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County Commissioner's Meeting Communications Report – June 2005

May

- 2nd Conducted radio testing with Lincoln County 9-1-1
- 2nd Attended WMD Exercise Planning Meeting at Rockland Fire Dept
- 3rd Attended monthly Department Heads Assoc, Meeting
- 5th Attended Knox County TRIAD meeting at Bartlett Woods
- 10th Attended County Commissioners monthly meeting
- 10th Attended WMD Exercise Planning meeting
- 10th Attended Rockland PD Supervisors Meeting
- 11th Attended Knox LEPC Meeting at Knox EMA
- 11th Knox RCC Supervisors Meeting
- 16th TRIAD Blood Drive, Congo Church, Camden
- 16th WMD Exercise Planning Meeting at Rockland Fire Dept
- 16th Attended Pen Bay Amateur Radio Club meeting
- 17th Attended NENA Meeting at Central Maine Commerce Center, Augusta
- 18th Attended Dispatch Advisory Meeting at Camden Fire Dept
- 19th Attended South Thomaston Town Meeting on Ambulance Service
- 20th Attended Public Officials Conference planning meeting
- 23rd Attended WMD Exercise planning meeting at Rockland FD
- 25th Attended MSP DMV Software demo at U of M at Augusta
- 26th Attended Maine Association of Counties meeting at Augusta

Radio testing was conducted on May 2nd with Lincoln County 911 to test the backup capabilities of the two centers. This test went well from both ends. The Lincoln County Center is adding new towers and will require some program changes to the radios at KRCC, but once those are complete, there should be good communications between the two centers.

Waldo County testing has been ongoing as well. We have been able to communicate with them on a regular basis.

There has been several WMD exercise planning meetings held this month in preparation of a functional exercise to be held on June 2nd. The functional exercise will introduce some actual radio communications and resource telephone calls to be placed. This will add more realism to the exercise. One of the key areas of failure in any event is

communications, both radio and person-to-person. This exercise should highlight some of those areas that will require improvement.

Another area of great concern will be that of the Public Information Officer (PIO). During the actual chemical spill at Dragon Products, we saw the need for a PIO to become pro-active in dealing with the media. During that event, we had Village Soup broadcasting a story over their web page that was not factual to the event. This caused several calls from concerned citizens to the EOC inquiring what they should do in the face of the dangerous chemical spill.

In some of the recent WMD meetings members has discussed various options for dealing with the PIO issue. It is difficult, at best, to rely on a single person to perform the duties of a PIO for every agency in the county. One of the thoughts discussed is to train a select group of representatives from various agencies to be a PIO. Then there would be a core group to call upon during an actual event. The PIO should have some working knowledge about the emergency services as well as the Right-to-Know laws and what types of information should be released to the public so as not to create undue panic.

The KRCC attended the TRIAD meeting at Bartlett Woods on May 5th. Final details of the Blood Drive to be held at the Congo Church in Camden were finalized. Two members of the Public Ed unit will be manning the registration booth and be available to answer questions concerning the 9-1-1 system and the refrigerator magnet program.

Also, plans are being made for the unit leader of the Public Ed unit to attend the TRIAD regional conference in Portland on September 30th. There will be 9 breakout sessions during the conference.

Director Lothrop attended the meeting of the Pen Bay Amateur Radio Club on the 16th. In years past the club has been active in support of the Emergency Operations Center at the EMA Office. This meeting was to see if that interest was still there and to offer the members an opportunity to work more closely with the Communications Center during an actual activation. The members were invited to participate in the upcoming Functional Exercise on June 2nd, and to offer them the opportunity to join us on other training issues in the future.

Director Lothrop attended the National Emergency Number Assoc. meeting on the 17th. The following update on legislative issues was provided at the meeting:

LD 407 – An act to move the ESCB from the Public Utilities Commission back to the Public Safety Dept. This legislation has been carried over to the next session, which will be taken up again after the first of the year.

LD 1081 - PUC & Public Safety review of the E911 System. An Ought Not to Pass vote came about due to a review that had recently been done and the committee did not see a need to do the process over again.

LD 1373 – Mandatory Emergency Medical Dispatch. An Ought to Pass was given this legislation. A joint EMS and ESCB effort will provide EMD to all of the PSAPs once approved. The State

EMS office will review all EMD programs to ensure that programs being considered meet the requirements of medical control. Once approved by the EMS Board, the ESCB will provide the training. Funding of the training will be covered by the ESCB. Backfill costs and travel expenses will be the responsibility of the PSAP. This legislation will provide EMD to 15 PSAPs that currently do not have any EMD program in place.

One of the other requirements will be for the State EMS office to see that a QA plan is in place. The State EMS office will also be required to conduct its own QA of each PSAP to see that the EMD program is being properly administered.

LD 1612 – Mandate E9-1-1 TDD Testing and Training. This bill was a bit of a “sleeper” that had some surprises when the hearing came up. The Maine Center for Deaf & Hearing Impaired had attached a bunch of restrictions to this bill, and offered some damaging testimony to support their restrictions. Some of the testimony had to do with silent TDD calls being ignored, leaving 9-1-1 callers without help.

One of the details of the bill was to have the Bureau conduct monthly testing of TDDs at each PSAP to include each answering position, test both receiving and making calls, and using a variety of equipment available to consumers. This testing alone would have required a person to be dedicated to doing nothing but TDD testing.

A legislative resolve for the ESCB and the Maine Center for Deaf & Hearing Impaired to meet to resolve their issues and come back in the next session with a workable amendment.

The PUC held a hearing on May 17th for the PBX – Multi-line Telephone Systems legislation sponsored by the Bureau. This legislation calls for a proposed rule change requiring PBX and Centrex telephone system users upgrading their system to be required to provide detailed ANI as part of the screen display to the 9-1-1 system. An example would be a hotel guest calling from Room #241, the hotel name and address, plus the room number must appear on the ANI screen.

This bill will become effective as soon as the Governor signs it.

NOTICE OF PUC RULEMAKING ADOPTION

The PUC has adopted the following rule:

Chapter and Title: Emergency Services Communication Bureau, Amendments
To Standard for Establishing a Statewide Enhanced 9-1-1
System Chapter 1 ss 4

Summary: To establish a process for reducing the number of Public
Service Answering Points from 48 to 26

This rule is available on the PUC web page at www.state.me.us/puc under Docket Number 2005-23 dated May 19, 2005.

I have copied and attached the section referenced in the rulemaking.

You will note that sub-section 4 Public Safety Answering Points has been modified. Some of the changes include establishing October 15, 2007 as the date for establishing the total number of PSAPs in the State at 26. They will include 5 in Cumberland County, 3 in York County, 2 in Androscoggin County, 2 in Penobscot County, and 1 each in all other counties in the State. The State Police PSAPs in Gray and Orono shall not be included in these limits.

In counties in which consolidation is planned have until July 1, 2006 to provide plans to the ESCB. The State Police shall file a report no later than July 1, 2006 reflecting agreements that it has reached for consolidating its PSAPs.

The amendment also includes funding mechanism for PSAPs planning consolidation in which up to 25% of the funds saved from eliminating PSAPs can go towards consolidation and dispatch functions for improved interoperability.

*SEE COPY OF THE RULE BELOW.

§4. Public Safety Answering Point Sites.

1. Compliance. Public Safety Answering Point sites shall comply with the PSAP standards set forth in Section 3, Subsections 1 through 5.

2. PSAP Sites.

A. Minimum PSAP Designation. There may be at least one PSAP designated in each County.

B. Total Number of PSAPs. As of October 15, 2007, the Bureau will support with funds collected by the surcharge authorized in 25 M.R.S.A. § 2927, no more than the following number of PSAPs: 5 In Cumberland County; 3 in York County; 2 in Androscoggin County; 2 in Penobscot County; and 1 each in all other counties in the State. The State Police PSAPs in Gray and Orono shall not be included in these limits.

C. Consolidation.

(1) Ten calls or Less. Any municipal PSAP existing as of July 1, 2005 that answered on average less than 10 calls per day for the time period January 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004 must file a plan with the ESCB no later than July 1, 2006 describing how it plans to consolidate with another entity taking greater than 10 calls per day, no later than October 15, 2007, unless it chooses the option in Section 4.2.D.

(2) Consolidation in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Hancock, Kennebec, and York Counties. For those counties in which PSAPs must be consolidated to reach the limits specified in section 4(2)(B) of this rule (Androscoggin, Cumberland, Hancock, Kennebec, and York), plans shall be submitted to the ESCB no later than July 1, 2006 reflecting agreements that has been reached to bring about that consolidation.

(3) State Police Consolidation. The State Police shall file a report no later than July 1, 2006 reflecting agreements that it has reached for consolidating its PSAPs.

(4) Use of Consolidation Savings. The Bureau may dedicate up to 25% of the funds saved from eliminating PSAPs, for use by any PSAP consolidating PSAP and dispatch functions for improved interoperability.

(5) Implementation. The Bureau shall accept any consolidation plans meeting the requirements stated in C (1-3) above. If plans meeting these requirements are not submitted, the Bureau shall determine which PSAPs will continue to receive financial support from the 911 surcharge funds.

D. Locally-funded PSAPs. Any PSAP receiving fewer than 10 calls per day as described in Section 4.2.C (1) or a PSAP no longer receiving surcharge funding as described in 4.2.C(5), may continue

to act as a PSAP if it reimburses ESCB all costs associated with PSAP status. Such election must be made no later than July 1, 2006, with reimbursement to begin October 15, 2007.

Director Lothrop attended the Dispatch Advisory Board meeting at Camden Fire Dept on the 18th. The primary topic of discussion at this meeting had to do with the radio communications capabilities at various parts of the County. There are still some areas where there is little or no reception. This includes the Washington, Appleton area, Friendship and St. George area and the islands.

There have been attempts to solve communications issues in these areas by trying different antennas, power outputs, etc., with minimal results. There is WMD money that has been allocated to put in a remote receiver in the Union area to help improve reception at the KRCC. However, there needs to be another remote transmitter in the Union/Washington area to eliminate all the dead spots. Further, there needs to be a transmitter, or re-location of a radio tower to improve the Friendship and St. George area.

The solutions to this problem can get tricky and expensive. I have included an agenda item asking to hire a consultant to come in and look at the system we have in place, and where we would like to be as far as communications capabilities, and then have the consultant provide a report on what a system design would look like and cost.

I feel that it is necessary to have a consultant come in and do this study as one has never been done in the past that I can determine. It is also like getting a second opinion. I feel that Coastal Communications is spread pretty thin in the personnel department and they do not have the time or expertise to design the network that we would need.

I feel that my budget could support the additional expense without fear of over-drafts. I also do have reserve accounts, should that become an issue. In talking with Waldo County, who recently had a consultant look at their network design, they spent under \$2,000 for the study.

The study will also supply equipment needed and approx costs, which can then be submitted through a Homeland Defense grant. The deadline for filing a grant for 2006 funding is July 29, 2005, so this project would need to be placed on the front burner.

I feel that it is imperative that these areas of no reception be corrected at the earlier possible timeframe. This project should take precedence over any other proposed projects. It is of first importance that we are able to communicate clearly regardless of location within the county.

We have established a nice interoperable radio network whereby all public safety disciplines can communicate with each other. It is now time to build redundancy and total coverage into the network.