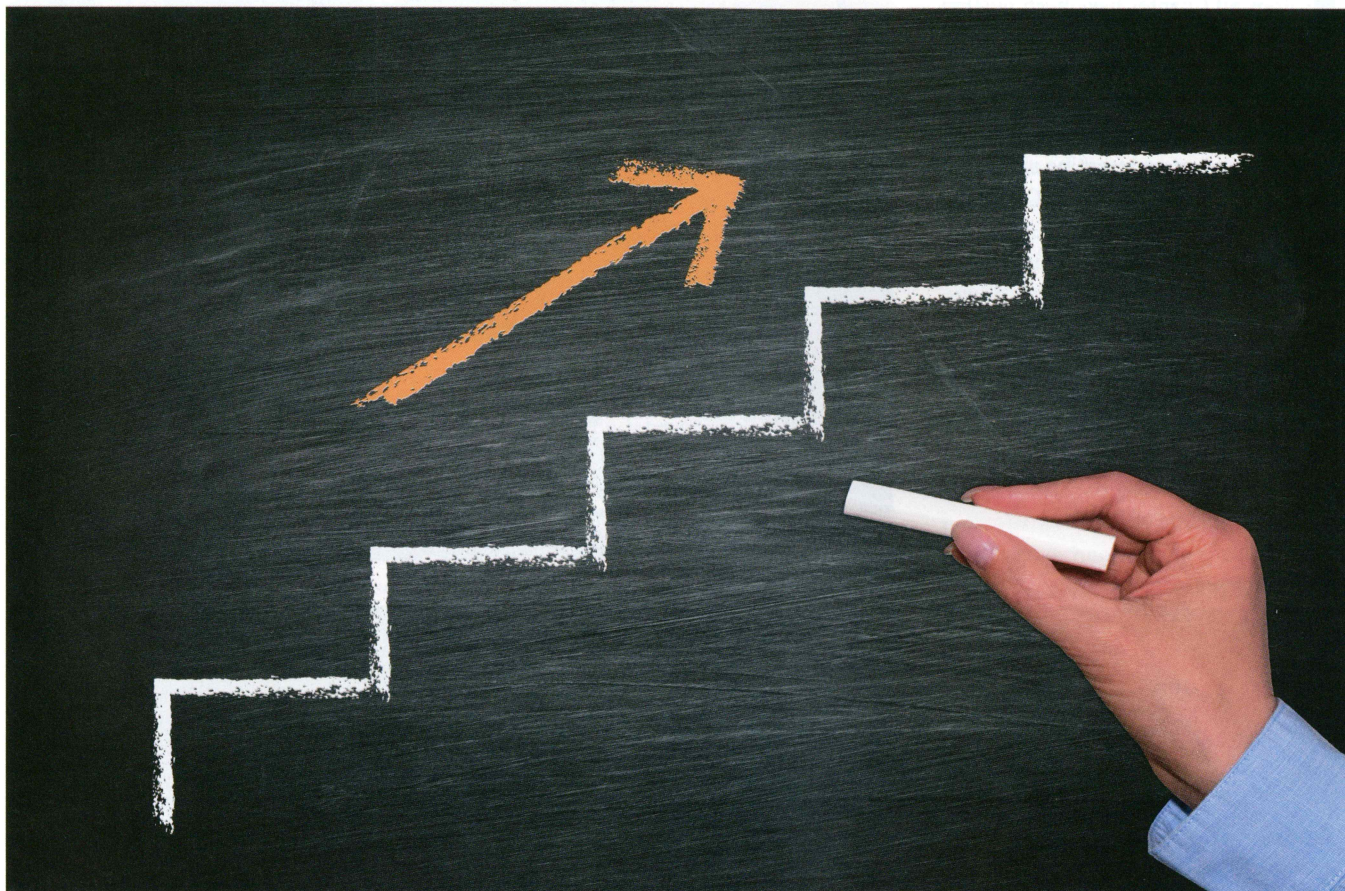


The Evolution of Public Safety Professional Training

By Tina L. Chaffin



For those who joined public safety in the last 20 years, it's hard to imagine a time when public safety professionals didn't have at least basic training.

Imagine receiving a call for a burglary in progress, with no previous training and no idea what questions to ask.

During a recent discussion with Wanda McCarley, APCO Past President (2006-2007), she described this exact scenario. Wanda was initially a city secretary. One day, the police chief walked by her desk and handed her a radio. He told her "when they talk, just say 'received' and write down what they said."

This was the beginning of Wanda's rewarding career in public safety. She hadn't received any training regarding what to ask,

instructions to give or what information was needed to ensure responder safety.

She quickly realized training was necessary to effectively respond to calls for help. At the time, however, there were very few options. There were no classes offered, the Internet was unheard of and there was not an efficient way to communicate with other public safety professionals. So, Wanda turned to APCO, which offered a magazine to its members. *PSC* magazine provided the information Wanda and others needed to begin developing training standards and training programs.

Today, APCO members are fortunate to have a variety of training opportunities. APCO offers classroom training, online

training, webinars and the RPL program. APCO's online forum, PSCconnect, allows members from all over the country to share ideas, ask questions, problem-solve and network.

APCO members still receive this magazine — the one you're holding in your hands — bi-monthly. Most members flip through the magazine, complete the CDEs or put it in their pile for later. For Wanda, the APCO magazine brings a smile as she remembers how it originally helped her realize there was so much more to public safety than "writing down what they said." ●

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