

December 10, 2001

Hello, all.

The purpose of this email is to update you on the status of the Wyoming Statewide Public Safety Mobile Communications (PSMC) initiative, presently in the pre-planning stage. This email will be posted with other project status reports at <http://ipc.state.wy.us/radio/index.htm>. If you would like to be removed from this list, please reply to me, and I'll make the change. Please forward this to others in your organization who should receive it.

As of our September 5, 2001 update, I had circulated a preliminary draft of an RFP for a PSMC Plan; this was requested by the legislative Joint Transportation and Highways Interim Committee on May 15, 2001.

The following nine paragraphs highlight noteworthy events since then.

Robert Wilson,
WYDOT Telecommunications Program Manager
(307)777-4440

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1. Legislative Joint Transportation & Hwys Interim Committee (Sept. 13-14, Douglas WY).

The committee voted 9-2 to champion a request for \$300K though the legislature, for funding the Statewide PSMC planning effort in 2002. The Executive Directors of the Wyoming Association of County Commissioners and the Wyoming Association of Municipalities expressed support for the planning effort, and their associations will likely be represented on the Steering Committee.

2. Wyoming County Commissioners' Association (Sept. 18, Rock Springs)

Provided copies of the PSMC plan Executive Summary and Questions & Answers sheet to WCCA; these were distributed to committee members at their meeting, for the general information of the Commissioners. The pre-prepared "Q&As" are appended to this email.

3. Transportation Commission of Wyoming (Sept. 20, Cheyenne)

Presented the PSMC plan RFP in brief overview, for the general information of the Commissioners.

4. Budget Peer Review with Governor Geringer (Sept. 28, Cheyenne)

Explained the PSMC planning initiative to other agency peers and Governor Geringer. WYDOT representatives provided clarification from the executive summary of the RFP, and a copy of the draft RFP was provided to Gov. Geringer.

5. PSWN Assistance (October, 2001)

Wyoming will receive some preliminary support from Federal Public Safety Wireless Network program consultants in the next few months. PSWN is a Federal initiative to encourage interoperability among wireless networks to meet local, state, and federal public safety requirements. Wyoming's experience will be used to document a strategy for creating a business case that will identify the most cost effective options for pursuing a shared statewide system.

6. WY Telecommunications Council (Nov. 2, Cheyenne)

The Telcomms Council meeting minutes recorded several positive comments from the Governor regarding PSMC at this meeting. "The goals for public safety communications are to improve interoperability, decrease fragmentation, increase capacity, and enhance coverage among all of the State's law enforcement and emergency medical service personnel. Currently, we do not have interoperability capabilities among the various law enforcement entities. There is a push to move everyone to a new spectrum of frequency, to adopt standards, to enhance security, to leverage funding and to make this effort part of Wyoming's anchor tenant services. The Governor envisions a single, public safety communications network, which is capable of voice, video and data, that allows images to be transmitted real-time." Mr. Wilson presented an overview of the Statewide PSMC plan initiative, for the general information of the Wyoming Telecommunications Council. The meeting facilitator suggested that the Council may want to review the DRAFT RFP prior to its distribution, in order to be sure that all alternatives are covered. He emphasized that the RFP is for consultant services. The Council may want to designate one of its members to serve on the steering committee; the SALECS chairman agreed to coordinate invitations to serve on this committee.

7. APCO WY Chapter Annual Meeting (Nov. 28, Casper)

Presented an overview of the Statewide PSMC plan initiative, for the general information of the Wyoming Chapter of the Association of Public-safety Communications Officials (about 50 professionals from various agencies, statewide). Representatives from agencies now implementing local communications upgrades in Casper and Cheyenne explained their ongoing projects. Legislators involved in the process explained their perspectives regarding the issues. The WY APCO Chapter distributed an information sheet about the PSMC planning proposal; it is appended to this email.

8. Wyoming Association of Municipalities Public Safety Committee (Nov. 29, Casper)

Presented an overview of the Statewide PSMC plan initiative, for the general information of this WAM committee.

9. Counter Terrorism Commission (November, 2001)

The Counter Terrorism report to Governor Geringer described Wyoming's disaster preparedness to respond to broader contingencies including acts of terrorism. It recommended: "Improve Communications & Planning - All Levels of Government. Communications and planning among local, state and federal agencies in law enforcement and emergency management must be strengthened.... Current and future federal and state funding for counter terrorism and related needs must be fully coordinated to maximize preparedness. Wyoming needs a state wide public safety communications system which insures that all local first responders and state officials can communicate in a timely and secure manner in times of emergency. "

The communications representative involved in the report invited representatives from WYDOT, SALECS, and APCO to meet on Nov 30th. We agreed that the best way for the Commission to support the development of a statewide public safety mobile communications system was: have a Commission representative participate on the Steering Committee that would be established as part of the RFP process; propose improvements to the draft RFP; and, assist in recruiting stakeholders for the proposed statewide plan. We agreed there is a need for a group or a sub-committee to discuss current mobile communications issues and operational plans, in the context of domestic terrorism, even before a statewide PSMC system is implemented.

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Q&A's Regarding Public Safety Mobile Communications Planning

These Q&A's were prepared in preparation for a hearing before the WY Legislative Joint Interim Hwys & Transportation Cmtee, and subsequently clarified. They address the need and approach for planning, not the justification of design of a new public safety communications system. The RFP is intended to plan the best way to address public safety requirements. A second RFP would be for the implementation of a statewide PSMC (Public Safety Mobile Communication) system. At the Sep 14th hearing, the committee voted to recommend funding of this plan to their respective bodies.

1) Do we really need another study? Yes. Past analysis and justification is important up-front information for the selected consultant. This plan will update past work. The consultant will prepare in-depth business cases, cost estimates, and architecture.

2) Will the plan be biased? No. We are specifying an independent consultant, not a potential communication service provider. In effect, we are hiring an architect for radios. Alternative analysis will objectively consider not doing a statewide project, as well as the possibility of partnerships, and leased or

hybrid networks. This is part of Phase 1, objective and authoritative cost estimates of candidates are required.

3) Is this an unfunded mandate for local government to buy new equipment? No. It is intended to take full advantage of new technology for those that can buy new mobile radio equipment, without degrading service of those who have to wait to buy new equipment. It will provide linkage to older equipment and have flexibility to interoperate with various systems. LE/Emergency responder interoperability will certainly remain a requirement as planning proceeds.

4) How are we going to pay for it? Don't know yet. Phase II will investigate possibilities, to include federal grants, and cost-sharing prospects.

5) Who will be in charge of the plan? A Steering Committee. Broad representation needs to be on the Steering Committee, addition to the DOT and SALECS members already named in the definitions. We hope to include the Wyoming County Commissioners Association and the Wyoming Association of Municipalities on the steering committee, as well as on the Technical Evaluation Committee to select the planning consultant. Our basic premise is cooperation for a truly statewide system, not just a WYDOT system. This means integration with local, adjacent state, federal, and other agency initiatives. This cooperative planning will prevent the chaos of independently pursued trunked radio systems.

6) What about publically available mobile communications? We will connect to public systems, but not rely on them. Such systems complement but do not replace the need for the envisioned PSMC system. Requirements will include some way of transferring information with public, commercially available voice and data communication systems. Planning has to consider transfer of emergency information to and from many sources to public safety vehicles. While we are concerned with connectivity with cell phones and other publically available communications, we all know that they are proven to be unreliable for emergency responder use when reliability is most important: during a widespread emergency. The functionality of cell phones is person-to-person, unlike public safety communications channels; also, cell phone coverage is very limited in Wyoming. The costs of real-time voice communications by satellite are very high.

7) Will we be asked to tear out and replace the new system every five years? No. Planning will explicitly address technology innovations and how they may be adopted. Implementation will require best systems engineering disciplines for efficient updating of the system over a long lifespan. (E.g., Modular, open-systems design, using appropriate technical standards).

8) What will the plan cost? Estimate \$300k. This includes the analysis, the written plan, and a technical demo/test over an 18 month period. When we

get RFP responses, we may negotiate to trade-off performance, schedule and cost (Best Value procurement approach).

9) What will the technical demo do? It will be conducted in the field; it will evaluate the operational utility and interoperability of recommended technology, including mobile data terminals and communications/dispatch centers.

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Prepared by the WY Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety
Communications Officials, International November 28, 2001.

* I N F O R M A T I O N S H E E T *
W Y O M I N G ' S
PUBLIC SAFETY MOBILE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

CONCERNS

Lack of Interoperability -- Ability to communicate between agencies and entities during emergencies.

Age of Existing Equipment and Systems - Many of the radio communications systems are at the end of their useful life and jeopardize the reliability of emergency communications.

Channel Congestion and Shortage of VHF Frequencies - Existing single channel systems are easily overloaded and can cause delays in emergency communications. New clear frequencies are not available for most areas of the state.

Inability to Add New Features and Technologies - Currently systems allow voice and limited data transmitting but not full Mobile Data Terminals (MDT), Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), Application of GIS/GPS Technology specific to Public Safety, Telemetry or Video.

Communication system replacement is being pursued independently, and without a plan to insure interoperability.

IDENTIFYING A SOLUTION

Develop a Public Safety Mobile Communications Plan to address the needs of all State Government public safety agencies, and include federal and local government, and other interested public safety entities.

*The Joint Transportation and Highways Interim Committee requested WYDOT prepare a Request For Proposal to support a strategic planning effort in 2002. (May 15, 2001 meeting)

*Plan elements include: a review of existing public safety infrastructure; exploration of impact, costs and benefits of options; and a recommendation on proceeding with funding and implementation. The Plan should further dictate how Public Safety Mobile Communications systems fit together and identify with what other systems.

*The RFP was accepted by the Interim Committee on September 14, 2001, as well as support for a legislative request to fund the planning effort. (Estimate \$300,000 for an 18 month effort.)

*The RFP solicits an independent consultant, using a two-phase approach, to provide:

- a. independent, objective and credible recommendations and cost estimates
- b. technical expertise on commercially available public safety mobile communication systems
- c. operational and organizational expertise relating to public safety communications
- d. administrative support for meetings and documentation