



NEWS RELEASE

From Mayor Dean DePiero

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September 25, 2008

Contact: Jack P. Marschall
(440) 885-8181 or (216) 346-9935 (cell)

PARMA COMPLETES INSTALLATION OF STATE OF THE ART EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

(PARMA) – The City of Parma has taken another giant step towards hi-tech emergency radio communications that includes interoperability. The dramatic, life-saving system enables the Parma Police Department to talk simultaneously on the same radio system with members of the Parma Fire Department during a crisis or emergency. The Parma Fire Department was among the first in northern Ohio to implement interoperability in 2007.

Crews have just finished installing a state of the art computer system powerful enough to share Parma's P-25 capability, the FCC's national standard for interoperability, with neighboring cities. In essence, the installation allows other area communities a pathway to upgrade and connect their emergency radio systems in partnership with Parma.

The cities of Brooklyn and Brooklyn Heights are continuing to upgrade their emergency radio infrastructure in order to become P-25 compliant.

"We are proud to take the lead role in this effort to increase safety, speed-up lines of communication and ultimately save lives," said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. "It's a win-win because our system will have the capability to benefit other communities throughout the region."

Discussion is now underway for the creation of a council of governments. The community-based leadership concept would give representation to those cities that partner with Parma's innovative P-25 communications system.

The City of Parma recently partnered with Cleveland State University to study the feasibility of establishing a regional emergency dispatch system. Several communities have voiced an interest in benefiting from a regional dispatch program including Broadview Heights, Middleburg Heights, North Royalton and Brook Park. A council of governments could oversee both P-25 operations and a regional dispatch system.

(more)

Mayor DePiero says working with neighboring cities on the regional dispatch program would put local first responders on the same team, saving lives, time and taxpayer dollars. Parma Fire Chief John French agrees.

“City safety and rescue crews communicating in a direct manner without having to be routed back and forth can and will improve operations greatly,” said Chief French. “Parma Fire has been enjoying the benefits of the P25 system since early in 2007 when our portion of Parma’s system was upgraded to the federal standard.”

“The bottom line here is saving lives,” said Mayor DePiero. “The need for emergency crews to have direct communication with one another at all times is no longer an option. We will continue the pro-active trend we have established on this critically important issue.”

Most of Ohio’s 88 counties do not have a common frequency band among all law enforcement and safety agencies. In northeast Ohio, police and fire departments use a diverse set of frequency bands that are not compatible. Local emergency experts say Parma’s technology will enhance communication between local, state and federal jurisdictions.

###