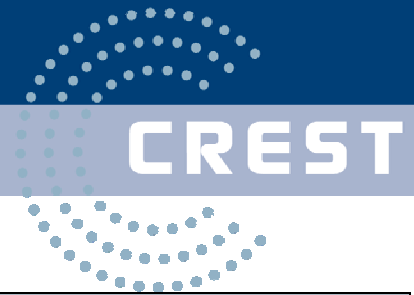


Newsletter

June 2007

Connecting emergency services in the Capital Region



Chair's Message

Welcome to the first bi-monthly edition of this newsletter. The purpose of it is to provide our members, users and shareholders with information on CREST – the organization and the system. It will include highlights, successes, upcoming events, tips for users and facts on the system.

Our most recent highlight is the action being taken to review and move forward on the recommendations in the technical assessment received last month. Our service, user, and advisory committees are currently reviewing the recommendations. Implementation on some has begun, and we hope to be moving forward soon on the more significant equipment improvements. See the article below for more.

In addition to the work being done to make technical improvements, the Governance Committee has been drafting changes to the Members' Agreement that will improve our governance structure. A summary of the changes is ready and we will be meeting with members to share the recommended changes and get input over the next couple of months. Changes to the cost allocation method are part of this Agreement. We hope to be bringing this forward to our Annual General Meeting in early July for approval, at which time we will also be releasing our first annual report.

The months ahead will be busy dealing with the technical recommendations and the amended Members' Agreement. These are the most important issues facing CREST, and the board and staff will be working hard to improve coverage, and thus the safety and security of our users and the public.

Hy Freedman
Chair of the Board

In Memoriam

CREST lost valued board member Jim Good on April 30th. Jim was a very active participant, not only on the Board since 2003, but as a member of the governance and finance committees. As a former officer, Jim represented the RCMP on the CREST Board faithfully and diligently, and his input was valued. He will be truly missed.

CREST Aids Police Chase

In a chase through three Greater Victoria municipalities, including Goldstream Park, CREST supported police in locating a potentially suicidal man who was ultimately found unharmed at Victoria General Hospital. The incident, which occurred last November, had geographic challenges and crossed police jurisdictions.

"It was a convoluted, multi-faceted investigation," said Cpl. Gord Bedingfield now retired from the West Shore RCMP. "It ended well, and we exercised an abundance of care."

In addition to supporting cross-jurisdiction communications, a bi-directional amplifier (BDA) located at Victoria General Hospital helped to boost in-building penetration for police officers.

Quick Facts about CREST

January – March, 2007	
Total Calls	1,730,081
Total Air Time Used	2,374 hours
Immediate System Access	99.87%
Averaged delayed access wait time	1.91 seconds

Technical Assessment Results

A technical assessment done on the CREST radio system says that an investment of \$6 - \$10 million is needed to increase the area served by the system, its reliability and effectiveness in buildings.

Results of the study found that the system has very good coverage in vehicles except in remote west areas, poor coverage for handheld radios in some areas, inconsistent coverage in buildings, poor coverage for pagers in some areas, and high levels of noise interference at a couple of sites. As a result, the study makes the following recommendations:

Short-Term (2007):

- Addressing interference problems at specific tower sites,
- Increasing system capacity by adding channels at some sites,
- Making CREST part of the CRD public safety operational environment and decision-making process,
- Reaching out to stakeholders and providing proactive maintenance, training, problem solving, and assessment and direction on future needs, and
- Increasing CREST staffing levels to support the above and provide proactive and effective involvement in the CRD public safety strategic environment.

Intermediate (2007/2008):

- Increasing the number of towers and/or augmenting the existing sites,
- Changing how the portable radios are worn by users and its location on their body,
- Purchasing in-vehicle repeaters to extend the coverage to hand-held radios,
- Adding satellite receiver sites, and
- Passing bylaws that require new and renovated buildings to meet public safety radio communications requirements, and prohibiting encroachments on microwave paths through permanent structures such as buildings and vegetation.

Long-Term (2015+):

- Looking at an open radio system standard for the future.

The recommendations have been presented to users for feedback and input on the decisions to be made. At the same time, work is proceeding on some of the recommendations, including: working with municipalities to pass bylaws that support radio communications on new and renovated buildings. Staff are developing an application for additional channels from Industry Canada, and working on fixing the interference problems identified at specific sites.

The CREST board is committed to making improvements to the system, and will begin making decisions on the recommendations this summer.

Tip of the Month

Where radios are worn makes a difference. A recent assessment done in a building by Network Operations Manager Bill Sidaway showed that:

- A portable radio worn on the hip under the arm received marginal coverage of 50% at best,
- The same portable radio worn on the hip with the antenna swiveled from the body had 95% coverage, and
- The same radio worn at chest level had 99.9% coverage.

Upcoming Events

Event	Coordinates
CREST Board	Wednesday, June 6 th 3:00 p.m., BC Transit
Governance & Technology Forum	Saturday, June 16 th 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon City of Victoria Ante-chamber
Annual General Meeting	Wednesday, July 4 th 3:00 p.m. Esquimalt Municipal Hall
CREST Board	Wednesday, July 4 th To follow AGM Esquimalt Municipal Hall