

# Clinton County Department of Emergency Services

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## Narrowband Radio Project Update

May, 2011

Report #3

### **INTRODUCTION**

Another month has passed and Clinton County's Department of Emergency Services (DES) continues to address administrative items related to planning for its narrowband transition and meeting the **December 31, 2012** deadline established through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Narrowband Ruling. The County's focus will continue to be on the needs associated with its public safety emergency two-way radio system. It is important for local government and field user agencies with FCC licenses to remember they have a responsibility to address their own two-way radio needs. You are not exempt from this FCC Ruling. There are those municipal governments out there whom have radio channels and equipment licensed. You need to be certain you will be in compliance by going through your records and reviewing your FCC license(s) if you have any. Your radio vendor should be able to provide you some guidance on any issues you may have regarding compliance. While the County is responsible for the general licensing specific to the public safety channels; EMS, fire and police agencies may also have some licensing issues they will need to address. Specifically, if you are operating a base radio unit from your facility, it should have an FCC license and an FCC call sign attached to it. You will need to make changes to these licenses. The County's DES will work with you in order to grant permission for use of certain channels licensed by the county, and we will also continue as a resource to help guide you in the right direction. However, municipalities and public safety agencies are responsible for the addressing of these issues within their respective organizations. Additionally, if you work with your radio service vendor, they should also be able to help guide you in the right direction. Don't delay! Now is the time to begin reviewing your records and getting your house in order. Keep in mind you have until **December 31, 2012**. DES has had interaction with some of you and we will continue being a resource and support mechanism for local government and the public safety community.

### **FCC LICENSING**

FCC licensing continues to be our primary focus right now. Back in early April our Consultant submitted to the FCC a proposed frequency plan for the law enforcement side of our radio system. Our proposed frequency plan is in review and we hope to have approval sometime in the next few months. This plan is requesting a change for our primary police dispatch channel to become a repeated channel, a request for a repeated operations channel and a request for three (3) additional channels for field or tactical operations. Additionally, as part of the proposed plan, we are relicensing the Regional Police channel as well as requesting licensing for the National Police frequency. If our proposed plan is

approved, it will greatly enhance the frequency capacity for law enforcement use here in Clinton County. With the submission of the frequency plan for law enforcement complete, our Consultant is now working to develop a proposed frequency plan for the fire & EMS side of the radio system. Hopefully we will have a frequency plan developed and submitted by mid to late May. Once the frequency plan for the fire & EMS side is submitted, we will pretty much be in a holding pattern with FCC licensing. We will simply be awaiting approval of the FCC.

In an effort to reinforce my comments in the **INTRODUCTION SECTION**, if any of you are operating a base radio unit from your municipal building, police station or fire/EMS station you have FCC licensing issues that will need to be addressed specific to narrow banding. If you are planning to have county licensed channels programmed in your base station radio equipment, you will need to make an official request to the county and have formal written approval from us. At this point you simply need to be reviewing your current/existing license and be developing a plan for transition. I would suggest holding off on making any changes until the county receives final FCC approval on its proposed frequency plans.

Re-licensing and the approval process for use of the county's licensed channels can be a little confusing. If your organizations intention is to operate a base radio and use county licensed channels, please make contact with me. I will gladly make time to review and discuss the process with you.

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

DES continues to have limited discussion with its consultant in regards to the development of our Technology Timeline. This limited discussion has helped us to identify some initial key points and bench marks, which will need to be included in our timeline as we work towards final development. The basic concept for the Technology Timeline continues to be in its early stages and our target date for ramping things up is still set for June.

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

As we begin to finalize our initial activity with FCC licensing, we will begin to focus time on working with the field user community to begin talking about the development of our Operational Timeline. The Operational Timeline will be the plan we will follow to migrate away from our existing radio system, to an upgraded/enhanced FCC narrowband compliant radio system. This will include such things as the timing for reprogramming of radio equipment, system testing and official cutover to the new system.

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

During the month of April, both the Police Committee and the Fire Procedure Committee were made aware of the proposed process for reviewing existing radio protocol and making modifications. This process is scheduled to begin during the month of May. At the May meeting of the respective groups, our first step will be to review the Table of Contents for the different procedures and develop a listing of the areas requiring change. We will then review and make changes section-by-section until we have addressed all areas of concern and interest. The goal continues to be for completion of the process

and being ready for implementation by May of 2012. We will then rollout an educational program and begin to follow the revised procedures prior to cut over, in hopes we are prepared to follow appropriate protocol when cutover to the new system occurs in the latter part of 2012.

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

There still has yet to be any action taken with regard to the creation of a Request for Proposal. We continue to have some general discussion with our consultant concerning our potential equipment needs and identifying the most cost effective solutions, while at the same time providing the maximum capability of a proposed new/upgraded system. We continue to anticipate formally beginning to develop our RFP in July of 2011 and be completed no later than the end of September 2011.

### ***BIDDING OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL***

It continues to be 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**

While **December 31, 2012** seems like a long time away, the reality is it will be here before you know it. Clinton County DES continues in its endeavor to not only meet FCC compliance with regard to narrowband, but also insure we maintain a system of quality public safety radio communications. We continue working to meet the administrative and planning needs of transitioning our radio system, in hopes of making the changeover as transparent as possible. Having a good plan on the front end, will help us to adequately see things through to completion and successfully clear any obstacles we may encounter along the way.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of municipalities as well as fire/EMS and law enforcement agencies with FCC licensed equipment to reach out to your radio vendor and inquire as to what if any action you may need to take in order to insure your license is compliant. Additionally, DES will also continue to be a resource for you.

While the clock continues to tick, there is still plenty of time. You need to be certain your respective agencies and organizations are taking the necessary actions 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.

The Department of Emergency Services remains committed to insuring an orderly transition to a narrowband compliant radio system in the most cost effective manner possible. Furthermore, we remain committed to being a resource for local municipal government and the public safety community. Should you have any questions concerning the narrow banding process, please do not hesitate to reach out. If our office does not have the answers to your questions, we will do our best to get answers for you in an effort help guide you through the process. You 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).