

# THE COMMUNICATOR

camden county DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY & JUVENILE JUSTICE

FALL 2010 VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

## COUNTYWIDE 700 MHZ MIGRATION PROJECT

The FCC has mandated that all of the nation's Public Safety radio systems operating at 512 MHz or below must be converted to a narrowband platform by January 1, 2013. Camden County's radio system is split into multiple non-interoperable wavelengths: 500 MHz UHF for Police and 150 MHz VHF for fire and EMS.

This multiple wavelength system has provided effective communications service to the County for approximately 20 years. However, due to the growth within the County and its associated public safety communications requirements, as well as growth of neighboring users of the same radio spectrum, the current system can no longer meet the demands of adequate coverage, radio traffic capacity, and expandability. Furthermore, the UHF police network is plagued by interference from digital television stations.

As a proactive measure, the County appointed a Radio Steering Committee comprised of public safety stakeholders, and chose an experienced communications firm, V-COMM, to collaboratively develop a solution to the FCC mandate and the inherent problems associated with our current radio system. A comprehensive plan was devised to provide the County with a robust 700 MHz radio system which would eliminate all of the aforementioned issues, meet the January 2013 FCC mandate, and allow for continued radio expansion throughout the County. This expansion would include the ability to integrate all of the



Freeholder Director Louis Cappelli, Jr., along with (left to right) Lindenwold Mayor Frank DeLucca, Jr. on behalf of the Camden County Mayor's Association, Cherry Hill Fire Department Chief Robert Giorgio on behalf of the Camden County Fire Chiefs and Officers Association, and Audubon Police Chief Thomas Tassi on behalf of the Camden County Police Chiefs Association, announce the new emergency communications system.

County's police dispatch services to go along with the current fire and EMS dispatch which covers all of the County's 37 communities.

This 700 MHz Migration Project would include 17 new antenna sites, portable and mobile radio units for the County's local police, fire, and EMS personnel, and various infrastructure and microwave upgrades. It is expected the project will be completed within a staged implementation plan, with Phase I being completed and operational, within the parameters of the FCC mandate, on or before January 1, 2013. Additional stages will further increase the system's ability to provide the most state-of-the-art communications service available. The

end result of the new 700 MHz system will dramatically increase the safety of our police, fire, EMS, and County agency first responders, as well as the public they serve.

The County Board of Chosen Freeholders have been steadfast supporters of this project and have recently committed significant resources to initiate the operational phase of bringing this project to fruition. It is the goal of the Freeholders to move forward with this project in a timely manner in order to reach the initial target date of January 1, 2013. We are currently performing a market analysis to determine a projected project cost and expect to be able to move forward with the purchase process in the near future.

## FREEHOLDER'S FORUM



**Freeholder Rodney A. Greco,**  
Liaison to the Department of Public Safety

Communication is essential to the success of any endeavor in all walks of life. However, in the public safety world, communication is a critical component to life and death situations.

This newsletter will serve as a periodic update to the County's public safety community and our municipal government partners regarding the state of the Camden County Communications Center. Specifically, the newsletter will provide you, our customers and partners, with a clear vision of where the Communications Center is currently, its vision for the future, and the critical projects it is involved with which will ultimately assist you in creating a more effective and efficient public safety infrastructure for your communities.

The Communications Center has made great strides over the past year; however, there are many significant challenges ahead. Without a strong partnership between the County's 37 municipalities, their respective public safety components, and the Communications Center, these challenges will be monumental to overcome.

Our success in dealing with a myriad of critical issues such as the FCC's January 1, 2013 narrow-banding mandate and our 700 MHz radio conversion solution, the county-wide MDC project, and the concept and reality of an integrated county-wide communication services model, will be dependent upon a strong collaboration between all of us to ensure the citizens of Camden County receive the best possible public safety services available.

I thank you for your commitment to enhancing the communication capabilities within our public safety community.



### COUNTY OF CAMDEN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUVENILE JUSTICE MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Public Safety and Juvenile Justice is committed to delivering professional and exemplary services in response to Camden County's diverse public safety and juvenile justice needs. We seek to build partnerships with all members of our County community in an effort to maintain overall safety while affording dignity and respect to all individuals.

The exploration of innovative ideas and concepts leading to improved services which optimize resources is a high priority for department personnel. With professionalism and honor in our work ethic, we shall strive to protect and serve with excellence and enhance the quality of life for all who reside, visit, or travel through the County of Camden.

## MOBILE DATA INFORMATION EXCHANGE PROJECT

The Camden County Mobile Data Exchange Project will link the Camden County Communications Center with the county's fire and EMS disciplines in a mobile data environment. This project will furnish each fire and EMS station in Camden County with one mobile data computer (MDC) and all associated hardware and software. The technology will enable emergency responders to access a common technology link between the Communications Center and fire department assets equipped with an MDC.

This technology will provide up-to-date data related to any incident where an asset is operating. Furthermore, the technology will complete the data link enabling each public safety entity to have real-time incident information such as resources operating at an incident including other public safety and non-public safety disciplines. Additional real-time incident information such as resource tracking, resource operating time, number of resources, and status of resources will now be instantly available.

Additionally, utilization of this technology will decrease the high volume of radio traffic on the fire frequencies at the Communications Center. By using the MDC to augment conventional voice communications, the amount of voice radio traffic will be decreased, which will ultimately provide the fire dispatcher valuable time for other tasks vital to support the overall incident.

Much of the traditional voice communications can be done utilizing this wireless messaging technology, which will free airtime on the fire frequencies and streamline communications for all aspects of public safety.

Each MDC unit costs approximately \$8,000.00, including the cost of a mandatory licensing fee. With 60 MDC units being purchased, the total cost of the project will be \$480,000 which is completely funded by the Department of Homeland Security through the Camden County Department of Public Safety and Juvenile Justice, Division of Emergency Management.

Implementation of this project will be completed in three phases: Phase One included 30 fire departments within the County's 14 municipalities with the highest call volume. This phase was completed in September 2010, with 30 MDC units purchased and installed. Phase two will be completed in October 2010, and will include the purchase of an additional 30 MDCs which will be distributed to the 18 remaining fire departments within Camden County.

The Communications Center is currently in the planning stage of Phase Three, which will include the County's Emergency Medical Services in the MDC project with additional Grant funding.



The Camden County Communications Center in Lindenwold.

## FIRE /EMS OUTREACH PROGRAM A SUCCESS

In early 2001 the need for interaction with the agencies the Communications Center serves was identified. At that time, Captain Jim Jankowski approached retired Chief Charles Lezenby for approval to develop an informational program for presentation to the aforementioned agencies.

With Chief Lezenby's approval, the Outreach Program was born. Captain Jankowski, along with Lieutenant Anthony Sirolli and Lieutenant Scott Longfellow, developed a comprehensive PowerPoint program that explained the many different aspects and responsibilities of the County's radio system.

This program, which includes action shots of fire/EMS incidents around the county, begins with the basics of radio use and progresses into the different areas of communications within the Alarm Room. It explains the Radio Manual, the reasons why we do things the way we do, the services we offer, and most importantly, the need for current information for CAD.

This program has been a huge success and has many received positive reviews since its inception. An updated program was offered again in 2010 by Captain Troy Bishop with AOIC Brian Gilmore assisting. This newer version contains the new policies that have been implemented since the original version.

The Communications Center will continue to offer this Outreach Program on a periodic basis, and it will be updated as new policies and procedures evolve.

## ALARM ROOM RETIREES HONORED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

Since the Communications Center Alarm Room was created in 1973, many dispatchers have moved through our ranks and on to bigger and better employment opportunities. This has always been a place to gain valuable experience and knowledge.

Some of our dispatchers have been lucky enough to make it to retirement. Harry Beebe, Chuck Van Camp, Robert Moran, Frank Lonsdale, Chuck Lezenby, Bill Shelton, Joe Gorman, John Waecthler, and Paul Beckley to name a few.

Recently, two long-time employees reached the ultimate career goal of retirement: Dispatchers Dominick Patricelli (34 years) and Arthur Brown (23 years). Both of these individuals gave many years of dedicated service to the residents of Camden County.

Lieutenant Eric Hoban, Dispatcher Rich Paul, and Training Officer Cathy Koehler felt the need to do something special for these dedicated employees. In order to create a lasting memory for Dom and Art, a dinner and slide presentation were created to celebrate their combined 57 years service.

Ticket sales were brisk and the event hosted close to 200 people. The event was held at the Bellmawr Park Fire Hall on May 14, 2010, and everyone had a great time. There was a presentation program hosted by Dispatcher KC McCarty, and gifts were presented not only by the employees but from some of the agencies that they have worked with over the years. There were many good times reminisced, as well as some good-natured ribbing of our retirees.

The night was a huge success as employees and outside agencies got to mingle and enjoy the affair in a relaxed atmosphere. It has been discussed having a committee assemble an event like this at least once a year to celebrate all retirees from that year.

We wish Dom and Art and their wives the best of Luck, Health, and Happiness as they journey into the next phase of their lives.



Chief Jankowski (left) wishes Dispatcher Patricelli well as he finishes his last tour of duty.



The B-Platoon congratulates Dominic Patricelli on 34 years of dedicated service.

## CAMDEN COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES TO RECEIVE FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS FOR SNOWSTORM

The Camden County Office of Emergency Management has assisted Camden County Municipalities in securing FEMA reimbursements for costs they incurred as a result of the December 20, 2009 snowstorm.

“We are pleased that the Camden County Office of Emergency Management was able to assist these municipalities by submitting these reimbursement applications to FEMA on their behalf,” said Freeholder Rodney Greco, liaison the Camden County Department of Public Safety.

“The the December 20th snowstorm caused the county, and numerous municipalities, to use a great deal of resources to keep roadways clear,” said Freeholder Ian Leonard, liaison to the Department of Public Works. “It is our hope that these FEMA funds can go to help municipalities already struggling with budget matters no matter what the amount.”

In the first round, 13 Camden County towns received a total of \$184,359.06 in August. In the second round, an additional 10 Camden County municipalities shared \$513,842 in FEMA reimbursements in September.



Freeholder Ian Leonard commends first responders and roads crews for the outstanding work they did during the record snowfalls.

## 2010 HISTORY MAKING WEATHER

During the first nine months of 2010, we have experienced several significant weather-related periods of peak activity at the Communications Center.

Including the major snow storm in December 2009, we actually “survived” three significant snow events during the winter of 2010. Following on the heels of the December 2009 snow storm, we were hit with back-to-back 25+ inch snow storms within a week’s time in February. In March, right behind the snow storms, we saw significant rainfall, at one point dropping almost 4” on one Saturday afternoon. Obviously, this combination of melting snow and large quantities of rainfall resulted in severe flooding throughout the County.

The summer saw a weather dichotomy with several near monsoons in June and July, and what will go down as the hottest summer on record. It should go without saying, these weather-related events kept the Communications Center extremely busy. In fact, the June 26th storm produced more than 1,082 calls for service in a 3 hour period.

We are proud to say that our employees rose to the occasion and performed their jobs professionally and without any substantial issues during the aforementioned weather-related peak activity periods. All of our employees at the Communications Center are to be commended for their dedicated service to the residents of Camden County.

**camden county**  
BOARD OF FREEHOLDERS

**Louis Cappelli, Jr.**, Director  
**Edward T. McDonnell**, Deputy Director  
**Riletta L. Cream**  
**Rodney A. Greco**  
**Ian K. Leonard**  
**Jeffrey L. Nash**  
**Carmen G. Rodriguez**

**COUNTY OFFICIALS**  
**Joseph Ripa**, County Clerk  
**Charles H. Billingham**, County Sheriff  
**Patricia Egan Jones**, Surrogate  
**Warren W. Faulk**, Prosecutor

**Department of Public Safety and Juvenile Justice**

**Rodney Greco, Freeholder Liason**

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The Department of Public Safety and Juvenile Justice is comprised of the Park Police, Office of the Fire Marshal, Office of Emergency Management, Regional Emergency Training Center, County-wide Communications Center, and Youth Center

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