



Dauphin County Commissioners
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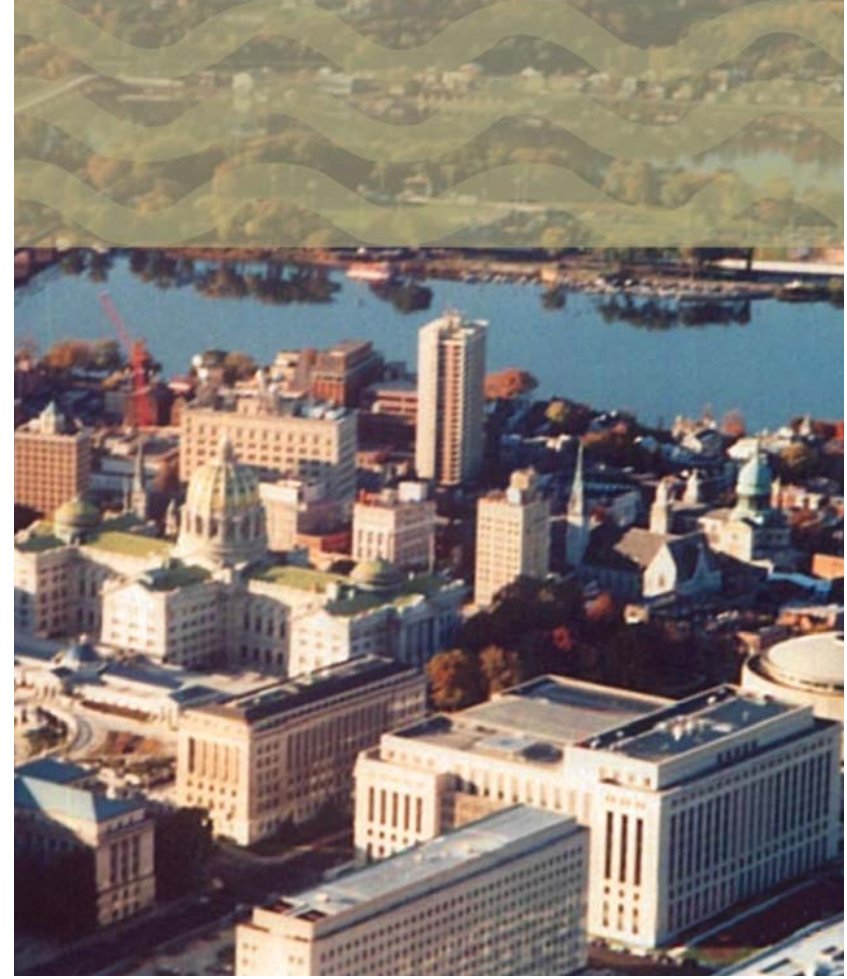
Dauphin County's radio network
To Keep Us Safe



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To Keep Us Safe



When danger approaches, the brave people who serve and protect the public reach for their radios.

To learn about what to do in an emergency, visit www.dauphincounty.org and click on the EMA/911 icon. Check out other County services and sign up for the weekly e-alert to stay informed about your County government.



When danger approaches, the brave people who serve and protect the public reach for their radios. For their safety, and ours, those radios should work every time. That's why Dauphin County is building a state-of-the-art communications system that will, for the first time, link all of our public safety agencies on a single radio network.

www.dauphincounty.org
click on EMA/911



Commissioners (left to right) George Hartwick III, Jeff Haste and Nick DiFrancesco stand outside the Emergency Management Agency as they lead the County's response to the June 2006 flood, which included the distribution of safe drinking water at numerous centrally located venues, the tracking of road closures, and around-the-clock decision-making in response to unmet needs at the local level.

The Need: Coordinated Emergency Response

Mention "public safety" and most people think of their local police fire and EMS departments. Few realize that Dauphin County has more than 73 public safety agencies.

We count on them to keep us safe. They count on each other. Police and fire work together. When an event is too big for one department to handle, neighboring departments send personnel and equipment. Borough, city, township and County agencies send special resources such as medical evacuation units, hazardous materials teams, and police tactical units.

State and federal agencies contribute. Cooperation is vital because no single agency could afford to prepare for every possible emergency alone.

But... when people from different agencies arrive at the scene, how will they communicate? Most of our responders use 1970s-era radio systems that are mutually incompatible. This makes it difficult to coordinate work and share information. That hampers rescue efforts when every second counts. Rescuers need radios that are interoperable so they can talk to each other.

The Solution: Dauphin County's New Public Safety Radio Network

Disaster Readiness

The network will support large-scale emergency operations with high call volumes and large numbers of rescuers from multiple agencies. It will be compatible with state and regional standards for interoperability as mandated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. When lives hang in the balance, it won't matter who works for the township and who works for the borough fire department – everyone will be in direct radio contact for swift, effective response.

Radio Coverage in More Locations

Improved coverage will keep rescuers in touch with dispatchers and backup assistance even in locations where they couldn't get a clear connection before.

Dependability Under the Worst Conditions

Our network is designed to keep running as if it were a matter of life and death – because it is. The technology has proven itself in places like Florida and South Carolina, where hurricanes, tornadoes, and other disasters knocked out cell phones and older radios but the public safety network never stopped working.

A Smart Investment

Over the years, agencies built a patchwork of radio systems that are now aging and expensive to maintain. Worse, they are reaching the limits of their capacity to handle more calls and users – which means they can't keep up with our growing population and heightened concerns about security. Dauphin County 911 received 257,820 calls in 2006, an increase of 368% since 1997. Rather than replace their old systems piecemeal, our first responders realized they could work together to build a better solution.

In late 2005, the County Commissioners voted unanimously to build a \$35 million county-wide network, funded primarily through a long-term bond issue. The Commissioners have submitted grant requests to Homeland Security programs to offset some of those costs. This is a significant investment in the safety of our citizens and our ability to attract business and residential development. The modern network will allow the County to avoid duplicate spending. By sharing the costs and benefits, every agency in every community will be able to face 21st century threats with 21st century communications.

Making Progress

The network is scheduled to become operational in 2008. Contracts were signed in 2005 and 2006 and work is underway. Equipment is being manufactured and radio towers and shelters are being upgraded. The equipment is planned for installation this Spring. Extensive testing will follow, and then a migration period as users receive training. Agencies will continue to use their old systems in the meantime.

As a citizen, you may not notice the changes right away. You will still dial 911 the same as always. The difference will be that the people who protect you and your family will have the communications support they need to do their best work on your behalf. When the radios work, we are all that much safer in a dangerous world.

