



NEWS

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First New Digital Radios Distributed As Part of Montco Emergency Dispatch Radio System Upgrade

Norristown, PA (August 24, 2016) – The Montgomery County Commissioners joined Norristown Police Chief Mark Talbot and Plymouth Township Chief of Police Joe Lawrence Wednesday for a demonstration of the new digital police radios that the County has begun to distribute as part of an upgrade to its Emergency Dispatch Radio System. To assist local municipalities in the purchase of the radios, the County arranged for financing that included coverage of the interest payments on the loans.

The Norristown Police Department was the first to receive the new radios, followed by the Cheltenham Police Department. The Montgomery Township Police Department will take delivery of its radios tomorrow.

“Four years ago, after a decade of delays, Montgomery County made a commitment to ensuring that police, EMS, fire, and public safety officials in the county have the tools they need to effectively serve our community,” said Josh Shapiro, Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “These new radios will make our community safer and help protect the lives of law enforcement and our first responders.”

The Department of Public Safety will distribute 4,700 new radios to police, EMS, and fire agencies throughout Montgomery County over the next few months in anticipation of turning the new system on in 2017.

This is an important milestone in a project that began in 2012 with the formation of an advisory committee of first responders, emergency managers, and municipal officials from throughout the county.

“Reliable radio communications is a first responder’s lifeline,” said Norristown Police Chief Mark Talbot. “Police officers, firefighters, and EMTs often go into dangerous situations and they have to be able to call for help if it’s needed.”

Most of the system’s equipment and infrastructure, and nearly all of the police and EMS radios, have reached the end of their useful life, with parts and service no longer available from the manufacturer. Motorola has also announced that it will stop providing service to most of the radios that fire companies in the county are using by the end of 2019.

In addition to replacing the antiquated equipment, Montgomery County is greatly improving the system’s coverage and signal strength by improving already existing radio towers or building new radio towers in locations across the county. The system’s reliability will also be greatly improved with the addition of a microwave network for communications between the towers, replacing the T1 lines that are frequently knocked out of service.