



Making Ohio Number One in Statewide Interoperability

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LATEST NEWS

The Muskingum County Sheriff's office was given the green light to upgrade their radio system to the MARCS system. The Sheriff's Office committed a portion of the cost and the amount saved in maintenance of the old system will cover another portion of the equipment costs. Dispatch Supervisor Kim Hambel said, "As far as officer safety and interoperability, I don't think we can not go with this system. This effort will bring all the local villages in Muskingum County onto a system that allows all the local agencies the opportunity to talk to each other.

SUCCESS IN INTEROPERABILITY

Senator George Voinovich met with officials from the MARCS Program Office, Columbus Department of Public Safety, Franklin County EMA, Ohio EMA, Ohio Hospital Association, Ohio Department of Homeland Security and Sharon Township Police Department. Senator Voinovich praised the collaborative work between these central Ohio agencies and is using this successful collaborative effort as the model to encourage other major cities in Ohio (Cincinnati, Cleveland, Toledo) to work together in the same way via the MARCS System. Columbus was recently placed in the top 5 cities nationwide in interoperable emergency preparedness. Many agencies are not able to take part in MARCS services due to budget constraints. Senator Voinovich is working to provide alternative funding sources for the MARCS System.

TOWER TALK

Upgrades to the MARCS system continue to be made. The Richwood site in Union county is nearly complete. Union County was designated as a "Proof of Concept" county to show the importance of radio interoperability. All emergency services within Union County are on the MARCS 800 MHz system and able to communicate with each other consistently. During the implementation, it was discovered the existing four towers in the area did not sufficiently provide service to the Richwood and Northern Union County Area. Studies were conducted and solutions were developed. Once completed, the tower will be 180 feet high and self supporting. It is scheduled to be completed sometime later this summer.



VOICE ON THE AIR

MARCS offers the opportunity for Local Emergency Use Only subscribers (LEUO) to be full users for \$20 per month, per device (\$240 per fiscal year, per device). Some current LEUO subscribers have misunderstand the charges as being \$20 per PTT! This is not correct. Agencies who are full subscribers benefit from unlimited use of the system and allows the subscriber to talk throughout the entire state and reach over 24,000 other users. In addition, full use subscribers are also assigned their own talkgroups, enabling them to talk amongst themselves without other agencies on the system hearing their transmissions. This would be beneficial for daily AND during multi-agency details. As an example, an incident commander may want to check the status of his jurisdiction. He would be able to speak to his own dispatcher without everyone else on the emergency detail hearing the communication if he had his own agency specific talkgroups. This is definitely a benefit to consider when subscribing.



TEAM FEATURE

Pam Storts is the Geofile administrator for the MARCS Program Office. The MARCS Geofile is the database supporting the mapping product on the MARCS network. Pam worked for BCI for 5-1/2 years before leaving to work in the private industry. She returned to the state in 1993 as a programmer analyst. Her work with MARCS began in 2002. Her 30 years in the IT field provide a very valuable knowledge base for the work she does with the statewide Geofile database. When she's not serving MARCS customers you might find her on a local golf course working on her golf stroke! We're very fortunate to have her as a member of our team.

Did you know...the MARCS Program office is currently beta testing a data initiative? We recently completed implementation for the Perry County Sheriff's office. Last month, work began to implement the Pickaway County Sheriff's Office. With the US Department of Homeland Security's emphasis on data interoperability, this is the perfect opportunity for Ohio step up and show how voice and data interoperable communications can be provided and supported on a statewide network.

Send your MARCS worthy news and pictures to teri.steward@ohio.gov.