

# MARCS

Making Ohio Number One in Statewide Interoperability

January 1, 2008

Issue 9

## IN THIS ISSUE

- LATEST NEWS
- INTEROPERABILITY
- TOWER TALK
- KNOW THE NOC
- TEAM FEATURE
- DID YOU KNOW

## LATEST NEWS

The Richwood tower site is completed and in use, but the upgrades to the MARCS infrastructure never stop. A new site is now in the works for Celina. This is a tower site MARCS inherited from eTech last year. In comparing the cost of upgrading the site's old technology to current standards and the cost to replace the structures, the decision was made to replace the existing structures. In essence the new/upgraded Celina site will replace the Wabash site, which has been showing signs of stress.

## INTEROPERABILITY IN ACTION

Public safety and first responders from Ohio and West Virginia participated in a joint emergency exercise. This was the first joint initiative between Ohio and West Virginia. A key objective to the exercise was to identify traditional and nontraditional viable assets currently available that can be called upon to supplement inadequate redundant communication or to provide primary communications upon failure of primary and redundant systems. Other Ohio participants included State Highway Patrol and Emergency Management Agency (both with their MARCS equipped communications van), Washington County Health Department and communications vans from the Athens and Guernsey County Sheriff Offices. West Virginia agencies included National Guard, Charleston National Weather Service, West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety-Office of Homeland Security, plus many others. The participants were presented with scenarios and were required to respond as if the events were currently taking place. This provided the perfect opportunity for all agencies to see and experience what works in a real response as well as get a clear view of resources available. Communications vehicles from the Guernsey and Athens County Sheriff Offices were on site, as well as the State Highway Patrol and Emergency Management Agency communications vehicles. All of these vans are equipped with MARCS redundancies allowing them to work outside the conventional Ohio boundaries and provide communications to multiple agencies across multiple jurisdictions

## TOWER TALK

Work on the Hocking Hills/Old Mans Cave site is under way. Although ground breaking hasn't begun, work to clear the area has started. The engineering teams and park officials have met and are certain ground breaking will begin soon. The hope is to have this tower on line by Memorial Day. The timing couldn't be more perfect as Memorial Day marks the opening of Ohio's Department of Natural Resources peak vacation season. This site will enhance portable radio coverage. The Hocking Hills region is home to nine state parks and these parks receive over 2 million visitors a year. MARCS is pleased to be able to help keep park visitors safe. Other upgrades include the addition of channels to the South Zanesville and Bloomfield sites.



## KNOW THE NOC

Donnie Thompson is the person you speak to many evenings when you call the MARCS Network Operations Center. Donnie graduated from DeVry in 1990 with an Associate of Applied Science in Electronics degree. He began working for the state in 1990 and joined the MARCS team in 2002. Donnie said he gets a great deal of satisfaction from helping our customers in any way he can. He said the single most exciting point in working on MARCS was being part of the team that blended voice and data statewide technology and seeing it all working together. His exact words, "to see it all working together is awesome". Donnie, we appreciate your help, and we all concur. It is AWESOME!

## TEAM FEATURE

Steve Garwood is the name absolutely every MARCS customer probably knows. After several years in the Air Force, working in telecommunications and weapons, Steve went to work for the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He retired after 28 years with the Patrol and joined MARCS in 2004 as our voice subscriber equipment technician and primary contact for MARCS template design. Steve has worked in telecommunications for over 30 years and claims to "do this stuff for fun". Steve is an active member of several organizations including Seneca Radio Club, American Radio Relay League and Air Force MARS. When he isn't doing this "fun stuff", he enjoys boating with his wife. Steve offers a wealth of knowledge and experience to the MARCS office and is always willing to share this knowledge with all who ask. Thanks a lot. Steve!



**DID YOU KNOW...**The rollout of MARCS construction consisted of eight phases. The first phase was completed in April 2003 and included the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville. One of the incidents that helped spearhead awareness and response to Ohio's antiquated radio system was the 1993 Lucasville Riot.

Send your MARCS worthy news and pictures to [teri.steward@ohio.gov](mailto:teri.steward@ohio.gov).