

*Sunshine Fund*

# Giving Back, North vs. South

By Rick Thomas

From my beginning involvement with the North Carolina Chapters of APCO and NENA, I can remember the chapters participating in some sort of give-back program. For many years we collected money or items for Toys for Tots or collected toiletries and money for the USO. However, prior to my involvement with the executive board of the North Carolina Chapter of APCO, I really didn't know a lot about a resource called the Sunshine Fund. Through unfortunate circumstances, in 2015 and 2016 I became very familiar with it and just how amazing this resource is to us as telecommunicators.

In 2015, two members of our chapter were diagnosed with breast cancer, and applications were submitted for these ladies to help them financially with their fight. However, the help did not stop with them; cancer continued to strike members of our chapter, and in each case the Sunshine Fund was there for these telecommunicators.

The Sunshine Fund depends on donations to maintain its success as a benefit for APCO members. So in September 2015, I made the commitment along with NC NENA President Philip Penny that all proceeds from our chapters' 50/50 raffles (in which proceeds are split evenly between the winner and the cause) and conference raffle sales would go to the Sunshine Fund and the TLC Fund, a nonprofit created in North Carolina to assist telecommunicators financially following devastating events in their lives. At the end of our conference in September, we announced we had raised \$3,330 for these two amazing charities.

In early October a dear friend, Atlantic Chapter President Maureen Will, accepted the challenge to raise more money than the North Carolina Chapter for the Sunshine Fund. (In addition, there may have been a lobster dinner on the line as wager.) At the end of their conference, the Atlantic Chapter had raised



\$1,546 with a 50/50 raffle for the Sunshine Fund, and Maureen admitted defeat during their closing banquet.

Not willing to let the South outdo the North, a motion was made the following day during their business meeting to match the North Carolina Chapter's donation and add \$1 to make their donation \$3,301. Additionally, Robert Schlieman, the 50/50 winner, donated his proceeds to the cause making a final donation of \$4,104 from the Atlantic Chapter.

This was a win-win not only for the Sunshine Fund, but also for me when I sat down to eat the lobsters Maureen had overnighted

to me in North Carolina. The North Carolina Chapter has already accepted the challenge to raise more than the \$4,104 our friends in the North donated this year.

I challenge other chapter presidents to get your chapters involved to support the Sunshine Fund. This can be done by holding 50/50 raffles at your chapter meetings and conferences, raffling off donated items during your conferences or even collecting loose change at meetings and conferences. ●

*Rick Thomas, ENP, RPL, is the immediate past president of North Carolina APCO.*

*CPRA Chapter*

# CPRA Celebrates 30 Years Honoring Dispatchers

By Robert Stoffel

The first year of dispatcher recognition was a humble start when at their regular monthly meeting on April 15, 1988 the California Public-Safety Radio Association (CPRA) recognized California Highway Patrol communications operator Raul Betancourt as telecommunicator of the year. After the meeting several CPRA members discussed having a bigger and better way of recognizing dispatchers with a more formal presentation.

The idea of the banquet was born, and the very next year it was held on April 13, 1989 at the Inn at the Park hotel in Anaheim. It featured three award categories: dispatcher

of the year, special achievement and outstanding performance. It was an enormous undertaking under the leadership of CPRA Operations Committee Chair Spence Leafdale (LAPD) and a few dedicated CPRA volunteers who reviewed all of the nominations, selected the finalists and did all the work necessary to make that first banquet happen.

Over the years the event grew to include what we have today: a social hour, dinner, keynote speaker, printed keepsake program, door prizes, plaques and proclamations. The banquet attracts nearly 300 attendees annually. A few things have changed along the way,