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MICHIGAN'S PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

MPSCS BULLETIN

MPSCS PROVIDES COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR 72-CAR PILE-UP

Inside this Issue:

From the Director's Desk	2
Stretching Your Budget	2
MPSCS Gains Universal Public Safety Appeal	2
U.P. Turns to MPSCS During Telephone Outage	3
Success Stories	3
Welcome New Members	4

- **Homeland Security Funds Now Available to Select Jurisdictions – See Page 2.**
- **MPSCS Radio Communications Critical During U.P. Telephone Outage – See Page 3.**
- **MPSCS Brings Benefits to Shelby Township – See Page 3.**

Editor's Note

We would like to thank you for your interest in MPSCS. We welcome any questions, comments or suggestions you may have to improve the quality of this publication. You may direct them by phone to Ms. Kelly Malbty of the Michigan's Public Safety Communications System 517.336.6675 or by e-mail at maltbyk@michigan.gov.

On February 7, 2003, blizzard conditions caused a 72-car accident on I-94 in Benton Township in southwest Michigan. The accident happened at approximately 1:30 p.m. when a car slid under the back of a semi-tractor trailer during whiteout conditions. Those involved in the crash stated that the heavy lake-effect snow had reduced visibility and caused poor road conditions. When the motorists approached the I-94 and I-196 interchange, the weather changed from bad to worse causing zero visibility. These conditions caused the cars to slow at differing paces and thus a chain collision ensued.

The crash left one man dead and six seriously injured. In all, over 40 people were transported to area hospitals after the incident.

The emergency caused a 12-mile stretch of I-94 to be shut down for nearly ten hours. Six agencies responded to the incident including Berrien County Sheriff Department, the Bridgman and Niles State Police posts, Benton Township, Coloma, Coloma Township and Watervliet Police Departments.

An accident of this magnitude has the potential to become a communications nightmare for the responding public safety

agencies. Fortunately, five of the six responding police agencies were members of MPSCS and were able to take advantage of the interoperability and coverage the system provides. The result was better coordination in tending to the injured, efficient clearing of the

wreckage and a better overall sense of organization and teamwork within incident command operations.

MPSCS has paid big dividends to Berrien County," said Berrien County Sheriff Paul Bailey. "This accident was a perfect example of why interoperability and reliable communications are critical to public safety."

Within minutes of the agencies arriving at the scene, a special event channel was set up for the responding departments. This allowed normal communication to resume on the county's main channel, while a separate channel served as the medium for incident command.

With the assistance of MPSCS, the public safety response to the accident was well coordinated. The 12-hour emergency ended with minimal loss of life and less injuries than would be expected from an accident of this magnitude.

"Communications has improved 100 percent in Berrien County since joining the MPSCS," said Sheriff Bailey. "The accident provided us with proof that MPSCS was the best investment for the county hands down."



Photograph courtesy of WNDU Television, South Bend, Indiana

A 72-car pile-up on I-94 in Benton Township caused a 12-mile stretch of highway to be closed for nearly 10 hours.

**USER TRAINING
SCHEDULE**

User Training will be held at the MPSCS headquarters in Lansing on the following dates:

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

Classes begin at 9 a.m. and last a full day. They are held at the Collins Centre in Lansing.

Class space is reserved on a first-come first-serve basis and is limited to 15 students.

For questions or to reserve a slot, contact Ms. Jill Behnke at 517.336.6674 or via e-mail at behnkej@michigan.gov.

COVERAGE TESTING

Want to know how well MPSCS performs in your jurisdiction? Contact the 800 MHz/9-1-1 Section to schedule coverage testing.

Coverage testing is not only a means of determining signal strength in your area, it is also an effective way for public safety officers and administrators to learn more about the system in a hands-on environment.

Coverage testing is free of charge and only requires that you select a small group of officers in your jurisdiction to participate in the assessment.

For questions or to schedule coverage testing, please contact Ms. Jill Behnke at 517.336.6674 or via e-mail at behnkej@michigan.gov.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Greetings colleagues. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all of you. My name is Paul Schulert. In November, I assumed the position of Director of MPSCS, filling the shoes of Captain Tom Miller who recently accepted the position of Commander of the Michigan State Police Human Resources Division.

Becoming a part of this successful entity known as the MPSCS has truly been a pleasure for me. I am eager to use my knowledge and expertise to guide the system from project mode to a fully functional radio network, an accomplishment that the system's employees and members alike should truly take pride in.

I have already had the opportunity to meet with many of you and discuss the benefits of MPSCS.

In the coming months, I will become acquainted with more of the public safety community that serves the great state of Michigan.

On a separate note, you may have noticed the change in appearance of our newsletter. While we realize the print is not as visually appealing, the final product is more cost-efficient and will help save State dollars during these economically challenging times.

It is also our intention to transition the newsletter to e-mail distribution to save printing and postage costs. If you wish to receive the MPSCS Bulletin via e-mail, please log on to our recently-updated Web site and click on the "Sign up for our Newsletter" link.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate in contacting me at 517.336.6262 or via e-mail at schulertp@michigan.gov.



Director Paul Schulert

**STRETCHING YOUR BUDGET
2003 State Homeland Security Grant Program**

In July 2002, the President approved the National Strategy for Homeland Security, a road map for the national effort to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism in the United States. In February 2003, President Bush signed into law the Fiscal Year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Act which will provide state and local governments with funds to enhance homeland security efforts.

The Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division is the designated applicant for the State of Michigan. While many specific details are

yet to be established, it is certain that select local jurisdictions will be receiving a portion of this financial assistance, as the grant will be rewarded to both the State and the local public safety agencies it represents.

Final decisions regarding this grant will likely be made this summer once the rewards are announced. For more information about this grant and others, please contact Ms. Kelly Maltby at - 517.336.6675 or via e-mail at maltbyk@michigan.gov.

**MPSCS GAINS UNIVERSAL
PUBLIC SAFETY APPEAL**

Radio communication is an essential tool across all sectors of public safety. The communications features that each sector requires, however, differs between agencies and thus oftentimes requires the use of separate radio systems. In an effort to coordinate all public safety onto a single network, the State of Michigan designed MPSCS for customization specific to an agency's needs.

Common references to MPSCS often delineate that the system is a network that primarily serves the need of the law enforcement community, namely the Michigan State Police. Oftentimes, MPSCS is referred to as "The State Police Radio System;" a statement that couldn't be further from the truth. The Michigan State Police is only one of the MPSCS' 304 members with less than half of the radios on the system belonging to MSP.

MPSCS members represent a large variety of

public safety personnel throughout every region of the state, with each agency drawing different benefits from the system's design. For example, a local fire department may not take advantage of the statewide coverage of MPSCS, but may feel secure that the system's coverage in their jurisdiction meets their needs and enhances officer safety. Meanwhile, a large police department constantly finds itself relying on the statewide coverage of MPSCS for prisoner transports, fugitive pursuits and other special events.

Whatever an agency's need may be, MPSCS personnel are available to meet with agencies to assist them with this system customization process. If you would like more information about how MPSCS can be customized to your agency's needs, please contact F/Lt. Gene Adamczyk at 517.336.6148 or via e-mail at adamczyk@michigan.gov.

U.P. TURNS TO MPSCS DURING TELEPHONE OUTAGE

On March 14, 2003, thousands of U.P. residents and businesses lost long distance and 9-1-1 telephone service due to a severed cable. The areas affected included several jurisdictions throughout the region including Chippewa, Alger, Marquette, Baraga, Iron, Houghton and Gogebic counties.

Around noon on that Friday, a crew working on a drainage project near Michigan me accidentally cut a fiber-optic cable. This caused telephone service outages that varied from the inability to make or receive long distance calls to complete loss of phone service. Service was not completely restored for nearly ten hours.

MPSCS provided reliable long distance communications for the region during this outage. Personnel at Negaunee Regional Dispatch and Marquette County Central Dispatch communicated directly with personnel from affected counties via MPSCS to prepare a list of local emergency telephone numbers for residents in affected areas to call in the event of an emergency. Regional and Central Dispatch personnel then relayed those numbers to TV-6, Charter Cable, and the National Weather Service Emergency Alert System (EAS). Residents

in the affected areas could then receive that important information from the commercial broadcast media.

In a region where long distance service is essential and cellular coverage is sparse, MPSCS provided the most secure and efficient means of communication during the outage, ensuring public and officer safety.

"MPSCS has already paid big dividends to the Upper Peninsula," said Joe Van Oosterhout, manager of Marquette County Central Dispatch. "The system was very effective in this difficult situation."

Marquette County joined MPSCS in February 2003 bringing 164 radios onto MPSCS. The county is the fourth U.P. county to join the system since the network became available last summer. Marquette County joins Alger, Keweenaw and Mackinac Counties in enjoying the full statewide interoperability and digital features that MPSCS offers.

Several other counties in the region are also considering MPSCS for their communications needs.



The recently remodeled MSP Negaunee Regional Dispatch Center shares its facilities with Marquette County Central Dispatch. This center provides 9-1-1 services to a vast majority of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

SUCCESS STORIES

MPSCS Enhances Officer Safety for Shelby Township

The Shelby Township Police Department recently joined MPSCS in July 2002. Since then, there have been several instances in which the new radio technology has proven to be a vital resource in preserving officer safety for the township.

The first of these instances occurred last summer when the pursuit of a stolen vehicle began in Shelby Township. The chase continued onto the M-59 expressway across several municipal jurisdictions until ending near the Pontiac Silverdome, over 12 miles away from the original start point.

The second incident occurred this past winter during a routine prisoner transport. The officers were traveling with the prisoner in downtown Detroit when they were struck by another vehicle. The superior coverage area of MPSCS ensured both the security of the prisoner and the safety of the officers by allowing the township's dispatch center to be contacted direct for assistance.

A routine police pursuit or prisoner transport was often troublesome to Shelby Township officers before joining MPSCS. With the old system, coverage barely extended beyond the township's borders. Shelby Township now benefits from the statewide infrastructure of MPSCS and is able to communicate in clarity on their main talkgroup across several counties. The agencies also have access to a separate statewide talkgroup that allows them to communicate from any geographic location in the state.

"The system works well and suits our needs," said Shelby Township Police Chief Robert Lehman. "The 800 MHz radios provide for the clearest communication we've ever had."

If you have a story that demonstrates the success of MPSCS, please contact Ms. Kelly Maltby at 517.336.6675 or via e-mail at maltbyk@michigan.gov.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

10,035 Radios Online

VISIT US ON
THE WEB AT:
[WWW.MPSCS.
COM](http://WWW.MPSCS.COM)

Marquette County Agencies

Chocolay Township Fire
Department
Chocolay Township Police
Department
Forsyth Township Fire Department
Forsyth Township Police
Department
Ishpheming Police Department
Ishpheming Township
Police Department
City of Marquette
Marquette County Central Dispatch
Marquette Police Department
Marquette County Sheriff
Department
Michigamnee Fire and EMS
Negaunee Fire Department
Negaunee Police Department
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Iosco County Sheriff Department
City of Manistee
Manistee County Sheriff
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Oscoda Area Fire Department
Oscoda County Emergency
Management
Oscoda Area Police Department
Oscoda County Sheriff Department
Plainfield Township Fire
Department
South Branch Fire Department
Tawas Area Police Authority