

For Immediate Release – Aug. 19, 2019

Contact: Michael Parks, Harrisonburg Director of Communications  
540.432.7701  
Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov

## HRECC senior communicator honored for quick, calm response

HARRISONBURG, Va. – You never know what the next call will bring when you're helping save lives at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center (HRECC). For Senior Communicator Leslie Barb, the next call actually helped bring new life into our world.

Barb was honored Tuesday, Aug. 13, for her help in assisting a soon-to-be grandmother whose daughter was in labor. Barb took the call early in the morning of July 25, when she was told that the woman was at home having severe contractions without hope of making it to the hospital in time.

Putting her training into action, Barb coached the caller to get the patient to lie down on the floor and begin preparing for delivery. Only 13 minutes into the call, Barb heard "I see it now" as the baby began to crown, and 39 seconds later the newest member of the family had arrived.

As Barb was confirming if the baby was breathing, she began to hear the infant cry, and the announcement, "It's a girl!"

"This was an awesome experience!" Barb, who has worked at the center for nearly four years, said. "It was very exciting to be able to walk the grandmother through the steps to be able to birth her grandchild. Also, to hear the baby girl's first cry was quite exciting. As a communicator it was very reassuring to me that both the mother and the baby were both doing good and I was able to stay on the phone with them until the arrival of EMS. This was also my first EMD save of my career."

Barb stayed on the line with the caller for another seven minutes until the ambulance arrived. Both the mother and her baby are now doing fine.

For members of the HRECC, it's moments like these that remind you how important your job is for your community.



*(Above, from left) HRECC Director Jim Junkins, Senior Communicator Leslie Barb and Operations Team Manager Michael Sherman after Barb was honored for her effort in supporting a caller whose daughter was in labor.*

“I love being an Emergency Communicator because it can be such a rewarding career,” Barb said. “By being that person to help citizens on their best or worst day and being able to work alongside with some of the best responders in public safety.”

“This is a great example of 9-1-1 Communicators going above and beyond answering the call and dispatching emergency services,” HRECC Director Jim Junkins added. “Pre-arrival instructions save lives and help bring new lives into this world.”

The HRECC is currently hiring for full-time and part-time emergency communicators. Those interested can apply through [www.harrisonburgva.gov](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov).

*The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).*



###