

# Clinton County Department of Emergency Services

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## Narrow Band Radio Project Update

April 5, 2011

Report #2

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Clinton County's Department of Emergency Services (DES) continues to move forward with the administrative and planning aspects for its narrow band transition to meet the **December 31, 2012** deadline established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). While the County continues to move forward in this planning process for its public safety emergency two-way radio system, it is important for local municipal government to keep in mind they are not exempt from meeting the FCC's narrow band requirement. The mandate also applies to local municipal governments who have FCC licensed radio frequencies and equipment they are using for their daily operations. It is important for municipal officials to get in contact with the vendor doing their radio work and determine their needs for meeting compliance by **December 31, 2012**. The County and DES have a tremendous undertaking in front of them to transition its public safety radio communications system. However, DES will do its best to continue being a resource and support mechanism for local government. There is still plenty of time, but the clock is ticking. You are better off working to insure your compliance now versus waiting until the last minute.

### **FCC LICENSING**

DES and its Consultant are well into the FCC licensing process at this point. Only being less than a month into the FCC licensing process has thus far proved to be very educational. We have learned that the county will be able to continue the use of all its existing channels. These frequencies will simply be relicensed as narrow band channels. This was good news! While there will still be a need for reprogramming of field user equipment and upgrade to the county's radio equipment, we will be maintaining the frequency capability we presently are accustomed to.

As we began working through this licensing process, we were able to identify frequency items requiring the completion of some administrative "housekeeping". By completing this administrative work, we will be streamlining the overall administration of the numerous radio communication and microwave channels licensed to Clinton County Government.

In working with our consultant, we have identified some potentially creative opportunities with our existing frequencies to address the repeater pairs for use in the broadcasting of the primary fire/EMS and police dispatch channels. Our concept/idea is in its infancy and will require submission to the FCC for review and approval. Furthermore, we have been able to also identify cost effective opportunities for increased channel capacity to accommodate law enforcement tactical operations and,

also revisit the area repeater concept. By being able to include the “repeating” capabilities in our radio project, we will help to overcome some of the potential coverage issues we anticipate from the transition to broadcasting our signal in narrow band. Repeating capabilities will also enhance our desire to improve our interoperable radio communications locally and also with state agencies. DES will be meeting with fire/EMS officials and law enforcement officials during the month of April to review and discuss frequency issues and items in more detail.

### ***TECHNOLOGY TIMELINE DEVELOPMENT***

In early March DES met with its consultant to talk about beginning development of the Technology Timeline. Following some discussion a basic scope/concept is in its early stages. The Technology Timeline will be an ongoing point of discussion and a more aggressive approach will begin to take shape in June of this year.

In addition to discussion concerning the timeline and based on direction from the Board of Commissioners, this meeting also included the development of an estimated line item budget for the transition to narrow band. With an estimated cost of \$1.5 million, DES has also developed a Finance Committee to assist in seeking outside funding to offset project costs. In addition to assisting in the search and procurement of outside funds, the Finance Committee will also provide over-site for the spending of any procured outside funding.

### ***OPERATIONAL TIMELINE DEVELOPMENT***

At this point most if not all public safety (police, fire and EMS) agencies should be aware of the need to meet the narrow banding requirement by ***December 31, 2011***. Through monthly meetings with law enforcement officials and fire/EMS officials, DES will begin to engage the various groups in discussion regarding development of the Operational Timeline. Discussion of the Operational Timeline will be an agenda items at the April Police Committee Meeting and the April meeting of the Fire Procedure Committee.

### ***REVIEW & REVISION OF CURRENT RADIO PROCEDURES***

With the anticipated transition to a repeated public safety radio system, we have identified the need for some change in our protocols for talking on the radio. While the changes will most likely be minimal, none the less they need to be addressed prior to system acceptance. It has been decided that the best approach for conducting this review and update process is to work through the Police Committee and the Fire Procedure Committee. The plan is to take an initial look at the police and Fire/EMS dispatch procedures for identification of sections needing change to meet the needs of each respective discipline. It is anticipated this initial review will occur in May 2011 at the discipline specific meetings. Our goal will be for completion of the process and be ready for implementation by May of 2012. Following the update process and prior to implementation, there will be an educational program developed and delivered to the public safety community.

### ***CREATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL***

Presently there has been no action taken with regard to the creation of a Request for Proposal. Some general discussion has taken place between DES and their consultant regarding the various tower sites and potential equipment need. But no formal action has taken place. As previously mentioned 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 still 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 phases 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**

Clinton County DES continues to move forward with the administrative and planning aspects of implementation for transition to a narrow band public safety two-way radio system, in order to meet the FCC mandate of **December 31, 2012**. If your municipality or organization has not already made transitioning to narrow band a priority, you need to put it on your radar screen. DES has adopted a team approach to its transition from wide band to narrow band. That team approach includes involvement and participation from the emergency service community, which we hope will result in a streamlined and organized transition. Furthermore, by obtaining input from the field user community, we will strive to develop a system that will meet the public safety radio communications needs for years to come.

The clock is ticking, but there is still plenty of time. I strongly encourage you to take the necessary action for transition to narrow banding of your FCC approved two way radio licenses and radio equipment. The longer you wait, the greater the challenge in front of you will be.

As always, the Department of Emergency Services is a resource that is available to you. At any point in the process, should municipal or public safety officials from within Clinton County have questions concerning narrow banding in general or 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](mailto:kfanning@ClintonCountyPA.com).