

**STATE OF COLORADO  
COUNTY OF ROUTT**

**ROUTT COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD  
July 27, 2006**

Bob Struble, Steamboat Springs Fire and Rescue, called the regular quarterly meeting of the Communications Advisory Board to order. Faith Mendoza and Joe Harris, Routt County Communications; Bryan Rickman, West Routt Fire Protection District; Chuck Wisecup, Oak Creek Fire Protection District; Chris Tritz, Oak Creek Police Department; Chuck Vale and Cheryl Dalton, Emergency Management; Bob Reilley, North Routt Fire Protection District; Jody Lenahan and Ed Corriveau, Hayden Police Department; Tyler Whitmore, Yampa Valley Regional Airport; Bob DelValle, Steamboat Springs Police Department; Rob Ryg, Coroner; Dave Hill, Routt County Search and Rescue; Mark Hall, Safety Specialist for Frontier Radio; Tom Sullivan, County Manager; and Doug Monger, County Commissioner, were present. Dee Bolton recorded the meeting and prepared the minutes.

**EN RE: EQUIPMENT DEMONSTRATION / MARK HALL**

Mr. Hall discussed the basics of tactical interoperability and provided demonstrations of various radio systems and tools. He said that the incident at Columbine High School sparked the need to develop a standard-based, functional platform with which various responders and agencies could communicate. He thought that complete Statewide interoperability would take a minimum of ten years or more. He said that a solution used on the Front Range was to acquire repeaters and a cache of VHF radios and to train volunteer organizations to become a pool of radio communicators using the radios owned by various agencies' systems. He discussed the Incident Commander Radio Interface, a bridge device strategy that rebroadcasts the audio from a radio; has pre-defined channels; connects UHF, VHF, and 800 MHz; functions for 30 hours; is connected by a standard modified speaker microphone; establishes an A-net and a B-net, can be easily set up within ten minutes, and costs approximately \$10,000. He noted that they should never be on 'scan'. He said that homeland security equipment and gear, but not funding, could be obtained through [www.rkb.mipt.org](http://www.rkb.mipt.org). He recommended running parallel systems, requiring quarterly training/re-training, and that the VHF system never be abandoned because the 800 MHz system could not overcome the laws of physics in which signals were attenuated when, for example, wet pine needles were in the area and interfered with signals, a common problem in wildland fire situations.

**EN RE: REVIEW OF MINUTES**

**MOTION—APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Vale moved to approve the minutes of the Routt County Communications Advisory Board for April 27, 2006. Mr. Hill seconded; the motion carried unanimously.

## **EN RE: COMMUNICATIONS REPORT / CHUCK VALE**

Mr. Vale said that the Rainbow Gathering had been the greatest current challenge. System-wise, everything was running well.

Mr. Reilley said that he was delighted that Farwell was operable—a real advantage and relief for North Routt.

Commissioner Monger suggested that a Thank You letter be sent to Barbara Kirkmeyer and Cathy Shipley for funding the installation of the Farwell 800 MHz system.

## **EN RE: QWEST TARIFF CHANGES AND PUC DEREGULATION**

Mr. Vale said that Ms. Mendoza spoke with the Public Safety Team the previous week regarding the changes in Qwest's services. He anticipated that services provided would be reduced and cost more. Qwest has the 911 database but shares it with Intrado, which does not necessarily work smoothly because Intrado has the reverse-911 database. The Statewide significance of these changes is still unknown at present but the situation is being monitored by Ms. Mendoza.

## **EN RE: 911 SURCHARGE INCREASE**

Ms. Mendoza announced that the surcharge for 911 service was going to be increased, which will change the rate from \$.70 to \$1.25 per line, effective January 1, 2007.

## **EN RE: JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> 911 OUTAGE**

Mr. Vale said that periodic outages have been an issue in Western Colorado. At present, Qwest has no back-up system when lines go down. Ms. Mendoza is working with Qwest and the Public Utilities Commission for a long-term solution. Meanwhile, citizens need to be informed that calls from cell phones as well as land lines to the Dispatch Center might be necessary.

## **EN RE: SEARCH AND RESCUE AND MEDICAL CALLS**

Ms. Mendoza said that the issue of Search and Rescue and medical calls had been raised at the most recent Emergency Medical Services Council meeting. The question was whether an ambulance or other agency should be paged/notified whenever Search and Rescue was dispatched.

Mr. Wisecup said that the EMS Council discussed but did not resolve the issue. He hoped that ultimately the Call Guides would be revised. He felt that when a rescue involved a 'medical extraction' or medical emergency, and another agency could reach the scene faster, it was appropriate to notify that other agency.

Mr. Hill explained that Search and Rescue never knew what the situation would be until the patient was reached. Search was finding a person; rescue was getting someone, determining the situation, and bringing the person out. He asked whether ambulances should be advised when an extraction was necessary. Mr. Rickman said that the basic treatment procedures could be carried out prior to the arrival of an ambulance or S&R since other agencies might be able to respond in significantly less time.

Mr. Vale said that an updated Call Guide was handed out prior to this meeting. He asked whether everyone agreed with the changes. No one had any changes.

Ms. Mendoza said that it would be easier for dispatchers if each district's chain of command was the same, but otherwise, a list of who to call and in what order for one's entire district should be sent to Dispatch.

#### **MOTION—UPDATED CALL GUIDE**

Mr. Hill(?) moved to approve and authorize the Communications Director to implement the revised Call Guide as submitted this day. Mr. Wisecup seconded; the motion carried unanimously.

#### **EN RE: TIERED RESPONSE FOR AMBULANCE**

Mr. Vale said that at the most recent EMS Council meeting, Dr. Cionni had expressed concern about the accidents and deaths that have occurred in Colorado when responders have their lights flashing and sirens on. Dr. Cionni had requested that a tiered response system be developed and implemented at the Dispatch Center level. Mr. Vale said that if such a system were instituted, the responsibility for determining when lights and sirens should be used would be the dispatcher's.

Mr. Struble said that that issue was one that each individual agency's departmental policy should address, and it should remain that way.

Commissioner Monger said that if the Dispatch Center made the determination, the County would be liable, which was not an appropriate situation. He added that if such a system were to be developed, it should be initiated by the EMS Council rather than the Communications Advisory Board.

#### **EN RE: POWER OUTAGES AND SPECIAL NEEDS CHECKS**

Mr. Vale said that one of the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina that has spurred discussion within FEMA was that emergency responders were not addressing issues associated with people with special needs. He said that across Routt County, the special needs population was handled differently by each district. One known fact was that the greatest population was in the Oak Creek Fire Protection District, which keeps a database. Key questions were, if a power outage occurred, what was the plan

and who was responsible for checking on that population, and how long did the power need to be out before action was taken. He noted that under HIPPA regulations, the special needs population database could not be shared unless a state of emergency was declared for an entire town or a county.

Mr. Struble suggested that a special meeting with the Visiting Nurse Association be held. He added that staffing would be an issue when a situation occurred.

Mr. Sullivan said that each district should provide input to Mr. Vale regarding the writing of the County's Disaster Plan, which has to include procedures for assisting the special needs population.

#### **EN RE: FUTURE OF ROUTT COUNTY RADIO SYSTEM AND 800 MHZ**

Mr. Vale said that the implementation of the 800 MHz system for the State Patrol had allowed the provision of new buildings and equipment for most Routt County sites. The WIN grant was approved, but when the Rainbow Gathering was slated to be held in North Routt and Farwell was inoperable, full support to alter the grant was approved, and additional 800 MHz equipment was provided. Eventually, Farwell, West Routt, King Mountain, and the microwave portion of Mount Werner would be upgraded and have five-channel capability on the 800 system.

Mr. Struble said that a five-year master plan would assist agencies in the development of their five-year CIPs. Mr. Vale said that the 800 system's infrastructure was not planned because the State rushed the process and provided funding to initiate it. He noted that the 2006 Homeland Security grant was a regional project. Northwest Colorado's priority was to provide all 106 ambulances with radios. The funding sources and grant awards were still uncertain, but he was confident that the State intended to put as much funding as possible into the establishment of the 800 MHz system, which he anticipated would be fully operational by 2008 or 2009. He noted that Western Colorado had 65 sites, all of which were prioritized as to when they would be upgraded. In terms of long-range planning for the purchase of equipment, he adamantly stated that all systems must be redundant. He said that a major concern was training dispatchers in two systems.

#### **EN RE: EQUIPMENT USED ON ROUTT COUNTY RADIO SYSTEM**

Ms. Mendoza said that interagency communications would be greatly simplified and enhanced if everyone had the same radios and were on the same system. Mr. Struble reiterated the need for a five-year master plan. Mr. Vale said that the right radios should be purchased and programmed correctly, and the rest of the currently-owned equipment should be discarded. Ms. Mendoza recommended coordinating the purchase of radios in large quantities. She would alert all agencies when an order was to be made so that compatible equipment could be purchased by several agencies, potentially at a lower rate.

**EN RE: TRAINING FOR RADIO EQUIPMENT**

[See above agenda item as well.]

Mr. Wisecup noted that training volunteers in the use of new equipment was an on-going issue. Ms. Mendoza responded that every agency was responsible for providing basic training on existing equipment. She recommended that monthly refresher sessions be offered.

**EN RE: NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Vale announced that new 2006 pocket guides were available.

Mr. Vale said that an e-mail survey would be sent shortly regarding the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan that had taken several years to develop. He urged every agency to respond to the survey so that a draft could be compiled.

Mr. Wisecup reported that the first draft of the Public Safety Review was being circulated. He would appreciate comments.

Mr. Hall stated that he had information on CDAP, if anyone were interested.

**EN RE: NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Communications Advisory Board will be held on October 26, 2006, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room. Agenda items should be submitted to Sue Heineman.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dee Bolton, Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Struble, Chairman