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An officer's safety is her main priority.

That's how Katie Reynolds, the Burleson Police Department's Employee of the Year, was described in a nomination letter written by Sgt. Diron Hill. She was one of two employees nominated for the honor that was awarded at the annual police banquet Feb. 17.

Reynolds is a telecommunications operator. She dispatches police and fire calls for the City. The Alvarado native was hired with Burleson in May 2007. April will mark 10 years of experience in dispatching. Reynolds worked at a few smaller police departments before hiring with Burleson, but most of her prior experience was with the Crowley Police Department, where Reynolds worked for more than four years.

"I was a waitress at a restaurant where the Crowley administration often came in to eat," the honoree said. "They convinced me to apply with Crowley. I didn't have a clue what I was getting in to but I sure enjoy the heck out of it. Most days it's a very rewarding job, getting to help all that we do."

As a telecommunications operator with Crowley, Reynolds often worked closely with the Burleson operators.

"I got to know the people by talking to them all the time and it made me want to be a part of the Burleson family," Reynolds said. "It's a good department and it's hard to get on here so it is a compliment just to be here."

The sergeant said that Reynolds is "very knowledgeable and dedicated and she always displays professionalism and integrity. She goes the extra mile to help citizens with problems that might not necessarily be police-related, or an emergency, but she does it anyway."

The Employee of the Year also does her best to help the officers.

"She demonstrates a great attitude at work. Even if you are having a bad day, she makes an effort to cheer you up," Hill said of Reynolds. "She does everything she can to provide the most up-to-date information when an officer is responding to a call. She truly cares about her job. Because of her work ethic, she has become a mentor and leader for the new dispatchers."

The 29-year-old honoree also mentors someone at home, a 6-year-old son.