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## FAYETTE COUNTY EMERGENCY SYSTEM RECEIVES MAJOR UPGRADES

**Uniontown, PA –** The Fayette County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is currently upgrading its emergency radio system, in order to better serve county citizens.

In December, the Fayette County Board of Commissioners approved a $5,612,000 proposal from Motorola Solutions for the enhancement project, which will be financed through a five-year lease at a zero percent interest rate.

EMA Director Roy Shipley has been working with Motorola to finalize the project's designs and equipment.

"When working with Motorola on a plan for replacement of the microwave system, we also developed a plan of what enhancements would be needed in the future," Shipley said. "Work will be completed over the next 18 months."

Planned upgrades include:

- Replacement of current microwave radios and multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) routers to the county's nine existing radio sites.
- Addition of two more 800 MHz Simulcast sites, which will increase coverage on the southside of the City of Connellsville and in South Connellsville Borough; on the southern end of the county; and in Dunbar Borough and surrounding areas.
- Addition of three channels per site to the system, which will increase overall capacity and eliminate busy times for first responders in the field during emergencies.
- Addition of virtual Geo-prime on site, which will provide backup coverage in emergency situations.
- Purchase of Astro Subscriber units to update radios for Fayette County Courthouse departments.

Fayette County Commissioner Scott Dunn said communication is "key to the success of anything and everything - especially emergency services."

"With an updated communications system, Fayette County EMA will have the capability to receive and send communications to not only the people of our community, but to coordinate with the police, fire, ambulance and other services of surrounding counties," Dunn said. "Having the ability to call upon shared resources during a disaster is huge, especially in combating things like forest fires and flooding."

Commissioner Vince Vicites said upgrading the emergency radio system is extremely important to the future of Fayette County's 911 program.

"Public safety is a top priority for this board of commissioners," Vicites said. "It's crucial that we expand and maintain a high-quality system, as its effectiveness could make the difference in saving lives."

Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr said EMA has been regularly working to expand and improve its emergency network, which has been in place since 1996, in order to provide better radio communication for all emergency services countywide.

"It doesn't do anyone any good if emergency personnel aren't getting the information they need because their radio channels are busy or they're in a 'dead zone,'" Lohr said. "The updates include expanding the footprint of radio coverage, adding capacity to the system and reducing the number of areas without radio coverage. The impact for those who live and work in Fayette County is greater efficiency in emergency situations, especially those where every second counts."

For more information about the ongoing upgrades, 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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