MPSCS Celebrates Two Decades of Service
Director Brad Stoddard reflects on two decades of service and looks ahead

TEN years have come and gone as we celebrated that milestone in 2016. From that first shovel in the ground in 1996 to the 248 towers later, Michigan has achieved a milestone that so many doubted and wished to fail. Nobody believed that the ideas of a few great men would be recognized as a mature national leader twenty years later.

Through the past twenty years, many memories have been gained and a few people have closed their professional careers with Michigan’s Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS) recalling that the team, the work, and the partners were some of the best times they recalled in their career. Any past or current MPSCS team member can identify with the amount of hard work that is required of you while serving the system. The job rarely stops, a 24x7 operation that can cull all of the energy and ideas from you through the days, years, and decade(s) that you dedicate to the greatest public safety communications system in the country. The maturity of the person, the team, and the partnerships have grown greater than anyone could have imagined and the opportunities for continued maturity and growth are just as ripe now as they were twenty years ago.

The past twenty years have endured leadership changes and agency changes, while MPSCS's ship continued its sea weary voyage parallel to a great Spanish explorer — exploring new lands and meeting new people, challenging the norms and never quitting. Now we look towards the next twenty years and have wide-eyed visions and unqualed passion to continue to mature and grow with additional partners, new services, and new expanded team members.

As we kickoff the 21st year of the system, we continue to find ourselves researching ways to find additional efficiency for our public safety partners with their use of the system, while looking inward for those services that our partners have requested and determining ways to meet their needs with the technology and services available. As my predecessors have stated, and I will continue echo, we would not have had the success across the two great peninsulas without the hard work and capability to continue to set the high bar while “never giving up.” Thank you for all you do, can’t wait to see what the next twenty years holds.
2017 Interoperable Conference Almost Here!
Register now for a week focused education and information

REGISTER today to join more than 200 local, state, federal, tribal, and private public safety communications experts and emergency response personnel for the 2017 Michigan Statewide Interoperable Communications Training Conference at the Great Wolf Lodge in Traverse City from February 7-10.

The conference annually provides a focused education and information about the advantages of interoperable communications, 911, evolutionary changes in interoperability, and relationships.

It is critical we stay the course in providing communication, interoperability and information sharing between public safety agencies and partners across the state and with our international border communities. In an emergency, every link in the chain is critical. We must work together and remain committed to our shared strategic vision of interoperability. This conference is a necessary annual touchpoint for working together, exploring new technology and generating commitment to Michigan’s strategic interoperable communications.

This year's conference registration fee is offered at the low rate of $200. To register, log in to MI-TRAIN at [https://mi.train.org](https://mi.train.org). To locate the conference registration, type 1067574 or 2017 Michigan Statewide Interoperable Communications Training.

The $200 registration fee includes: breakfast and lunch on Wednesday, February 8; breakfast and lunch on Thursday, February 9; and breakfast on Friday, February 10; and training materials. Lodging costs are not included in the $200 conference registration fee.

Lodging arrangements must be made separate from the conference registration process by calling the Great Wolf Lodge, Traverse City at 231-941-3600 and referencing group code “2017INTEROP”. A credit card will be required to secure the room; your credit card will not be charged at the time of reservation.
Island Upgrades
New tower co-location improves coverage on Mackinac Island and in the Mackinac Straits area

In early November MPSCS added the Mackinaw City Site “7806” (zone 4) tower to its statewide system, bringing the number of towers in the system up to 248. The project was a collaboration between the C.C.E. (Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Emmet counties) Central Dispatch Authority, Mackinac Island, and Mackinac County. C.C.E. owns the tower; MPSCS is co-locating equipment on site. One of the immediate benefits of adding 7806 to MPSCS is greatly improved radio coverage on Mackinac Island for first responders. Previous to adding the new tower, Mackinac County E911 installed a bi-directional amplifier (BDA) at Mackinac Island Fire Station 1. The BDA, while helping to alleviate signal gaps on Mackinac Island, suffered from interference and digital filtering issues. A more comprehensive solution was needed; this is where MPSCS stepped in. Adding 7806 to MPSCS provided a great solution for our partners by offering superior 800 Mhz coverage to the Mackinac Straits area.

Testing occurred on November 7, 2016 with staff in the MPSCS Field Resources Center (FRC) working with a Mackinac County 911 first responder on Mackinac Island. Testing returned positive results; the downtown and Mission areas had vastly improved radio coverage that met or exceeded estimates from a 2015 engineering study.

The testing process also improved mapping of coverage with areas now better defined, located, and logged. Problem areas, mostly downtown, are now more clearly marked, giving first responders an improved picture of coverage issues when responding to emergencies. It was also reported that base station radios on the island now receive and transmit better.

The addition of the new tower is the latest example of MPSCS building partnerships with the first responder community while demonstrating a commitment to statewide interoperability. Bryce Tracy, E911 Coordinator for Mackinac County, had this to say about the expansion and working with MPSCS:

The completion and implementation of the new 800 MHz tower site in Mackinaw City, further proves the resolve of MPSCS working closely with local entities to help better resolve communication coverage gaps and improve system infrastructure integrity. This combined and collaborative effort between the MPSCS, C.C.E. Central Dispatch, Mackinac Island, and Mackinac County further proves the constant evolution and drive that the MPSCS provides for better communications to all users of the system. This will enhance the safety of emergency responders and other radio users, providing a more resilient and redundant communications interoperability platform in the Straits Area.

Mackinac Island can have upwards of 15,000 visitors a day; the addition of 7806 will improve safety for first responders, residents, and visitors of the island and in the Mackinac Straits area.
**Fire Paging Expands**

Local agencies get cost effective paging with MPSCS’s fire paging solution

Michigan’s Public Safety Communications System’s 800 MHz Fire Paging has taken root and is being implemented by a growing number of agencies across the state. When local agencies convert from existing analog paging solutions to MPSCS’s digital P25 network, they are able to end the cost and responsibilities of maintaining a separate paging system. Because public safety responders utilize familiar devices on the new system, benefits such as ease-of-use, comfort level, and competency are retained. Other advantages include much clearer audio, improved range and reliability, customizable paging groups for enhanced interoperability, simplified dispatcher process, and reduced time to send critical messages.

Continued expansion of the Fire Paging solution is an important element of MPSCS’s mission of providing public safety agencies of all disciplines a standards-based, statewide communication system focused on enhanced efficiency and reliability. Approval of devices for the system was finalized in October of 2015. Since first going live in March of 2016, the system has experienced significant growth. The Fire Paging solution is currently in operation or pending implementation in 15 Michigan counties and is being tested in 10 more; the number of pagers in use on MPSCS has grown to over 730. As of October 2016 the fire paging system is active or pending in 94 agencies at 124 fire/EMS stations throughout the state, with 40 more agencies undergoing testing.

**MPSCS Lifecycle Remediation Crosses Major Milestone**

Second phase of remediation work recently completed

With the recent completion of the second phase (of five) of its major lifecycle remediation project, MPSCS has crossed a major milestone towards the system-wide replacement and upgrading of end of life 800 MHz radio and 6 GHz microwave equipment. The phased rollout of upgrades will allow MPSCS to continue to provide agency partners and the stakeholders they serve industry leading services well into the future.

Starting in December 2015, the year-long phase two focused on the northern Lower Peninsula and replaced equipment at 61 sites in total. The completed work represents a major step forward for public safety communications network users statewide and will offer Michigan’s first responders a more reliable network with increased capacity and redundancy.

The lifecycle remediation project also serves as an example of what is possible with strong public-private partnerships; MPSCS staff have been crucial to the implementation of the upgrades by insuring private industry partners meet strict best in class specs. Vendors like Motorola (800 MHz) and Nokia (6 GHz microwave) have, in turn, provided MPSCS with a turnkey solution that allows for upgrades to be put into production with minimal disruption.

Look for a more in-depth breakdown of MPSCS’s Lifecycle Remediation in a future issue of MPSCS Quarterly. Agency partners that would like an update on the remediation process and its implications can contact Theron Shinew at ShinewT@michigan.gov.
U-M Implements MPSCS’s Computer Aided Dispatch

MPSCS’s P1 CAD offers University of Michigan powerful geolocation tools

With the implementation of MPSCS’s Premier One Computer Aided Dispatch (P1 CAD), the University of Michigan has become the first entity to adapt the state’s suite of public safety applications for use at a non-state institutional level. In 2012, as part of an effort to unify previously disparate security functions, U-M created its Division of Public Safety and Security. As described on its website, U-M DPSS “is responsible for all police and security functions related to the University’s Ann Arbor campus, including the University of Michigan Police Department, the Hospital and Health System Security Services, the Housing Security and Safety Services, the University Security Services, and other campus-wide security functions.” To achieve the new department’s directive, Jeffrey McDole, Director of Communications and Technology Management for U-M DPSS, sought to upgrade its existing dispatch system and approached MPSCS in October of 2014. MPSCS’s P1 CAD features the scalability to function across the entire breadth of the state or be tailored down to suit an individual institution, and MPSCS dispatch consoles were already in use on the Ann Arbor campus. As such, MPSCS’s CAD system offered the university a solution to better address its needs. With the infrastructure already in place, McDole worked in close collaboration with MPSCS to facilitate the switch, and P1 CAD became operational at U-M in June of 2015.

U-M’s selection of MPSCS’s dispatch system was based largely on a need for a geolocation solution. P1 CAD is built upon a premise of geo validation rather than the address validation typically used by other CAD systems. Institutions like U-M occupy large, incongruous geographic areas. Physical addresses are of little use to officers responding to calls where a single address may encompass a large area, such as a stadium or a park. Geo validation offers dispatchers and officers the ability to use maps to initiate and respond to incidents, resulting in improved response times.

The P1 handheld application provides a convenient solution for security officers not operating from vehicles, as is the case with hospital and housing security. P1 CAD’s ability to interface with alarms and other public safety systems and to create dashboards for monitoring and assessing the system have proved particularly beneficial. The security measures employed by MPSCS’s P1 CAD ensure HIPAA and CJIS compliance, permitting hospital security and law enforcement to be integrated with other public safety functions that previously required separate administration. U-M’s two geographically separate dispatch centers are unified through P1 CAD to operate as a single entity; nearly 350 employees are united under a single platform to provide dispatchers and responders with true real-time, cross-campus situational awareness.

By partnering with MPSCS and taking advantage of their expertise and resources, U-M has been able to execute a campus-wide public safety solution that would have been a cost-prohibitive endeavor to undertake as a stand-alone solution. U-M DPSS has worked through the challenges of mapping significantly different business practices onto a new model with a single common language, and they are handling approximately 113,000 calls for service annually through P1 CAD. “It’s a work in progress,” McDole says of U-M’s implementation of the system. Recognizing the potential for expanding its applications and functionality, he and his team continue to explore new possibilities for U-M’s public safety community.
Update Your Email Profile and Stay Up to Date With MPSCS

Please review your email profile and stay up to date with MPSCS

As part of our ongoing effort to provide you with important MPSCS news and information we’re asking MPSCS email subscribers to review and update their MPSCS email profile. The process takes less than five minutes and ensures that our mailing lists are up to date. By staying up to date you’ll receive timely notifications about events in your service area and surrounding counties.

Follow these directions below to update your profile:

1. On michigan.gov/MPSCS click on the envelope under “Stay Connected.”
2. Enter your email address* and answer the Spam Block question. Click Submit.
   *Use the address you received in the notification from MPSCS.
3. Under Subscription Topics, select Michigan’s Public Safety Communications System and click Submit.
4. Answer the four questions listed. Click Submit.
5. The next screen will notify you that you have successfully subscribed to Michigan Department of Technology Management and Budget.
6. Click Finish — you’re done!

If you haven’t subscribed to our listserv you can do so by clicking on the envelope under “Stay Connected” on the MPSCS website. If you have questions, please contact us at mpsc@michigan.gov or 517-284-4100.

Review your email profile on michigan.gov/MPSCS and stay up date with MPSCS! Not subscribed? Head over to the website and sign up to get critical notifications.

System Snapshot | MPSCS by the numbers (current as of December 2016)

79,787
Mobile & Portable Radios on MPSCS

59,415
Square Miles Covered

248
Tower Sites
(64 sites locally owned but integrated into MPSCS)

1,553
Public Safety Agencies Served
(State, Local, Federal, Tribal & Private)
MPSCS's Klay Watson Recognized as Radio Frequency Technologist of the Year

Klay integral to success of $150M remediation project

Congratulations to Klay Watson of MPSCS's Grand Region Service Center! Klay was selected as the 2016 Radio Frequency Technologist of the Year by the Michigan Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (MI-APCO). Mr. Watson was recognized at MI-APCO’s annual fall conference in Frankenmuth on Thursday, October 20, 2016.

Klay has served the State of Michigan as a radio technician for 20 years. He was chosen to be a part of the team that did the testing and acceptance procedures on all of the new equipment and was nominated for the distinction by his supervisor, Dennis Fountain, in recognition of the numerous admirable qualities Klay demonstrates on the job. These qualities include a commitment to excellent customer service, an outstanding attention to detail, and a willingness to lend a hand whenever needed. Klay’s initiative to maintain current knowledge of equipment integrated into the system by taking advantage of any available training supports his ability to work effectively with vendors and customers.

Of specific consideration for this nomination was the key role Klay played in Phase 1 of MPSCS’s $150 million remediation project. He displayed skill, perseverance, patience, flexibility, and a willingness to go above and beyond. He consistently maintained a positive attitude — even when vendor delays resulted in frequent short-notice schedule changes that required unplanned overtime. As a result of his expertise and exemplary teamwork, Klay was asked to assist with the training of technicians for the Phase 2 remediation team, in addition to his role reviewing installation and testing procedures with vendors.

Kudos to Klay Watson in six words: Dedication and a job well done!

MissionCritical Communications Recognizes MPSCS Director Brad Stoddard

Stoddard recognized as one of 2016’s Most Influential Thought Leaders

Michigan’s Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS) is pleased to announce that Brad Stoddard, director of the MPSCS, is among the 2016 recipients of the MissionCritical Communications Award for Most Influential Thought Leaders.

Mission Critical Communications asked for readers’ input on the most influential industry thought leaders, most innovative communications networks and top technology innovations. The award was given to those who helped propel the industry forward.

Stoddard was selected as the recipient of this award for his work to expand the land mobile radio community and the landscape of Michigan’s Public Safety Communications System.

For more information or to subscribe to MissionCritical Communications magazine, visit www.MCCmag.com.

Across MPSCS

Accolades

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New Employees

**Brent Hissong**
Brent has been hired as a steeplejack in Northville and will be providing maintenance to the communication towers. He was previously responsible for upgrading and maintaining Verizon’s cell tower equipment as a crew leader for Earthcom Inc. Away from the job Brent enjoys spending time with his wife and their six-year-old daughter and two-month-old son, as well as some recreational softball and football.

**Craig Terrill**
Craig has joined Jennyl Simon’s communications team and will be helping with MPSCS’s branding, communications, and outreach. Previous to his appointment he served as the Media Specialist for the City of Takoma Park, Maryland. Craig started his career in government as a student assistant in MDOT’s Office of Communications.

Craig enjoys playing guitar, film, Detroit sports, and bleeds green as a MSU grad. He is glad to be back home in Michigan.

**Jason Simmons**
Jason has joined the Lansing Install Shop as a Radio Technician after twenty years in the US Army Signal Corps. He enjoys four wheeling, motorcycles, and shooting. Jason is married and has a teenage step-daughter and a five-year-old son.

**Josh Towslee**
Josh has joined Jennyl Simon’s team to assist with communications and outreach. He came to MPSCS after serving as a student assistant with the HR office at the Department of Health and Human Services. Josh is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Communication from Siena Heights University through Lansing Community College’s University Center. Josh is an avid home cook and also enjoys camping, reading, music, the Detroit Tigers, and the MSU Spartans. His wife is a nurse care manager at MSU’s pediatric clinic, and they have a one-year-old son.

**Daniel Witgen**
Dan has accepted a position in the NCC and will be promoted to Radio Technician 12. He will be helping to provide System Level support to the Technicians in the field as well as Contractors and the many State, Federal, and Local agency users of the MPSCS. He is looking forward to the new challenges that will be brought on by this promotion and is appreciative of the time working with Support Services and the Grand Region Service Center.

Dan enjoys to tinker with wood and getting caught up in projects. He also enjoys playing golf, shooting sports, and tries to enjoy watching the Lions.
Thank You From MPSCS!

MPSCS staff — past and present — would like to thank all our partners over the last two decades. We strive to be the best because we serve the best: Michigan’s first responder community. Enjoy some pictures from MPSCS’s past as we work towards the next twenty years (and beyond!)

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