

**STATE OF COLORADO
COUNTY OF ROUTT**

**ROUTT COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD
November 18, 2005**

Chairman Bob Struble, Steamboat Springs Fire and Rescue; called the special meeting of the Communications Advisory Board to order. Faith Mendoza, Routt County Communications Director; Chuck Wisecup, Chris Tritz, and Tony Morgan, Oak Creek Fire Protection District, Tyler Whitmore, Yampa Valley Regional Airport; Chuck Vale, Emergency Management; Bob Reilley, North Routt Fire Protection District; Bryan Rickman, West Routt Fire Protection District; Joel Rae, Steamboat Springs Police Department; Rob Ryg, Coroner; Doug Monger, County Commissioner; Sharon Clever, Routt County Communications; Jody Lenahan and Ed Corriveau, Hayden Police Department; Dan Nielsen, Yampa Fire Protection District and United States Forest Service; John Warner, Sheriff; Dan Taylor, Undersheriff; and Tom Sullivan, County Manager, were present. Dee Bolton recorded the meeting and prepared the minutes.

EN RE: RADIO PROTOCOL

Ms. Mendoza said that current radio procedures were instituted in December, 2003. Concerns regarding some of the protocols have arisen since that time.

Mr. Sullivan said that due to the concerns expressed, Ms. Mendoza had temporarily suspended radio procedures. To resolve the issues, this meeting had been called. He said that highly reliable organizations' personnel were able to change routines quickly in dynamic situations since the personnel were organized, focused, and mindful of the situation. Emergency responding agencies had to function in that manner as well. He said that Ms. Mendoza knew what was needed at the Communications Center, and agencies needed to determine what they needed and what worked and procedures should then be developed and applied consistently.

Ms. Mendoza reviewed a list of general concerns that she had received.

Each agency representative then described his or her concerns and suggestions individually. Issues and comments included the following:

Wrong information such as telephone numbers had been given out.

Officers' home telephone numbers have been released.

Dispatchers should be trained adequately to reduce user failures.

Following the current procedures takes valuable air time and hinders everyone's safety so protocols should be shorter, simpler, and more precise.

The shotgun traffic issue has created animosity.

Channels needed to be used better: bypass channels rather than repeater channels should be used.

Some radios needed to be reprogrammed.

Protocol policies should be enforced consistently.
Operating radios on mountaintops is extremely complicated so stating that a transmission has been heard is critical.
The root of the issue relates to user failure.
Some technical problems are due to the various types of equipment that different agencies use.
Codes might shorten air time, but users will not use codes.
Approximately 85% of the earlier technical problems have been resolved.
Speaker microphones create transmission issues.
Federal procedures need to be followed, but they keep changing directives.
Plain language should be used so everyone understands; codes should not be used.
Often, an initial transmission is the only one received or able to be sent so messages need to be well-considered and expressed clearly the first time.
Why change a system that had worked successfully for years? In other words, determine the problems that need to be remedied and correct only those rather than the entire protocol system.
Incorrect transmissions should be reported to supervisors so correct procedures can be taught to the individual at fault.
Following the protocol takes time away from attending to the incident.
Dispatcher turnover is a problem.
Direct channel use would cut down on radio chatter.
Shotgun traffic is good: the responder's location gets logged.
Acknowledgement is important so senders know transmissions have been heard and recorded and for accountability issues and safety.
Shotgun traffic does not work for the County law infrastructure.
The technology that we have should be fixed before an 800 system is initiated: Farwell, County law, and Road and Bridge have not worked for the last eighteen months.
Procedures are different for every agency; dispatchers are going to have to deal with that.
We have one of the best dispatch centers in Northwest Colorado.
The State-wide TAC channel is an underutilized, non-repeater channel.
Multiple channels can be used but the equipment needs to be the same type and channeled the same. Consistency is needed across agencies and channels, especially when multiple agencies are on the same incident.
In-coming calls to the Communications Center are prioritized so information as to a caller's situation is critical.
Form a sub-committee, solicit lists of needs from agencies, then meet with Ms. Mendoza to devise a consistent protocol that will work for agencies as well as dispatchers.
Different agencies use the same numbering so the personnel numbering system needs to be improved.
The biggest users should determine the system that works for them, then other agencies should be required to adapt to that system.

If all information is provided at once, a dispatcher might miss something, and more stress on the dispatcher is created. If a dispatcher acknowledges, the caller knows the call has been heard, he has the dispatcher's attention, and the dispatcher knows the caller's location.

New people are always being trained at the Center; it has always been that way—and it is an inherent problem for all dispatch centers.

It was agreed that the shotgun traffic protocol would be suspended. Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Mendoza will work with the dispatchers to establish what is working for them and what problems are recurring. That information will be shared at the next regular Communications Advisory Board meeting, and the next course of action will be determined.

EN RE: NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Communications Advisory Board will be held on January 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