

Clinton County Department of Emergency Services

Narrow Band Radio Project Update

March 7, 2011

Report #1

INTRODUCTION

With the start of a new year, Clinton County's Department of Emergency Services (DES) moves into the second year of a three (3) year project, to meet the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) mandate to transition its radio system to narrow band frequencies and equipment. While one would generally think this to be an issue specific to public safety radio, it is not. The mandate will also impact local municipal governments who have FCC licensed radio frequencies and equipment they are using for the daily operations. While local municipal government is also impacted by this mandate, the County and DES will focus on the transition of its public safety radio communications system. However, DES will do its best to be a resource and support mechanism for local government.

During 2010 DES worked with its consultant, MCM Consulting Group Inc. (MCM) to conduct a needs assessment and evaluation of its entire radio communications system. This evaluation has provided a roadmap, for the County and DES to follow as they transition its radio system to meet the narrow band requirement. The balance of this document will provide some basic information concerning the steps needing taken to meet the December 31, 2012 FCC mandate. This report, with update information will be provided at the beginning of each month in an effort to keep all local government, fire, EMS and police agencies aware of the progress the County is making in the transition process.

FCC LICENSING

FCC licensing is at the foundation of this project. DES is working with its consultant to complete the relicensing of current channels licensed by the County for public safety needs. Additionally, the County will be attempting to license repeater pair's for use with the primary fire/EMS and police dispatch channels. Due to the potential for a prolonged timeline in work through the licensing process, the FCC licensing process will begin during March 2011.

There was an initial desire to also have localized repeater channels available in different portions of the county. Presently, this concept will be placed on hold due to unexpected costs associate with FCC licensing. While the local repeater channel concept is currently on hold, it is something that will be revisited in the future as things move forward.

TECHNOLOGY TIMELINE DEVELOPMENT

Beginning in March of 2011 DES will begin the development of Technology Timeline, which will identify a timeline for the creation of items such as a request for proposal (RFP) for the updating of the public safety radio system and the development of a schedule for the vendor (s) who will work with the County and the public safety agencies in transitioning to a narrowband compliant radio system.

OPERATIONAL TIMELINE DEVELOPMENT

As part of the narrow band transition, there will also need to be a timeline developed to determine how the County along with the associated public safety agencies are going to continue operating on the current radio system, while at the same time transition to a new radio system. This plan will be known as an Operational Timeline. The development of such a timeline will require input from all aspects of the public safety community and the administration of the County dispatch center. Development of the Operational Timeline will begin sometime in April of 2011.

REVIEW & REVISION OF CURRENT RADIO PROCEDURES

Because we anticipate our radio system evolving into a repeated system as part of the narrow band transition, there potentially will need to be some changes in the standard operating procedures currently being used for radio communications. While operating on a repeated system will not be much different than operating on our current simplex system, it will require some greater radio discipline from both field users and dispatch center staff. Furthermore, there will also need to be some subtle changes in other aspects of the current procedures. The review of current police & fire/EMS radio procedure will be conducted by dispatch center personnel as well as personnel from the Police & Fire/EMS Committees.

CREATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

In order to insure we are specifying components for a system that will best meet the current and future needs of Clinton County, DES will be working with its consultant to develop a comprehensive Request for Proposal (RFP). Because of the complexity in the proposed system, it is anticipated development of a complete RFP will take approximately ten (10) to twelve (12) weeks. RFP development is expected to begin in July of 2011 and be completed no later than the end of September 2011.

BIDDING OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

It is the hope of DES that the project will be in a position for the completed RFP to go out for bid to the various vendors in October of 2011. Following regulations set forth by County Code, the bids will be opened in an official meeting of the County Board of Commissioners. Once the bids are opened, they will then be reviewed by DES and their consultant to insure accuracy of the bids received. It is anticipated this process will occur in mid December 2011.

AWARDING OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Following formal review of the received bids, a formal recommendation will be made to the Board of Commissioners. It is hoped the formal recommendation and the RFP will be awarded by no later than early in January of 2012.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Following the awarding of the RFP, the County will enter into contract with the successful vendor and project implementation will commence. It is estimated that the implementation of all phase of the transition will take approximately nine (9) months. The details of this work will be formally outlined in the Technology and Operational Timelines.

SYSTEM TESTING

With hopes of all system components being in place and programming of field user radio equipment complete, system testing will be conducted through October 2012.

SYSTEM ACCEPTANCE

Upon successful completion of system testing, the County will accept the system as complete and then schedule an official date for cutover to the new system. Presently System Acceptance is anticipated to occur sometime in early November 2012.

SYSTEM CUTOVER

Official cutover to the new system will occur on the officially proposed date. Field user agencies will be notified of the official date and time for cutover. Presently the County anticipates cutover occurring in mid to late November 2012.

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR

The transition through the various stages of this project, are on a very aggressive schedule. As things move forward it will be very important for the County and DES to stay on track with this schedule, so we are able to meet the FCC mandate of December 31, 2012. Staying on track and moving forward in a positive direction will require a great deal of cooperation and coordination by all parties involved. It truly will be a team effort to see this project through, and the County looks forward to working with the various local governmental and public safety agencies to see the project through.

At any point in the process, should municipal or public safety officials from within Clinton County have questions concerning narrow banding of the County's public safety radio system, they should feel free to contact me directly by telephone or Email. My office phone is **(570) 893-4090 ext. 3407**, while my Email address is kfanning@ClintonCountyPA.com.