

**STATE OF COLORADO
COUNTY OF ROUTT**

**ROUTT COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD
May 24, 2007**

Bob Struble, Steamboat Springs Fire and Rescue, called the regular quarterly meeting of the Communications Advisory Board to order. Dave Hill and J. P. Harris, Routt County Communications; Bryan Rickman, West Routt Fire Protection District; Chuck Wisecup, Oak Creek Fire Protection District; Chuck Vale and Cheryl Dalton, Emergency Management; Mike Zuckerman, North Routt Fire Protection District; Ray Birch, Hayden Police Department; Tyler Whitmore, Yampa Valley Regional Airport; Joel Rae, Steamboat Springs Police Department; Rob Ryg, Coroner; Dr. David Cionni, Routt County Emergency Medical Services; Gary Wall, Sheriff; Terry Barber, Information Systems; and Doug Monger, County Commissioner, were present. Dee Bolton recorded the meeting and prepared the minutes.

EN RE: COMPUTER-AIDED DISPATCH SYSTEM / DR. CIONNI

Dr. Cionni said that at a recent Emergency Medical Services Council meeting a vendor had presented a computer-aided dispatch program that Dr. Cionni advocated considering. He has been encouraging the community to create a plan to prioritize emergency levels of response for all Emergency Medical Services calls and stated that the software program demonstrated graded the severity of patients' injuries or illnesses through a series of questions. The program had been developed using twenty years of data collection so was reliable. The program entailed an entire dispatch protocol process to integrate with the CAD system and provided considerable back-up information. He stated that the system would significantly reduce potential liability to providers without compromising patient care.

Mr. Hill said that the software was an emergency dispatching software that processed information through scientifically-based algorithms that directed a caller through life-saving measures and determined whether lights and sirens were necessary. The current program used at the Dispatch Center was the EMD of Colorado, an emergency dispatch program that was a card system rather than software-driven and that provided less specific medical advice. The new system was simple and would standardize protocol, but would require a change in the manner in which dispatching was handled. The new system was also more scientifically/medically-based. Software would have to be purchased, and the product required that every new dispatcher be trained by the program-provider rather than in-house, so an on-going cost for training every new dispatcher would be a consideration. He stated that the current VisionAir system would not efficiently support the new software. Some dispatch centers had elected not to use the system due to the cost. He noted that the Communications Center had internal trainers for the current EMD system. He said that EMS providers would have to support the new system before he would consider budgeting, purchasing,

and implementing the system. However, when the new CAD system was purchased, a new EMD system could also be purchased to interface with the CAD.

Dr. Cionni stated that he was confident that EMS providers would support the new system. He estimated that the system would cost less than \$20,000. He asked Mr. Hill whether he thought the system was better than the current system. Mr. Harris said that a full demonstration of the system was impressive and the system was easy to use. If EMS agencies advocated for the system, he would visit Grand Junction to observe the system in operation as well as consult with other users of the system.

Mr. Rickman asked whether EMS grant funds could be used to purchase the program. Mr. Vale thought that that was possible.

Commissioner Monger asked whether the benefit was safety for EMS providers. Dr. Cionni said that the protocol averted the potential for over- or under-trianging emergency responses as well as potential liability.

Captain Rae asked whether currently information was being provided that would prevent the use of lights and sirens. Mr. Hill said that the Dispatch Center conveyed the information to the appropriate agency, and the agency decided how to respond. Dr. Cionni was uncomfortable with EMTs making decisions based on information provided by the current system's protocol.

Captain Rae asked about liability in regard to a computer dictating a response. He noted that law enforcement had a strict protocol when responding to an incident that required driving through town and recommended that fire and EMS have similar policies so that all agencies were determining the level of response rather than a dispatcher. He stated that in our community, the time difference between a regular and a Code 3 response was minimal. He asked whether the system was inclusive to EMS. Mr. Harris said that three different programs were available: EMS, fire, and law enforcement so if an incident involved two of those agencies, the dispatcher would use two programs simultaneously. Mr. Hill said that dispatchers would ask a series of questions that would lead to the system's recommendation as to whether to make an emergent response, but the decision to do so would still be at the discretion of the responding agency.

Dr. Cionni thanked the Communications Advisory Board for the opportunity to speak then exited the meeting.

EN RE: REVIEW OF MINUTES

MOTION—APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Wisecup moved to approve the minutes of the Routt County Communications Advisory Board for January 25, 2007. Mr. Hill seconded; the motion carried unanimously.

**EN RE: 2007 COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD
REPRESENTATIVE DESIGNATIONS**

Mr. Struble stated that the designated representative for the Oak Creek Fire Protection District and its alternate representative had been received. The City of Steamboat Springs City Council had appointed Mr. Struble and Captain Rae as its representatives, but notification had not yet been received. Mr. Struble will send confirmation of those appointments to Mr. Hill.

EN RE: CAD/RMS REPLACEMENT / TERRY BARBER

Mr. Barber said that the CAD/RMS Oversight Committee met recently and discussed the fact that VisionAir would no longer issue a release for the records management software because it was too expensive for it to develop a Statewide system for Routt County and the City of Steamboat Springs. The Committee was exploring options for replacement of the CAD/RMS system. Entities other than the current ones had expressed interest in interfacing with the shared City/County system. The Committee was in the process of developing intergovernmental agreements and identifying requirements and anticipated that by 2009 the system would be selected, budgeted, and replaced. The current Communications Advisory Board entities would be part of the decision-making process as well as the financing of the upgrades to the system. At present, the cost of the system was a 50-50 arrangement between the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County and was a shared record management system for the Steamboat Springs Police Department and the Sheriff's Office and included a jail system module. The new system would ideally include fire and EMS as well as law enforcement. A benefit of the system would be high-speed internet; the most difficult aspect would be the integration of various types of network services and secured channels. He said that interested entities should e-mail him and/or attend the next CAD/RMS meeting in July. He noted that the Board of County Commissioners would have to approve the project, which could cost between \$200,000 and \$500,000. He added that technology did not resolve all issues.

Mr. Birch stated that the Town of Hayden would be interested in participating.

Mr. Hill said that Communications was gathering as much information as possible; no recommendations were being made at this time. Much information would be available and shared with interested agencies. In the near future, a VisionAir representative would discuss the current system, its problems, and future alternatives, and New World would make a presentation of its product in June.

Captain Rae stated that VisionAir had overall been a disappointment. He asked that Barb --- be notified whenever a system demonstration was to be offered. Mr. Harris said that all agencies would be notified via e-mail when demonstrations were to occur.

Mr. Barber exited the meeting at this time.

**EN RE: COMMUNICATIONS REPORT AND RADIO SYSTEM UPDATE
/ DAVE HILL**

Mr. Hill reviewed a comparison of the number of calls from the same time period for 2006 and this year. He asked what information should be reported and was informed that a list of the types of calls per agency was unnecessary because agencies tallied their own pertinent information.

In regard to the 800 MHz system, Mr. Hill said that he was working with the Board of County Commissioners regarding the upgrades to the microwave system. Harris Corporation would install the bandwidth capacity to connect to the State system and allow the Dispatch Center to dispatch on the 800 MHz system. End-user radios continued to be discussed.

In relation to Communications staffing, Mr. Hill reported that four good candidates had been interviewed for the opening for the third Supervisor at the Communications Center so that position would be filled soon. Communications Specialists openings had been advertised; eighteen applications had been received, and testing would occur the following week. He anticipated that the Communications Center would be fully staffed in the near future. Since the last CAB meeting, Mr. Hill had been employed as the new Communications Department Director, and a new position, that of Assistant Communications Director, had been filled by Mr. Harris.

Mr. Hill discussed recent lessons learned included the acknowledgement that better information could have been dispatched relative to the Christian Center incident and the hospital's response to a testing exercise broadcast on the Road and Bridge channel that had been interpreted as an actual incident. A better way to execute those training and testing exercises was being devised. He stated that end users needed to improve their understanding of the communications system and the often limited nature of the information available to dispatchers. He asked for suggestions for improving the effectiveness of dispatchers and users as well as the use of radios. Captain Rae said that the SSPD held monthly meetings, and dispatchers were welcome to attend. Topics such as appropriate language could be addressed, and rapport between staff could be enhanced. Mr. Hill extended an open invitation to all agencies to visit the Communications Center at any time. He added that either he or Mr. Harris planned to visit all agencies in the near future.

EN RE: DIGITAL PAGING / J. P. HARRIS

Mr. Harris asked what was needed in terms of digital paging interfacing so that he could provide information to those interested. Mr. Hill said that Steamboat Springs and Oak Creek fire had inquired about which pagers to purchase. He said that funds were available in the budget for new and replacement pagers. He noted that digital paging was a good option, but asked what the specific needs to be met were.

Mr. Vale said that when repeaters were replaced, they were analog repeaters due to a significant cost difference. Since the repeater was on a fifteen-year replacement cycle, a problem arose because the analog system could no longer be used if digital repeaters were used. The first decision was whether all agencies wanted to shift from analog paging to digital paging, and, if so, the paging shift should correspond to the repeater replacement timeline. Since Steamboat Springs law enforcement had moved to digital paging, it was no longer possible for the Communications Center to page all of Routt County's law enforcement agencies. He said that technically paging was possible on an 800 MHz system and on a digital trunk radio (DTR) system so that emergency personnel could be anywhere in the State and be paged. However, Colorado's system did not have the capacity for that paging scenario. Thus, State agencies would remain on State VHF frequencies. It would behoove Routt County to retain its VHF paging system for a while longer because it provided redundancy and paging capacity.

Mr. Struble said that the former Communications Director had advised him to budget the purchase of digital pagers and she would purchase the pagers in bulk through the County and then the City could reimburse the County for the number of pagers the City wanted. Mr. Hill said that the research and implementation of a digital pager system as well as the purchase of a few pagers had been budgeted by the County for 2007. In 2008 and 2009, approximately 250 pagers would be purchased per year. To purchase appropriate pagers, he had to first understand the needs that they would fill. One option that might cost less would be to use cell telephone systems that had text-messaging capability, which functioned differently from the voice aspect of cell phones. That option would also require no system maintenance, but the future of the system would be out of the County's control. Commissioner Monger said that a plan should be developed so that all agencies moved in the same direction. Mr. Hill will assemble information.

EN RE: NEW BUSINESS

EMS EXERCISES

Mr. Vale announced that a Yampa Valley Medical Center exercise was scheduled for May 23rd; a Yampa Valley Regional Airport exercise was scheduled for May 31st; an exercise would occur at the Soda Creek Elementary School on June 20, 21, and 22nd; and a Northwest Colorado HAZMAT exercise would probably occur in October, for which more information would be forthcoming.

SCHOOL GRANT

Mr. Vale reported that all of the school districts in the County as well the private schools, the North Routt Charter School, and Colorado Mountain College had recently applied for a togetherness grant to increase school preparedness. If the grant were awarded, one exercise would be required by Fall, 2008.

CITIZEN AWARENESS NOTICES

Mr. Vale said that the region had been considering digital products that would alert the community about road closures and other types of announcements through text-messaging. The ten-county region had applied for a 2008 grant to accomplish that goal within the entire region. The equipment considered might accomplish the goal as well as answer some of the questions raised earlier in the present meeting. Eagle County had a system in use at present the efficiency of which would be evaluated by the region.

ROSS STATEWIDE TASKFORCE

The Ross Taskforce had met the previous day and discussed updating Routt County's current ROSS program. All agencies would be informed as to the reason for its construction and its uses.

CONQUEST PROGRAM

Mr. Vale said that the Conquest program was a free software item that he would share with agencies that had laptop computers. The program was a database to use in building incidents. It would also include all of the ICS forms and Ross information. The software was compatible with MS Office 2002.

INFORMATION PACKET

Mr. Vale referenced the information provided this day that pertained to interoperability and included articles on the funding thereof, a map of Colorado related to channel numbers used across the state, a copy of the act that addressed Senate Bill 06-237, and the STIC Plan for Routt County, a plan required by each of Colorado's nine regions and prepared by Northwest Colorado's Communications Directors that addressed the migration to the 800 MHz system. In regard to the latter document, Mr. Vale stated that Routt County had spent \$3,000,000, which included \$2,500,000 for the purchase of equipment and \$500,000 in the remodeling of equipment for the Communications Center. He said that operability communications pertained to compatibility within Routt County; interoperability meant the ability to communicate with other counties. He reviewed the status of the County's migration to the 800 MHz system and the short-term and long-term timetable and equipment needed to meet complete interoperability in all agencies. He said that approximately \$1.5 million would be needed to accomplish the project. Mr. Vale noted that the final two pages of the 800 MHz Migration Plan memorandum contained concerns to be addressed in the future.

Mr. Vale announced that he was officially the former Project Coordinator, the responsibilities of which would be assumed by Mr. Hill and Mr. Harris. He encouraged all members of the public safety team to support the new coordinators.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION TO INTERESTED AGENCIES

Mr. Struble said that agencies needed to be alerted about road closures, broken hydrants, and other such incidents. He asked how that notification could be accomplished because faxing and e-mail did not work for those in the field. Mr. Hill said that changes in infrastructure status were not aired to everyone. He would investigate the possibility of creating an information page.

COMBINING EMS, CAB, and WILDLAND FIRE COUNCIL

Mr. Wisecup said that he continued to pursue the combining of the three groups. The EMS Council was finalizing the first draft of a set of by-laws for all agencies' perusal and feedback.

LANGUAGE TO USE WHEN AIRING A DEATH TO THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Mr. Hill asked the most sensitive way to communicate to the Dispatch Center that an individual was deceased. Several terms and phrases were suggested; it was the consensus of the group that the terms to be used to convey an individual's death would be 'Code Black' or to page 'Henry-1'. It was suggested that the term be uniformly used by all agencies. Mr. Hill will ascertain whether Search and Rescue accepted the term, and then he would notify all agencies to begin using the term.

EN RE: NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Communications Advisory Board will be held on July 26, 2007, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room. Agenda items should be submitted to Sue Heineman.

No further business coming before the Board, same adjourned sine die.

Dee Bolton, Recorder

Bob Struble, Chairman