

February 7, 2013

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The Burleson Police Department's Telecommunicator of the Year "always keeps a positive attitude, makes the best of every situation and is willing to go the extra mile."

That's how Sabrina Rivera was described in her nomination for one of the department's top six awards. The honor was given at the department's annual awards banquet in January. Although the award is for Telecommunicator of the Year, the job title is now Public Safety Communication Specialist.

"I am grateful to be honored amongst my peers," Rivera said of the award.

The 42-year-old Azle native was hired by the Burleson Police Department in 2010. She was familiar with Burleson, having moved to town in 2005.

"I became a communications specialist because I wanted the opportunity to help others and make a difference," Rivera said.

The award winner's certifications include the Basic Public Safety Telecommunications Certification, Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System/International Justice and Public Safety Network (TLETS/NLETS), Texas Crime Information Center/National Crime Information Center (TCIC/NCIC), and Text Telephones/Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTY/TDD).

TCIC provides immediate access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to law enforcement agencies throughout the state to data regarding the stolen status of property and the wanted, missing, sex offender, or protective order status of people. TCIC also provides a direct link to the NCIC so that law enforcement officers throughout Texas know instantly whether a vehicle, a boat, or other property under investigation is stolen, or a person in question is wanted anywhere in the country.

According to the nomination, Rivera "has proven herself to not only be a capable employee, but one who truly cares about her profession and the officers she works with. She is well liked by all of her fellow employees and she volunteers to assist where she is needed. She attempts to rectify many calls over the phone so she doesn't tie up an officer's time if it is something minor."

Rivera's mother, Linda Duke, and her father, B.G. Duke, owned their own bakery before they retired in 2001. Rivera's father passed away in 2006. Her mother is engaged to marry John Graham, in October of this year. The award winner has been married to Roy Rivera for 18 years. They have two children, 16-year-old Jonah Rivera and 14-year-old Cassandra Rivera.