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COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY
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PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY'S MICROWAVE SYSTEM

On November 20th, 2007, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors gave direction to the County Executive Office and General Services Agency staff to proceed with the financing, purchase, and installation of a new, countywide digital microwave communications system.

History

Installed in 1990, the County's existing microwave communications system is a vital component the public safety communications network, and it provides critical radio communication for a number of local, state and federal government agencies. The system however is obsolete and is at risk for sudden, catastrophic failure. The County Communications Committee has been discussing the future replacement of the County's current Microwave System since 1997.

The General Services Agency purchased path and site survey's for a future microwave system as well as site assessments through the Western States Contract Alliance (WSCA)—an association of fifteen western states created in 1993 to provide cost-effective and efficient acquisition of products and services. Alcatel Lucent, a worldwide leader in microwave communication, completed the surveys on February 23, 2007, and the site assessments on July 16, 2007. A combination of grants funds and general fund dollars were utilized to complete this work to date.

Existing Microwave Overview

Interoperable, uninterruptible communications between state and local public safety agencies is critical, especially during emergencies.

Repairs to the existing microwave system are increasingly difficult and expensive. Replacement parts are no longer manufactured and must oftentimes be scavenged from equipment sold as surplus by other agencies.

The County recognized that, along with public safety voice traffic, any new microwave system must be capable of handling the County's secure high-speed data transmission needs: mobile data terminals, secure videoconferencing, fingerprint identification, building security applications, and other sources of digital traffic. The system must also be built on open standards and capable of accommodating emerging technologies.

"The General Services Agency assists in providing the foundation upon which County Government is built"

Benefits of the New System:

- Resiliency.
- Open Standards: Ability to handle voice, land-mobile radio, and high-speed data.
- Intelligent: with different priorities for different users, applications and organizations.
- Virtual Private Networks (VPN): Allows multiple agencies, to utilize the same network without jeopardizing the integrity and privacy of individual users.
- 99.999% reliable licensed technology:
 - No interference
 - Predictable performance
- Protected investment/longevity of the solution:

This recent action taken by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors is a major step towards ensuring the long-term reliability of public safety communications in Mendocino County. In addition to providing vital public safety communications and secure data transmission, the new system may also provide a local economic benefit by offering a transport medium for broadband Internet access and voice/phone communications to underserved rural communities. Installation of the new microwave system is due to be completed in July 2008.

For additional information, please contact Kristin McMenomey, GSA Director, at 707-463-4291.