

# Newsletter

August 2007

Connecting emergency services in the Capital Region



## Chair's Message

The past two months have been a busy time for CREST.

I'm pleased to report that, at its July 4 meeting, the board of CREST unanimously approved moving forward on improving the radio system. As recommended by the police and fire service committees and an advisory committee, CREST staff was directed to engage Motorola, the system provider, to design and price enhancements to the existing radio system. A report on this work is expected from Motorola in September.

At the same time, the board agreed to Metchosin's recommendation to revisit the cost allocation method. This will be done by the beginning of September, and the board does not anticipate this interfering with the improvement process.

On behalf of the board, I would like to acknowledge and thank all the members of the police and fire service committees, user committee and the advisory committee for the time, effort and expertise put into helping us move forward with the needed changes.

The Annual General Meeting of shareholders was also held on July 4. It included approval of the 2006 annual financial statements, the appointment of auditors, designation of directors, changes to articles of incorporation and the 2006 annual report. Also, to address the cost allocation method noted above, the shareholders recommended a 60-day delay in implementing changes to the shareholders agreement.

I am confident that the cost allocation concerns can be resolved. Changes to the shareholders agreement are needed to support borrowing for the

system improvements, as well as for other financial and contractual matters that need to be approved by the shareholders.

With a requirement for 100% approval by all shareholders, CREST is put at risk of individual shareholder demands each time support is required for decisions, including technical changes with financial implications. CREST needs both financial and decision making certainty.

We still have much work ahead, however the steps taken over the past two months have gotten us closer to addressing user concerns, improving the system's technical performance and bringing governance and financial stability to CREST.

Hy Freedman  
Chair of the Board

## Quick Facts about CREST

Month	Total Calls	Total Air time (hours)	Immediate System Access	Average delayed access wait time (seconds)
April	641,604	877:30:26	99.89%	1.87
May	708,530	964:30:36	99.82%	2.71
June	692,267	955:35:54	99.79%	2.35

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## CREST Approves Plan to Improve System

At a meeting on July 4<sup>th</sup>, the Board of CREST unanimously approved a plan to make the purchases needed to improve the CREST radio system.

The improvements are estimated to cost \$6 to \$10 million. The plan includes an aggressive schedule for implementing the changes that would result in major improvements by early 2008.

The plan comes as a result of a study released in mid-April that found that the system fails to meet commonly accepted public safety standards for coverage and capacity. The study also confirmed that the underlying technology and system are sound and that steps can be taken to bring the system up to industry standards.

In adopting the plan, CREST board chair Hy Freedman said, "We will continue to work with our members and the 36 emergency response agencies in the Capital Region that rely on CREST. Our goal is to improve the system's reliability and the safety of the emergency service providers that use it as quickly as possible."

Prior to approving the plan, the board received input from committees made up of police, fire fighters and other users from around the region, as well as a panel of emergency telecommunications experts.

While the detailed user review of the study's recommendations was underway, CREST staff continued to work with users to improve the system.

## System Improvements in the Works

Since receiving approval to proceed with improvements on July 4<sup>th</sup>, work has been done to develop the specification and contract terms for purchasing system improvements. Key elements include:

- A coverage specification for 97% reliability for portable radios worn on the hip (with an appropriate building margin) throughout the CREST service area,
- A statistically valid method for verifying coverage,
- A method for addressing any variance between the specified coverage and the achieved coverage, and
- Clearly defined responsibilities and dependencies for adhering to a contracted project schedule.

Discussions with Motorola, the system provider, on the main principles of the contract have begun and meetings held to date are being used to develop the contract and specifications.

In a parallel effort, traffic engineering is being done to identify the specific number of channels required and a letter of intent for Industry Canada is being developed.

Every effort is being made to move as quickly as possible on making the needed system improvements, and keeping the CREST police and fire service and user committees informed on progress.

### Tip of the Month

Municipalities are encouraged to pass bylaws that require new and renovated buildings to meet public safety radio communications requirements. This includes prohibiting encroachments on microwave paths through permanent structures such as buildings and vegetation. Sample bylaws are being developed. If you are interested in obtaining them, please contact general manager Gord Horth at [crestgm@shaw.ca](mailto:crestgm@shaw.ca) or by phone at 995-5708.