



## Knox Regional Communications

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### County Commissioner's Meeting Communications Report – September 2005



## SCHOOL OPENS – DRIVE SAFELY



It's hard to believe that summer is winding down and the children are headed back to school already. It has been another busy month in the world of public safety in the County. The Rockland Lobster Festival, Maine Boat and Harbors Show, Antiques Show and the Union Fair have certainly made it a busy month here in Knox County!

### AUGUST

- 02 Department Heads Association Meeting
- 03 Meeting With Commissioners on Space Needs
- 03 Lobster Festival Starts!!
- 09 County Commissioner' Meeting
- 12 Maine Boats and Harbors Show Starts in Rockland
- 12 Antiques Festival starts at Union Fairgrounds
- 15 Full Scale Exercise Planning Meeting
- 16 9-1-1 Council Meeting at ESCB
- 16 NENA Awards Committee Meeting at ESCB
- 17 Provided Limited Access Computer Training for Thomaston PD
- 23 MECCA Meeting at Lincoln County 9-1-1
- 29 State Audit of METRO/NCIC
- 29 KRCC Supervisor's Meeting
- 29 Dispatch In-Service Training Class
- 31 Budget Review with County Administrator

The month of August has been pretty busy with several on-going project meetings taking place. The first of the meetings was held on August 4<sup>th</sup>, when EMA Director Sylvia Birmingham and Director Lothrop met with the County Commissioners to discuss the results of the recent building study meetings that had been held to identify space needs and possible co-location compatibility.

A copy of the minutes of the meetings outlined the areas of a new facility that could be shared, thus eliminating redundancy. Areas such as kitchen facilities, restrooms, and equipment were covered.

The meeting with the commissioners was to seek further direction on pursuing a floor plan from an architect to determine space size, make-up and cost estimates. In order for us to proceed forward, there would need to be some type of floor plan for the space needs of the two departments. This would be necessary to determine total square footage and utility needs so that construction costs could be estimated.

The commissioners agree that an architect could be sought, utilizing existing building study funds in the Communications budget. The Directors will seek an architect to formulate a potential floor plan and rough cost estimates based on the desired square footage. The Directors will report back to the commissioners with their findings.

The Maine Lobster Festival ran from August 3-7. There were relatively few incidents related to the Festival compared to other years. There were the usual traffic problems throughout the City; however, there were no major incidents at the Festival.

Plans continue to progress for the October 1<sup>st</sup> full-scale exercise. Another planning session was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. This exercise will provide for actual responses in the field and will require the use of the existing radio network for communications. The end result will be a true test of all levels of public safety and the radio network.

The 9-1-1 Council held a scheduled meeting on August 16<sup>th</sup> at the ESCB Office in Vassalboro. The following is a brief overview of items covered in the meeting:

A moment of silence was held in honor of Council Member William H. Layman, York County Commissioner, who recently passed away.

The ESCB training lab for dispatchers is in the process of being upgraded with new equipment that will be delivered to PSAPs under the new Verizon contract. The equipment will provide for 9-1-1 enhanced service for the state of Maine and will include mapping. The State will need to run all dispatchers through a new training course on the new equipment before the equipment is installed and activated at the various PSAPs.

It was noted that all available dispatcher training in the State is now being posted on the ESCB's web page.

The ESCB has also automated the training records of all dispatchers, allowing department heads and supervisors to log onto the Academy web page and access all training records on employees.

The ESCB also has a new training program for wireless call handling. This course will be presented regionally throughout the state. The class will provide for handling wireless calls,

proper reading of ANI/ALI display information, and how to contact the various wireless services for follow-up on tracking wireless callers.

The state has launched a Job & Task Analysis project as of the week of August 8<sup>th</sup>. The State has hired a company to conduct the survey. They will be visiting nine communications centers comprised of Local, County, State and small non-PSAP centers. The information gathered will be used to provide a draft list of skills and job functions performed by dispatchers from all types of centers in the state.

The list will be fine-tuned and put on a link on the internet. A survey will then be placed on line for all dispatchers, service chiefs, etc. to complete. The survey will take between 30-45 minutes to do on line.

Once completed, this will identify common job tasks that will be incorporated into learning objectives to form a mandatory statewide training curriculum.

It is hoped that the process will be complete by the end of the year.

The ESCB office will also be providing a tuition-free class on stress Identification and Management for Communications Officers on the first of September.

The ESCB has been working with the State EMS Bureau to adopt administrative rules for providing Emergency Medical Dispatch training to all PSAPs. The training must become effective as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. The training will be provided to all PSAPs at no cost.

The APCO Northeast Region Conference will be held this year in Portland, ME on October 23-26. This conference will bring many industry vendors to the conference with a wide variety of the latest technology for use in the 9-1-1 industry. There will also be pre-conference training classes as well as three days of breakout sessions on various 9-1-1 related topics. The cost for attending is only \$99 for the entire conference. Several personnel from KRCC will be attending the sessions being offered.

In the world of wireless, it was reported that Sprint is in the process of purchasing Nextel. Just another move in the world of take-over and mergers in the wireless community. It is anticipated that when the dust settles, there will likely be only two or three major wireless service providers.

Unicel is the only carrier in Maine that has not properly deployed Phase I technology at this time. They continue to work on meeting the requirements of the State, which require that Phase I ANI provide at least the cell company name, tower physical address, and the Lat/Lon info and sector face. The sector face is the direction the antenna points in. This would be the area in which the cell callers are located that are being handled by that tower.

The new Central Maine Regional Communications Center in Augusta has had telephone equipment installed in the past couple of weeks. It is anticipated that the Center should be ready for operation by October 19<sup>th</sup>. That is the projected date for the State Police to re-locate to that facility.

The Center was originally supposed to have up to 26 operator positions. The startup will see only 9 operator positions. The ESCB Bureau reports that initially, it will be just the Maine State Police utilizing the facility. Soon after the start-up, they hope to have other PSAPs that will be interested and want to go into there.

There still has not been any operating budget presented, so most agencies contemplating on switching over still have no idea what it will cost them to have their dispatching services provided by the new center.

There also has not been a formal administrative rules and policy documents released. A committee is still working on drafting same. There also has not been a civilian director hired to oversee the operation of the center. Presently, Maine State Police Lt. Don Pomelow is in charge of the center.

There are still several issues that need to be ironed out such as employee wages and benefits that will have to be approved by legislature. There is also the issue of how to deal with employees that are absorbed into the center from other centers that may seek to merge into the new center. Seniority and vacation and sick leave benefit accrual are other important sticking points.

In regard to consolidation issues, the final count on the total number of PSAPs is 26. This appears, at this time, to be the best the State can reduce the number down to. October 15, 2007 is the final cutoff date for state funded PSAP equipment.

Merger news this month includes the town of Gorham, which has voted to merge into the Cumberland County Communications Center. This merger could occur as soon as 2-3 weeks from now. The Gorham dispatchers are circulating a petition that, if the required 1100 signatures are obtained, could force the Gorham Council to re-visit the issue, but does not require them to seek another vote on the issue.

One of the requirements of Gorham was that their six dispatchers be employed in the Cumberland center. Cumberland has agreed to take five of them as full time employees, and the sixth as a part-time employee.

York County is still trying to figure out what they are going to do. They presently have 11 PSAPs in the County and under the proposed cuts, must reduce that number to 3.

VOIP Issues this month include an update on GWI. Their VOIP service does work now. They discovered that the 7-1-1 for relay service did not work. That has since been corrected and is now working.

It is reported that Vonage gets all their telephone numbers from Choice One. This has caused problems for some PSAPs here in the State that have received a "No Record Found" message when receiving a VOIP emergency call. The info provided comes back to Choice One, when actually the number was sold to Vonage. This causes delays in trying to

identify and locate a VOIP caller. Dispatchers are wasting precious time calling Choice One when they should be calling Vonage.

Briefly, what this all means to you, the consumer, is that any time you use an internet provided telephone service, you run the risk of the 9-1-1 center not being able to quickly identify you and your location. In order for an internet telephone to work, it must enter the telephone network at some point. Internet service providers buy banks of telephone numbers from suppliers such as Choice one, which will allow dial-up access for internet generated wireless calls to enter the telephone network.

When this is done, the wrong company name was appearing. Also, callers must remember that we have no technology currently available to identify the caller's location, such as is possible to some degree with standard wireless service. The State of Maine, as well as a national effort is underway to get the ANI/ALI interface to work so as to properly deliver the caller's info to the PSAP.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, Director Lothrop and Supv. Gibbs provided a training class on "Limited Access User" for the Thomaston Police Dept. This class provides information on the proper use of the Metro Teletype and National Crime information Center computer systems. Thomaston PD is hoping to have mobile access to the network through a WiFi service provider that has been working with the Town of Thomaston. The Limited Access training is required of all personnel capable of accessing and using the Metro system.

The Maine Emergency County Communications Association (MECCA) held a meeting at Lincoln County on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. This group was formed to provide a platform for all county communications centers to coordinate efforts directly related to the operation of county PSAPS. The group has representation on the MACO board.

The MECCA group will be providing a training class on public education at the upcoming Maine Association of Counties Convention to be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September in Lewiston.

The Knox RCC received a State Audit on the use of the Metro and NCIC computer system on August 29<sup>th</sup>. This audit looks at the quality and accuracy of data entered into the system and that proper procedures are being followed on dissemination of data such as criminal records. The overall goal of the audit is to identify any high liability risks created by the improper use of the system.

I am happy to report that the Knox RCC received one of the lowest possible risk factor scores available. I commend the efforts of all the entire communications staff for making that goal possible.

MECCA – Maine Emergency County Communications Association  
NCIC – National Crime Information Center  
METRO – Maine Telecommunications and Radio Operations Procedures  
ANI – Automatic Number Identification  
ALI – Automatic Location Information  
PSAP – Public Safety Answering Point  
ESCB – Emergency Services Communications Bureau  
LAT/LON – Latitude and Longitude  
APCO – Association of Public Safety Communications Officers

## **Employee Recognition Request**

I would like to again schedule a recognition session for the communications personnel. I would like to coordinate this with the County Administrator and as many of the Commissioners as possible.

I would like to have the ceremony at 1000 Hrs. on September 28<sup>th</sup>, if that is convenient for the commissioners. I have a couple of special awards for two employees, as well as pins to present for everyone for the work they have done this past year.

I would like to have all the employees present on that day, as well as the Public Education Unit to be in their uniform. The Public Ed display will also be set up for review.

It would be nice to have at least one of the Commissioners present to maybe say a few words from the administrative side of county government, as well as to assist in handing out the pins. It will also be a perfect time for Jane to meet all the communications staff.