

# Milwaukee County

## Interoffice Communication

**DATE:** August 27, 2008

**TO:** Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr., Chairman, Judiciary, Safety and General Services Committee

**FROM:** Dennis John, Chief Information Officer, Information Management Services Division

**SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT – 800 MHZ REBANDING PROJECT**

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

Milwaukee County has successfully negotiated and executed an agreement that provides for \$5.6 million in outside funding from Sprint Nextel to replace the Milwaukee County Transit System's (MCTS) 16-year-old integrated voice and data radio communications system. The County's agreement with Sprint Nextel marks a significant milestone after nearly two years of analysis, planning and negotiations under the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 800 MHz Rebanding Project.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its December 2007 meeting, the Judiciary, Safety and General Services Committee requested status updates on the 800 MHz Rebanding Project. This informational report is intended to fulfill the committee's request.

Milwaukee County operates a Motorola SmartNet II 800 MHz Trunked Simulcast radio system. The system is used by 17 of the 19 municipalities within Milwaukee County for first responder and other public safety agency mission critical communications, including the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department, House of Correction, Public Works and Milwaukee County Transit System. The County's radio system supports over 5,400 active mobile (in-vehicle) and portable (hand-held) radios within approximately 83 different agencies.

In 2005, the FCC ruled that most Public Safety 800 MHz systems in the United States be modified to eliminate cell phone interference. The FCC appointed a Transition Administrator (TA) to manage the scope of the nationwide project. As part of a legal settlement, Sprint Nextel is required to pay most costs related to the project. Currently, the total cost of rebanding Milwaukee County's public safety radio system is estimated to be in excess of \$8 million.

There are three major phases to this project. The first phase of the project is the Planning Phase that includes preparing the documentation and negotiating appropriate costs with Sprint/Nextel, conducting detailed system inventory and frequency analysis, determining what equipment must be reprogrammed, retuned or replaced, and coordinating interoperability plans with regional users. The second phase is the Implementation Phase that includes the actual reprogramming, retuning or replacing of radio system equipment. The final phase of the project is the Closeout/Audit Phase that includes the reconciliation of costs, audit of justification documentation and an examination of any unaccounted equipment or other issues during the first two phases.

A resolution (File No. 05-303) was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors and signed by the County Executive in 2005 that authorizes the Chief Information Officer (CIO), Information Management Services Division (IMSD) to negotiate and execute agreements with Sprint Nextel and vendors to accomplish the required work for the project. In addition, a Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from municipal police and fire departments, as well as various Milwaukee County departments, was formed to represent the stakeholders of the radio system and ensure successful outcomes for this project.

A Request for Proposals was conducted in early 2006 to seek experienced telecommunications consultants to assist Milwaukee County in the rebanding project. Televate, LLC, an independent wireless technology firm with extensive knowledge and experience in all aspects of the rebanding process was selected. In addition, Catalano and Plache, PLLC, legal counsel experienced in the rebanding process, was retained to represent Milwaukee County in negotiations with Sprint Nextel and the TA. All of Milwaukee County's agreements with consultants for the Rebanding Project require all costs be reimbursed directly from Sprint Nextel, thereby removing risk to Milwaukee County taxpayers for the cost of the project.

### **OVERALL PROJECT STATUS**

IMSD submitted an informational report to the County Board during its December 2007 cycle to provide an update on the status of the Rebanding Project. At that time, the project team was in the middle of the planning phase of the Rebanding Project. To date, the project team has completed the required planning work for both the data system (MCTS) and voice system (police, fire, EMS).

Milwaukee County continues to be diligent in its efforts to comply with the FCC's mandate, meeting the requirements of the reconfiguration effort by working closely with Sprint Nextel, the TA and users of the system to plan, negotiate and execute the necessary work of the project. The Rebanding Project Team includes IMSD staff, Corporation Counsel, Televate, LLC, and Catalano and Plache, PLLC, as well as numerous user agencies. The Project Team spent several months negotiating a Planning Funding Agreement (PFA) with Sprint Nextel and the TA during 2006. The PFA was approved by the appropriate entities in April 2007 and all planning phase tasks, including frequency analysis, inventory analysis of mobile and portable radios on the system, interoperability planning, and procurement of a vendor to replace the MCTS communication equipment and software, have been completed. To date, all consultant fees for services provided to Milwaukee County for the Rebanding Project have been paid by Sprint Nextel. In addition, Milwaukee County has recovered nearly \$140,000 in revenue for internal staff costs related to the project. Additional funds for County staff time spent on this project are anticipated from Sprint Nextel during 2008 and 2009.

### **MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM**

The most significant challenge within Milwaukee County's Rebanding Project as a result of the FCC's mandate is the impact the project will have on the MCTS voice and data communications network. The MCTS currently operates a computer aided dispatch and automatic vehicle locator (CAD/AVL) transit communications system that was originally deployed in 1992. The system was designed around the Motorola Spectra two-way FM radio. Other major in-vehicle components of the transit communications system include the Intelligent Vehicle Logic Unit (IVLU) and Transit Control Head (TCH). The radio, IVLU and TCH work together to allow the bus driver and dispatch to share information through voice and data communications. The current equipment and software

that support the MCTS communication system will not work with the newly proposed frequencies from Sprint Nextel and the FCC. Therefore, the Motorola radio on each bus, as well as the IVLU and TCH communication equipment on each bus must be replaced. The total cost to replace this system, including equipment, labor and project management is approximately \$5.6 million.

A request for proposals (RFP) was conducted to select a vendor to replace components of the MCTS communications system, as required by the project. The Rebanding Project team recently completed successful negotiations with Sprint Nextel on a Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement for replacement/retuning of the MCTS data system. The agreement specifies payment of \$5.6 million in funds from Sprint Nextel for equipment and installation, including all vendor, consultant and County/MCTS costs.

IMSD has worked closely with Corporation Counsel, Risk Management and Community Business Development Partners during various contract approval processes.

The following is a list of objectives achieved to date and upcoming milestones for the project:

**Objectives Achieved:**

1. Project Charter and Statement of Work developed.
2. Rebanding Project Team assembled, including engineering and legal consultants.
3. Kick-off meeting and on-going communications with user groups conducted to discuss impact and logistics of project.
4. Website for project established with summary, contact information, links to related documents and monthly status reports: [www.county.milwaukee.gov/rebanding](http://www.county.milwaukee.gov/rebanding).
5. Planning Funding Agreement negotiated and approved by Milwaukee County, Sprint Nextel and TA to conduct planning tasks.
6. Analysis of subscriber inventory conducted to determine radios that require replacement.
7. A RFP was conducted and a vendor selected to replace the MCTS CAD/AVL system.
8. All planning tasks for voice and data system completed.
9. Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement for data (MCTS) system replacement negotiated and approved by Milwaukee County, Sprint Nextel and TA for \$5.6 million.

**Upcoming Milestones:**

1. Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement for voice system (police, fire, EMS, Public Works) to be negotiated with Sprint Nextel during Q3/Q4 2008.
2. Data and voice system reconfigurations to be conducted Q4 2008 to Q4 2009.
3. Project completion targeted for Q1 2010.

It is recommended that this report be received and placed on file.

---

Dennis John, Chief Information Officer  
DAS – Information Management Services Division

CC: County Executive Scott Walker  
Supervisor Lee Holloway, Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Sheriff David A. Clarke

Cynthia Archer, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
George Torres, Director, Department of Transportation and Public Works  
Terry Cooley, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors  
Rick Ceschin, County Board Research Analyst  
Linda Durham, Committee Clerk, Judiciary, Safety and General Services Committee