



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY EMERGENCY RADIO SYSTEM UPGRADED

Uniontown, PA – The Fayette County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has upgraded its emergency radio system, improving services for citizens and first responders alike.

In December 2020, Fayette County Commissioners Dave Lohr, chairman; Vince Vicites and Scott Dunn approved a \$5,612,000 proposal from Motorola Solutions for the Radio Systems Enhancement Project. The county radio system is part of the multi-county Interconnected Regional Radio Systems (ICORRS).

The two recently installed radio tower sites, which include communications shelters and generators, are located just outside of Point Marion borough and off of state Route 119 North in Dunbar Township. The towers allow EMA to offer better emergency coverage for Point Marion, South Connellsville, Dunbar Borough, Dunbar Township and other rural areas.

Additionally, the project included upgrading the present microwave radio network router connectivity and installation of a new generator at the county's backup Emergency Operations Center.

"The project also included replacing system controllers with a GEO-Prime site system that provides redundancy and better reliability to the radio system network," EMA Director Roy Shipley said. "We added three radio channels at each tower site to increase system capacity for all area users on the county or ICORRS system in Fayette."

Shipley said the project, which lasted from the final design phase in April 2021 until its completion earlier this month, was a "unique challenge for all parties involved."

"Various challenges created some minor delays, due to many restrictions created by COVID-19 protocols and backlog of the supply chain," Shipley. "It was all finished when the Point Marion tower site was brought online."

Commissioner Lohr said the project is important to everyone in Fayette County, because it impacts "how we take care of our own."

"When there's an emergency situation; when someone you love is in pain; when lives hang in the balance - seconds feel like minutes, minutes feel like hours and response time is critical," Lohr said. "In short, the project will improve communication and reduce response times, and isn't that what you want when you're calling 911?"

Lohr said that, because the county is mostly rural and not densely populated, we "tend to forget just how large a footprint Fayette County has."

"At 798 square miles, Fayette County has a larger footprint than Allegheny County's 745 square miles, and it is vital that our emergency services reach every citizen, in every part of the county, no matter how

isolated,” he said. “For many, it doesn’t seem critical until it’s your loved one who’s fallen or stopped breathing. In that moment, every second counts. That’s why this project is critical - to meet the needs of everyone in Fayette County when help is needed most.”

Commissioner Vicites said, when it comes to Fayette County’s EMA and 911 programs, better communication is “something we always strive for.”

“You absolutely need these towers and shelters for enhanced emergency communications,” Vicites said. “Enhanced connectivity means a better response time, which allows our emergency personnel to save more lives.”

Commissioner Dunn said the tower sites will play a key role in first responders’ abilities to protect and serve citizens.

“Roy and his team are to be commended for their work in overseeing what is one of Fayette County’s most important projects to date,” Dunn said. “Improved tower signals mean better communication between emergency services and faster response times for anyone experiencing an emergency.”

For more information about the project, visit www.fcema.org or call the Fayette County Emergency Management Agency at 724-430-1277.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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