



NEWS RELEASE

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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: LAUNCH OF COUNTY'S NEW EMERGENCY RADIO COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Build out of the County's new Emergency Radio Communications System is complete, and as of Jan. 6 nearly all of the county's first responders are on the new system.

"The implementation of this project, and the system itself, represents a significant transformation in public safety and demonstrates the power and benefits of cooperation," said County Executive Steve Ehlmann. "The County and its 20 jurisdictions have worked tirelessly over the last several years to see it to fruition and I would like to thank and recognize everyone for their hard work and dedication."

The county's new system is part of a larger system being implemented concurrently in both St. Louis and Jefferson counties, increasing the capability of the entire metropolitan St. Louis area in responding to major disasters. During December 2014 and January 2015, first responders and jurisdictions throughout the county moved onto the new system and are able to communicate with each other for the first time. The new system also provides better coverage and voice clarity, improving the level of service to residents. Before, first responders and municipalities operated their own separate systems, which had coverage gaps, poor voice quality in some areas, were becoming obsolete, and the majority of which could not be modified to meet Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandates that went into effect at the beginning of 2013.

As of Tuesday, users on the system include the St. Charles County Police Department, St. Charles, St. Peters, Wentzville, all 11 fire and ambulance districts and St. Charles County Dispatch and Alarm, as well as the St. Charles County Highway Department and County Park Rangers. St. Charles County is the first of the three counties to implement the system, with Jefferson County expected to launch at the end of January.

"This is an exciting time because, no matter where our officers are in the county, they have significantly improved radio coverage and voice clarity and will soon be able to communicate with all first responders in the county to help the public faster and more efficiently," said St. Charles County Police Chief David Todd. "The new system fills the gaps in coverage throughout the county that previously prevented first responders and agencies from communicating with each other."

The radio system and towers, including maintenance, was projected to cost the County \$39.5 million and it is coming in at

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that amount. Funding for the system was provided by a \$24.3 million bond issue and increase in the County's Capital Improvements Sales Tax approved by county voters in August 2009 and down payments from the Capital Improvement Sales Tax and the Dispatch and Alarm Fund. In addition, \$9.7 million in federal funding authorized by the St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS) program in the East-West Gateway Council of Governments, funded a key component of the multi-county system. The County began work in 2011 with Motorola Solutions to engineer the 12-site tower design for the system. Testing of the equipment at Motorola's headquarters from June 24-26, 2013, was successful and all 12 tower sites were completed as of March 2014.

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