

**STATE OF COLORADO
COUNTY OF ROUTT**

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK
November 6, 2014**

Chair Chuck Wisecup, Oak Creek Fire District, called the meeting of the Routt County Communications Advisory Board (CAB) to order. Chuck Wisecup, Oak Creek Fire, Cheryl Dalton, Emergency Management; Doug Brown and Levi Pietrick, Routt County Communications; Michael Arce, Steamboat Springs Fire; Emy Keeling, Routt County GIS; Mike Swinsick, North Routt Fire; Greg Tuliszewski, Hayden Police; Kristia Check-Hill, Routt County Search and Rescue; Tyler Whitmore, Yampa Valley Regional Airport; Daniel Harris, Classic Air Medical; Dal Leck, West Routt Fire; Garrett Wiggins, Routt County Sheriff; and Tom Sullivan, Routt County Manager; were present. Carrie Mansfield recorded the meeting, and prepared the minutes.

EN RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Chuck stated that a quorum was not yet present and postponed approval of the minutes until then.

EN RE: PROJECTS AND ISSUES

COMMENTS ON PRESENTATION BY FIRSTNET COLORADO ON JULY 24, 2014

Doug began the conversation by saying the County is faced with deciding between three types of communications networks, and they all have cost factors that must be considered. He said dependable, technical information will also be required before a decision can be made.

A question was asked if there would be any federal funding to help with the implementation. Levi answered that the money that is allocated for spending by the Federal Government right now is strictly for outreach and test platforms. There is no money for system build out.

A representative asked if one or more of our systems would have to go away and what the cost would be for the new FirstNet system. Doug confirmed that we will be forced to make a determination because the cost of supporting three separate systems would be unaffordable. He said the cost of a FirstNet system has never been discussed because consultants have to be brought in to survey your area to determine what assets you have vs. what is needed, what they have, and what you are willing to give up to them.

Levi said that since they are using cellular technology it will require a lot more sites to cover the same area we have now. Doug said that if the rest of the state goes with FirstNet, and we have a standalone 800 system, we might not be compatible with the rest of the state.

Levi said that the state has spent about 1.2 million dollars on the test platform in Adams County that is for specific users. Doug said he thinks the cost to get the technology in every vehicle and for every person will be astronomical.

Greg asked how long we will be able to maintain our current system. Doug replied that the DTR system is projected to be supported for the next 20 years. The DTR repeaters were just replaced county wide by the state, except for those on Emerald Mountain. He said the backhaul of the microwave is going to be the problem because it's fading fast as far as the ability to get repair parts and the cost of the repair parts. Greg asked how can we be sure the system will last that long, and how do we make an informed decision? Tom said that planning for the cellular technology has not even reached our area yet, so we are years out. We will have competing technologies as we move away from radios to cell phones. Motorola and the radio companies are going to stay in existence as long as it is profitable. Some rural areas are moving towards studying the technology, but development is probably going to move from the east coast to the west coast.

EN RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Chuck stated that a quorum was now present and they could proceed with official business.

EN RE: ADMINISTRATIVE

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The draft minutes of the July 24, 2014 quarterly meeting of the Communications Advisory Board (CAB) were reviewed.

MOTION

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the Communications Advisory Board of November 6, 2014. A member seconded; the motion carried unanimously.

2015 MEETING SCHEDULE

Discussion of the 2015 schedule followed. Chuck said the meetings are normally held the 4th Thursday of January, April, July and October. Cheryl commented that they usually meet on the same Thursday as the MAC Advisory Board meeting, but the meeting set for April has been changed to March in order to approve the AOP prior to April 1st. Chuck said that it is helpful to have the meetings on the same day so that representatives only have to come to town once. Cheryl said she will send the dates to Doug for review.

OAK CREEK SITE – HIT BY LIGHTNING

Doug said he has determined that the Oak Creek site was hit by lightning. It tore through a lot of our equipment up there. It appears that it came through the commercial power lines and it went through the electrical transfer switch for the generator to the commercial power, then nuked the control modules inside of it. From there, it went into the building and took out a significant amount of equipment to include amplifier heads on the microwave tower. We are still trying to get costs assessments. He said equipment is at the vendors now being evaluated and repaired, so it's an on-going process. The state loaned us a considerable amount of equipment to bring the radio site back up. The transfer switch is non-operational. If we lose commercial power, it's going to have to be a manual transfer to the generator to bring it up until the transfer switch is operational.

Greg asked if there is an estimated time for repair. Doug replied that we have no idea. We are at the mercy of the vendors. All we can do is send the equipment to them and see how quickly they can make the repair(s). We are not on a priority service list. It's way too expensive for us to do that. We fall in line with everybody else.

Another person said that he heard it not only took out the Oak Creek site, but it took out some of Eagle County as well. Levi said that it took out two sites in Eagle County – Beaver Creek and Wolcott. Doug said getting the equipment back up and operational is an on-going process right now. He said we were hoping we could have a lot of it done before the snow sets in, but it doesn't look like that's going to happen now.

FARWELL FUEL TANK

Levi said he is no longer able to reach the manufacturer that quoted the expanded tank, so we will have to start over and send out County RFP's to find a vendor willing to manufacture one. Someone asked if the fuel level had been checked on Farwell. Levi said the tank was full last time he was at the site.

DISPATCH CONSOLES

Doug said that replacement of the dispatch consoles has been completed. He said it was a seamless installation completed by Motorola out of Denver. The installation was uneventful and required only one change order. He commended Levi, who was Project Manager and said he did an excellent job.

RADIO CHANNEL TEMPLATES

Levi said the channel maps have been printed. He will program the County radios first, to be followed by subscriber IGA radios in January. He said he will provide as much notice as possible for scheduling.

RADIO TECH REPORT

Levi said the Oak Creek site is semi-operational due to the equipment loaned to us by the state. He said the site is down one channel and explained that it's a 6-channel site, operating on 4 channels and the control channel. He hopes the site will be fixed by the end of the month.

Levi said the state has completed replacement of almost all of the Quantars with GTR repeaters at Routt County sites. The only exception is the Emerald Mountain site.

He said all of the site preventative maintenance was completed by the end of September. Besides the DTR problem at Oak Creek, there is an outstanding microwave issue at King that will be addressed once the Oak Creek site is restored.

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER STAFFING

Doug said dispatch will be fully staffed when the two trainees complete their training programs. One Trainee is projected to come out of training next month. The second trainee is in his second month and appears to be doing well

Greg asked Doug to pass on his compliments to the two dispatchers, who juggled officers, dispatch, calls, press, and medical personnel during the recent shooting. He said they did an amazing job.

COMMUNICATIONS VAN UPDATE

Doug said the ComVan is mechanically operational right now, but they discovered a number of communications issues when he set up a dispatch team recently to test the communications systems. He is preparing an overall assessment for County officials that he will present at the next board meeting. In answer to a question about its current capabilities, Doug said if we need to deploy it tonight, we will have a warm place to stand, operational 800 and VHF radios, two cell phone amplified systems and two airband radios. In answer to a question re: its ability to double as a command post, Doug replied that it would serve well in that capacity, and would be comfortable to work out of.

Doug said he talked to Terry Barber earlier today about equipment interconnect problems inside the vehicle, and Terry offered as much help as needed to resolve the issues. There are also some procedure flaws involving deployment that will be corrected.

Sheriff Wiggins asked if any progress had been made toward his suggestion to name the CommVan as an emergency vehicle so that drivers will not be required to have a CDL to operate the vehicle. Doug replied that this option seems viable, but is still being researched.

OPEN DISCUSSION – FUTURE PLANS – ROUTT COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Doug started by saying that the meeting began with a brief discussion re: future equipment needs. He said there are so many unknown factors at this point in time, that it's anybody's guess what the right course of action will be.

Chuck said he knows the DTR handhelds are going to be obsolete soon and asked if there is a replacement plan. Doug replied that replacement is built into the pool concept based on life expectancy. Tom commented that the money being put away is unlikely to be adequate long term or even short term, especially considering the necessity of upgrading and relocating the DTR equipment at the Emerald Mountain site.

Chuck asked if a standard was being developed for all County users as far as the mobiles and handhelds themselves, so that everybody has the same radios. Tom replied that given the development of new technologies, it will probably be impractical to go back to VHF. The most feasible solution for the present time may be to continue our use of the DTR system, especially if we want the State to continue to pay for and cover some of the infrastructure at the tower sites. Doug agreed. He said he was at the Hayden site when the state techs changed out the DTR system there, and they did a commendable job. All of the equipment is new.

Chuck said, if we assume we are going to continue with DTR, are the handheld radios going to become obsolete in 2017? Levi replied yes, the XTS and XTL product line is officially cancelled as of November 30th of this year. Motorola offers 5 years of support, but that is based on their own availability for repair parts.

Chuck said the problem for him and for other agencies is that they cannot afford to replace all of their radios in a single year. Purchase has to be phased over a number of years with a few radios being purchased each year. 2017 isn't far off. They need to know now which radios they should purchase to be compatible with everyone else in the County. Greg said the State has started switching their people over to the APX System, which is another five hundred to eight hundred dollars per radio.

Doug said that Levi had the foresight to test new radios. Levi said we have a couple of Motorola APX radios to test. He said he thinks we could do better for the money than that product line. We just need to shop around a little. In answer to a question about price range, Levi said the radio that he ordered from Motorola is an APX Dual band (VHF / 800), and it cost \$4,300. Greg said the dual capability of these radios is worth the extra \$400 or \$500.

Levi said that most manufacturers offer a similar radio, either VHF/800 or UHF/800. There is also a Tallis Liberty radio that has VHF/UHF/800 and airband all rolled into one. It looks like a brick and weighs as much, but it's got everything you could ever need in one radio, and they are cheaper than the Motorola APX line.

Greg said I know they are supposed to be compatible, but it hardly ever works that way. He asked Levi if he will be testing radios like Kenwood and others to discover whether they are compatible or not. Levi replied that at the State level there is a tech ops committee. They won't allow a radio to be programmed on the State network until its undergone testing. He said there's a list of approved subscriber radios. So whatever we decide to go with will have to be on that list, or we will have to push to get it on that list.

Sheriff Wiggins suggested having a round table or meeting to discuss this issue and try to determine which radios would best meet the needs of all the users, since needs may vary from agency to agency. Greg said budgets are already set for 2015, so a decision needs to be made soon to allow for budget lead time, or the money won't be available for purchases in 2016 and 2017. Levi replied that he doesn't know of a product line that Motorola has cancelled that hasn't had at least three years of service past the end of manufacturing and sometimes longer. So you can reasonably expect three years, optimistically, five years and maybe even seven.

Cheryl asked if this discussion will be brought up at the regional steering committee on the 18th when the functional groups get together for the Northwest Region? Levi replied that it's already a topic among technicians. Eagle County and Garfield County have already started migrating to the APX product line as XDL/XDS products fail in order to limit the impact of having to do it all at once. He went on to say that he thinks we can do better for the money. Motorola makes a good product line, but there are other products that meet the same specifications and military standard testing, and some of them are USA made.

Greg said he budgeted the purchase of a vehicle or two with radios in 2015, so he will have to know soon what make and model to buy. He asked Levi, how quickly he could come up with a list of minimum specs so a determination can be made. Levi responded that he can get the approved subscriber list from the CCNC website and pull up specs on a couple of model ranges and provide that to whoever is interested. Garrett said if the agencies can have a list of specifications and capabilities soon, everyone can take a look at the list and provide feedback including what their first, second and third choices are. Levi replied that he will send the list out to the CAB group.

EN RE: OLD BUSINESS

No old business was reported.

EN RE: NEW BUSINESS

No new business was reported.

EN RE: ADJOURNMENT

At 4:22 p.m., Chuck moved to adjourn the Communications Advisory Board meeting. A member seconded; the motion carried unanimously.

No further business coming before the Communications Advisory Board, same adjourned sine die.

Carrie Mansfield, Administrative Assistant

Chuck Wisecup, Chair

Date