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To enrich lives through effective and caring service.



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October 26, 2006

To: Each Supervisor

From: Dave Lambertson
Director

Subject: **RECONFIGURATION OF COUNTYWIDE INTEGRATED RADIO
SYSTEM (CWIRS)**

This is to inform your Board of activities the Internal Services Department (ISD) will be undertaking over the next year related to the frequency band reconfiguration of the Countywide Integrated Radio System (CWIRS).

CWIRS is a County radio system used for mobile communications by many County departments and agencies, including Health Services, Public Works, the District Attorney, Probation, ISD, and others. The Sheriff and Fire departments do not use CWIRS and therefore are not affected by the reconfiguration.

Under an Order issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), all radio systems nationwide utilizing certain frequencies in the 800 MHz spectrum, including CWIRS, must be reconfigured to utilize different frequencies in the spectrum. This is needed to correct congestion in the spectrum which has resulted in instances of radio interference. The FCC Order also requires the complete cost of the reconfiguration to be borne by the Sprint Nextel Corporation (Sprint Nextel). Therefore, there will be no net County cost for this effort.

The reconfiguration will consist of reprogramming existing radio sites as well as all mobile and portable equipment. Where site or mobile and portable equipment cannot be reprogrammed, new equipment will be acquired and installed. We estimate that a substantial amount of portable and mobile equipment will need to be replaced with new models having equivalent or better features. This will afford the County a significant opportunity to refresh CWIRS with benefits of updated technology and greater longevity at no cost to the County.

Background

Beginning in the late 1990s, government agency and public safety radio systems utilizing the 800 MHz frequency spectrum began to experience interference in their operations. At first the interference was intermittent and the cause was unknown.

After an investigation by the FCC, the cause was determined to be the use of adjacent frequencies by Nextel Communications, Inc. Nextel was later acquired by Sprint and is now known as Sprint Nextel.

During 2000-2004, the FCC held hearings and explored various possible solutions to the problem. In August 2004, the FCC issued its Final Report and Order requiring 800 MHz licensees, including Los Angeles County, and Sprint Nextel to move to new frequencies. Because Sprint Nextel was determined to be the source of the problem, the FCC has required that Sprint Nextel provide the funding for all licensees nationwide to reconfigure their systems. Accordingly, the FCC Order requires that funding agreements be negotiated by each impacted agency (i.e., such as the County) with Sprint Nextel.

Funding Process

The funding agreements will be structured in a manner that ensures that the County receives funds from Nextel in advanced of incurring the expenditures related to the reprogramming and equipment replacement needed. This includes funds to cover the County's dedicated costs (e.g., ISD labor costs, etc.) as well as costs incurred by vendors (e.g., equipment such as transmitters and receivers). The advance funds received by the County will be placed in a trust account managed by the County specifically designated for the reconfiguration project.

The funds will be drawn down as actual costs are incurred by the County. For vendor purchases, we anticipate that funds will be disbursed by Sprint Nextel directly to the vendors upon acceptance of work or equipment by ISD. No budget adjustment will therefore be required.

The FCC Order provides for a "true-up" process at project completion. If expenditures are less than the funding received, the excess must be returned to Sprint Nextel. If expenditures exceed funding, additional funding must be provided by Sprint Nextel in accordance with FCC guidelines.

Procedures and Timetables

Under the FCC Order, all systems must be reconfigured no later than June 30, 2008. This deadline is subject to change by the FCC. Border agreements with Canada and Mexico must be negotiated by the U. S. State Department and may delay the implementation date. However, planning is proceeding assuming that there will be no delay.

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In order to meet the current deadline date, the reconfiguration project will proceed as follows:

- Step 1 - Planning Stage
 - Estimated to begin January 2007, take approximately three (3) months, and cost approximately \$475,000.
 - Will result in development of a detailed statement of work and cost estimate for the actual reconfiguration effort.
 - A Planning Funding Agreement will be negotiated with Sprint Nextel to provide funding for the planning stage. We estimate that this agreement will be presented to your Board for approval during December 2006.

- Step 2 – Implementation Stage
 - Estimated to begin July 2007, take approximately twelve (12) months, and cost approximately \$30 million.
 - Will result in the acquisition of equipment and services to reconfigure CWIRS to utilize new frequencies in accordance with FCC requirements.
 - A Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement will be negotiated with Sprint Nextel to provide the funding for the implementation stage. We estimate that this agreement will be presented to your Board for approval during June 2007.

We are looking forward to this opportunity to refresh CWIRS at no cost to the County. I will keep you informed of progress as significant developments occur.

Please call me or have your staff contact David Mayer, ISD Telecommunications Branch Manager, at (562) 940-2907 should you have any questions.

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c: Chief Administrative Officer
Chief Information Officer
ISD Board Deputies