

Personnel News

April 2010

Blessing Guillermo was appointed April 19 to the Homeland Security Program Manager position for the Public Safety Interoperable Communications grant program. Guillermo, who first came to the Emergency Management Division in June 1998, has served as a program assistant in the Enhanced 9-1-1 Unit since 2004.

Joan Sterling, a plans analyst in the Plans Section of the Plans, Exercise and Training Unit, retired from the Emergency Management Division in April after 24 years of state service. She started at EMD in 1990 as an administrative assistant to former Director Kate Heimbach. A Certified Emergency Manager, Sterling was appointed an exercise and training specialist in 1992. She became a project coordinator and mitigation planner in 1996 and continued to work in planning positions for the remainder of her EMD service.

John Vollmer, who came to the Emergency Management Division in February 1991, retired from state service April 30. Vollmer served in the civil defense program and as public education coordinator, and hazard mitigation strategist before becoming senior program coordinator in the human services program of the Programs and Recovery Unit in November 2000, three months before the state's largest disaster -- the Nisqually Earthquake of 2001. In the Nisqually recovery operations, Vollmer directed state oversight and management of a record 41,414 individual disaster aid registrations, leading to more than \$51 million in temporary housing assistance and repair grants and to more than \$3 million in Individual and Family grants. He proceeded over the next nine years to manage the state's role in individual assistance programs in five other federal disasters, seven U.S. Small business Administration economic injury declarations, 18 agricultural disaster declarations and one fisheries disaster. "My time in Emergency has been fulfilling," Vollmer wrote to his co-workers in a retirement e-mail. "I went about my work with commitment, passion, and tenacity to the chagrin of some and the joy of others. I leave knowing I was able to help a lot of our fellow citizens not only to prepare for, but to recovery from the horrific affects of disasters as well." Vollmer said he was most proud of his work to organize a group of reservists to help the state in disaster recovery. "I doubt there is a more diverse group in state government. While diverse they share a common bond -- the love of their fellow man and the altruistic commitment to help others in their time of need. It has been a pure joy to work with such caring and selfless souls." In a retirement ceremony April 29, Vollmer received a Certificate of Appreciation from Gov. Chris Gregoire and a General's Medallion from Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, director, Washington Military Department.