



COUNTY OF BUCKS Emergency Communications Radio Project

Where we started:

The Emergency Responders and 911 Dispatchers are operating on a radio system that was put into service in 1998. Our system is in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our responders rely on their radios as their lifeline; and we want to ensure they have the best possible equipment for their operations today and in the future.

Realizing the current system is approaching the end of its functional use, and due to the FCC's narrowbanding requirements, the County Commissioners reaffirmed their dedication to public safety by entering into a contract with Motorola to provide our county with a new 700 MHz, APCO P25 Phase 2 radio network. The County has already committed funding to this project, and we have made a significant capital investment into early project related costs.

In June 2012, we completed the review of Motorola's system design and finally, in December 2012, the County and Motorola were able to agree upon change orders to the original contracted design. The County Commissioners increased their investment by \$2.2 million, bringing the contract value up to \$39,400,000.

Where we are today:

The priority focus of the project staff is twofold:

1. Site acquisition. The new radio system required a new design which included the deployment of equipment at additional tower sites. The majority of the sites that will be used in the new design will be on existing towers in the county. We are also using sites in Hunterdon County, NJ, and Lehigh and Montgomery counties. A critical component to these deployments will be reaching agreements with private tower site owners. That effort is currently underway. Once leases are established, the County will be moving into the construction phase of this project.
2. Ordering procedures. With the deployment of this system, the emergency responders will need to secure new equipment to operate on the network. The County project team and representatives from Motorola will be hosting workshops to assist emergency responders with developing their equipment orders. Priority attention is being given to agencies with grant funds with upcoming expiration dates.



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The schedule will begin to take shape over the next few weeks. We are still looking to cutover to the new system in the 3rd quarter of 2014. Ideally, all of our emergency responders will have their equipment ordered and will have taken delivery of it no later than January 2014. This will allow us ample time to get the equipment field tested and properly installed in the police cars, fire trucks and ambulances throughout the county. Once the finalized schedule has been approved, we will share it with our user community.

Where we are headed:

A working draft of the schedule is outlined below:

- 1/20/2013 – 3/11/2013 - Weekly ordering workshops.
- 2/2013 - AFG grant deadline, Bucks County Radio Department will begin accepting and placing orders.
- 9/30/2013 – All orders due to the Bucks County Radio Department.
- 12/20/2013 – Bucks County Radio Department will place final orders with Motorola.
- 1/31/2014 – All equipment expected to be delivered to the Bucks County Radio Department to begin programming and assembly.
- 3/1/2014 – 6/30/2014 – Equipment distribution to public safety agencies.
- 4/1/2014 – Training Classes will begin.
- 7/1/2014 – System expected to be online for field acceptance testing.
- 9/30/2014 – Anticipated cutover to the new system.
- 12/31/2014 - System acceptance.

What does that mean for your municipality?

Ordering and Financing Questions:

We request that any Motorola equipment being ordered for use on the new radio system be placed through the County's radio department.

We are aware that there are some entities that have received AFG and RDA grants which contain special conditions. Those grants have specific timing requirements that we have been addressing to insure that those grant funds are not allowed to expire. The RDA grants have an annual expiration of 12/31, and it is our understanding that the current AFG grants are set to expire in February 2013. Priority is being given to those with AFG and RDA grants.



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It is important that all of our municipalities and emergency responders plan for this large capital expense. Please make it a point to talk about the financial needs of your responders in 2013, and explore any grant opportunities that may be available to your municipality and your emergency responders.

The County intends to make financing for the subscriber equipment available late in the 1st quarter of 2013. As we have outlined on the project website, the financing details include the following:

- The County will provide funding for agencies that request financial assistance.
- We will allow funding for Motorola radios and accessories only and that equipment must be ordered through the Bucks County radio department.
- Installation and removal costs will be the responsibility of the agencies.
- Financing plans will have a 7 year term. Agencies can make payments over a 7 year span with no early pre-payment penalties. The agencies will receive the same borrowing rate that the County receives. The County has not yet secured funding but intends to within the next 90-120 days at which time we will provide an update with the terms and conditions.
- For those of you who are working with a grant requiring a department match – your agency will be permitted to finance the amount you need to match if allowable within the rules of those grants.
- For agencies that take advantage of County financing, you will not be required to begin making payments on the equipment until after County acceptance of the system, which we anticipate to occur by the end of 2014.
- Agencies will be required to pay for what is requested with their finalized orders. We cannot accept changes to the orders once they have been processed.
- To assist agencies with their ordering needs, the sales team from Motorola, along with the County's project team will host ordering workshops. These will be smaller work sessions designed to give specialized attention to emergency responders to aid them with the order forms. Locations will be posted to the project website as soon as they are finalized and will begin late in January 2013 and run through March 11, 2013. Additional sessions will be on an as-needed basis.

Monthly Updates:

Monthly updates are provided on the County's website. Those updates can be found at www.buckscounty.org – scroll to the bottom of the page where the icon with the portable radios is for the latest project news.