



## Knox Regional Communications

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### County Commissioner's Meeting Communications Report – July 01, 2005

#### June 2005

- 1<sup>st</sup> Public Official's Conference planning meeting at Knox EMA
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Knox EMA Functional Exercise at Camden Fire Dept.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Coast Guard Search and Rescue forum
- 6&7<sup>th</sup> Training Class at South Portland Police Dept. – Incident Dispatcher Team
- 8<sup>th</sup> MECCA Meeting at Waldo RCC
- 8<sup>th</sup> Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting at Knox EMA
- 9<sup>th</sup> F.B.I. Audit of METRO Compliance
- 14<sup>th</sup> County Commissioner's monthly meeting
- 14<sup>th</sup> Rockland PD Supervisor's Meeting
- 17<sup>th</sup> Public Education Unit meeting
- 20<sup>th</sup> Dispatch in-service training – Hostage Negotiations refresher
- 21<sup>st</sup> W.M.D. training class in Augusta
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Dispatcher applicant testing
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Inspection of EMA radio antennas, cabling, etc. with tower climber
- 28<sup>th</sup> Dispatcher applicant interviews for one full time and one part time position

Plans are under way once again to hold a Public Officials Conference at The Haven on Rte. 90 in Rockport. A previously planned conference scheduled for May had to be cancelled due to lack of funding by sponsors. The conference is now scheduled for October 12<sup>th</sup> from 1600-1900 Hrs.

The conference will feature an overview of the Dragon Products chemical spill that occurred in April. The main focus of the meeting will be on costs associated with such a major event. The Rockland Fire Dept Haz Mat team will be set up in the parking lot to show what equipment is used for such an event, and what costs are incurred to replace contaminated equipment, and manpower costs. It is hoped that this presentation will give civic leaders a clearer understanding of response and costs associated with such an event.

The Knox EMA held its functional exercise on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Camden Fire Dept. The functional exercise introduced radio communications into the tabletop exercise. Many problems in communications were experienced. First of all, the portable radios were UHF radios loaned from Coastal Communications so as not to jam emergency channels for the duration of the drill. These portables created a lot of cross-channel interference, making

communications difficult. Also, cell phones were proven to be unreliable inside the structure.

Many people think that this breakdown in communications made the drill a failure. On the contrary, I feel that it brought realism to the event. Hardly an event goes by without some type of communications failure. This event was no different. We had the radio issues, we had cellular telephone failure and we had personnel failing to communicate with each other, making for a realistic scenario.

Some of the lessons learned from this exercise will be valuable in real-life incidents as they are the same type of issues we will face.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, several members of KRCC attended the Coast Guard Search and Rescue forum held at Coast Guard Station Rockland. This forum featured instructional training in several areas including fostering better working relationships between the Coast Guard and other public safety agencies. There were various demonstrations including a helicopter from Cape Cod that demonstrated airlifting personnel from a ship, to flare demonstrations, and search and rescue operations.

Director Lothrop and Supv. Gibbs attended a two-day training class on June 6&7 in South Portland on Incident Dispatch Teams. This training showed how to organize and run an incident dispatch team. An incident dispatcher would respond to an on-scene command post and handle most of the on-scene radio communications between the incident commander and the Emergency Operations Center. This provides for greater use of analog frequencies at the incident scene and provides for more accurate and concise communications. There is also greater tracking of personnel and equipment, enhancing safety of all personnel operating at the scene.

The state MECCA group met at Waldo County RCC on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The MECCA members are planning for a breakout session at this year's Maine County Commissioners Conference in September. The topic will be on public education and will cover several topics; including how some of the county public education units got started and "get the word out". The MACo group is interested in how existing public education units got started and what methods are used to get out promotional information about county activities. Part of our presentation will be geared towards answering those questions.

The F.B.I. conducted an NCIC audit of the Knox RCC on June 9<sup>th</sup>. The audit assesses the scope and effectiveness of state compliance with NCIC policies and procedures. This is accomplished through a review of operator training, Interstate Identification Index (III) inquiries, on-site data quality checks, and an administrative interview.

The KRCC received an excellent audit score, which indicates the lowest possible risk factor obtainable for the Center. This score reflects the attention to policy and accuracy of the staff of the Center, which made this score possible.

The Public Education Unit met on the 17<sup>th</sup> to review upcoming events for the summer. The unit will be at the Thomaston July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, and the Maine Lobster Festival parade. An informational booth will also be set up at the Union Fair.

New group photos were also taken and will be on display shortly.

An in-service training class on hostage negotiations and suicide callers was held on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The lead instructor was Deputy Corey Dodge. A review of policy and procedures in the handling of calls was conducted. Some minor changes to policy were highlighted and will be referred to the policy committee for updating.

Director Lothrop and supervisors Gibbs and Coombs attended a one-day training class on communications in WMD events. This class was held at the Maine Principals Association building in Augusta.

The class was titled "Leadership for National, State, and Local Preparedness: Conflict resolution, negotiation and problem solving strategies.

One of the goals of this training was to enhance communications among the various agencies, associations and organizations involved in WMD incidents. The U.S.

Department of Homeland Security unveiled its plans to develop National Planning Scenarios. As part of this effort, regional cooperation between jurisdictions will be encouraged. Better collaboration requires problem solving, information sharing and ongoing dialogue. The class focus was on building and maintaining cross-departmental and organizational connectivity to achieve optimal preparedness.

There were eight applicants that tested for the dispatcher position. All eight applicants scored within six points of each other. Background checks and references reveal that all eight are qualified for the position. Therefore, all eight will be interviewed on June 28<sup>th</sup>. It is anticipated that one full time and one part time person be chosen from the group.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Director Lothrop, Radio Repair and a tower technician inspected the EMA radio tower and antennas on the courthouse roof. There have been radio problems with some of the radios not working properly. The inspection revealed that the coaxial cables connecting the radios to the antennas are all very old and in need of replacement. There are some splices in the coaxial cable, which also reduces the performance of the radios.

Out of the five antennas, four of them need to have the coaxial cable replaced. The State EMA radio antenna and cable is in good condition and does not need replacing.

A written estimate is forthcoming, which will be submitted for possible funding through Homeland Defense grants.

The present EOC is located in the basement of the courthouse. The entire setup is not very well conceived. The antenna coaxial runs to the roof must take a circuitous route through the facility. This allows for greater risk of damage by outside contractors working within the structure and also causes extreme signal loss due to excessive cable lengths. For every 100 feet of cable, you lose 1.5 Db gain on your antenna. An example of this problem is your radio is 40 watts, due to the 200 ft cable being used we end up

with a final output at the antenna of approx. 20 watts. Half what the radio should be doing. The office area is cramped and not user friendly. There is no lightning and shock protection in place for the radios. The ground wire, until recently was not even connected to a ground rod.

The circuitous routing will also be cause of higher than normal labor to run the coaxial cables. They must snake through the cellar and into Doug McKnight's office where they enter an unused chimney to make their trek to the roof. There is only an approx. 8x8 inch opening in Doug's wall allowing access to the bend where the cables will enter the chimney. This bend is another 1.5 to 2 feet into the wall, making it difficult, at best, to run the wiring. There is also a major amount of telephone and/or computer cables occupying the area as well. This could lead to causing other problems by disrupting this wiring while trying to run to radio cables.

This is no fault of the EMA Director as she has made the best of a bad situation. This wiring has been in place for many years, and as the facility has modernized, there has been more and more wiring added to the confined wall space. These conditions should be noted, especially when considering possible co-location of the EOC in the future.

#### **Update on Radio Consultant:**

After having had an initial meeting with the Radio Consultant, I have found Waldo County's information on casts to be fantasy. I have attached a copy of the quote I have received from Communications Consulting Service showing the costs for the work needed to be done for Knox County.

Mr. Davol is able to do the propagation studies based on the locations of potential tower sites given to him. This will provide us with color copies of coverage areas for those proposed sites. Mr. Davol can also provide some basic recommendations for system design, which would then have to be worked up by the local radio vendor.

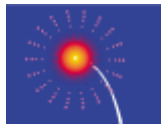
In order for the consultant to do the entire system design project, the total package cost would be \$10,000. This cost would include path studies, engineering of system, budgetary pricing, RFP development, etc. These are all the components that the local radio vendor is not capable of providing, especially in the window of opportunity for applying for the Federal Grant money.

The engineering of the system is the major component of the project. This is where the propagation studies of the proposed sites are combined with the best system design for connectivity of the tower sites to provide maximum system performance at the lowest possible price.

The consultant would also serve as a neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party for RFP design and review of bids. This allows Coastal Communications to bid on the project without any bias on the part of the County.

A project of this magnitude requires an excellent engineering study to obtain the best possible results.

I have recently obtained pricing to replace two base radios at the KRCC which are funded in the Capitol Outlay portion of my 2005 budget. It appears that there will be approx. \$7,000 left over in that fund, once the purchase and installation of those radios is complete. We were able to get reduced pricing on the proposed base radios, which has kept the cost down for that project. The savings from this Capitol Project could be applied towards the consultant fees.



**Have a Safe and Happy  
Holiday!!!**

# **Communication Consulting Service**

**16 Alling Drive. Gray, Maine 04039 Tel. 207-657-4009 Cell 207-831-3708**

Mr. Linwood L. Lothrop  
Knox Regional Communications  
327 park street  
Rockland, Maine 04841

June 28, 2005

Dear Mr. Lothrop,

It was a pleasure to meet with you. I apologize for the delay in getting this to you, this time of year; everyone is trying to meet deadlines.

My Rates are \$75.00 dollars per hour including travel time. No charge for mileage.  
Overnight stays billed at actual expense.

A typical County wide radio system assessment generally is billed at a flat rate of \$10,000.00.

This includes:

- Propagation studies
- Path studies
- Engineering of system
- Budgetary Pricing
- Request for proposal development
- Review of bids
- Manufacturer tech support on system design
- Consultation during construction

If you would desire you can pick and choose what portions of the project you would like assistance with.

I can start by running path and propagation studies based on the locations you have and are considering. I will provide you with color copies of the coverage and point to point studies along with some basic system recommendations. The fee for this service would be \$1500.00 dollars.

Based on the results of these studies, you can have your local radio shop advise you as to a system design or I can provide that for you.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Richard Davol  
Communication Consulting Service