



PRESS RELEASE

From Mayor Dean E. DePiero

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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In response to Homeland Security study that says region unprepared when it comes to communicating during a disaster....

City of Parma has solution to county's plan to link municipalities' safety forces under a unified emergency radio system

(Parma) – The City of Parma already has in place a cost-effective and FCC compliant emergency communications system that could span Cuyahoga County and put police and firefighters in many communities on the same channel during a mass crisis.

This news comes at a time when Cuyahoga County officials seek to implement a unified radio system that could run as high as \$115-million to install – a sum most suburbs find too costly. IT ALSO COMES AT A TIME WHEN A HOMELAND SECURITY STUDY SAYS GREATER CLEVELAND IS AMONG THE LEAST PREPARED REGIONS IN THE COUNTRY WHEN IT COMES TO COMMUNICATING DURING A DISASTER.

Parma is the only city in northeast Ohio with a radio system that meets the national standard for “interoperability” known as P-25, or the ability for different radio systems to communicate with one another.

Parma safety officials said with minimal costs, other county municipalities could sign onto Parma's radio system and have the ability to communicate with each other during a mass crisis.

Parma's M/A-Com, Inc. radio system is diverse, versatile and feature-rich. The system has the capacity to handle the addition of several hundred radios and provide seamless secure critical communications over an even larger area.

The cost to municipalities for a P-25 upgrade would vary depending on their size but the current cost to date incurred by Parma to upgrade the M/A-Com system is \$100,000 – which was obtained by U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich. This would enable safety forces to talk to one another and without having to scrap existing radio systems – something that the county's plan calls for.

(more)

In addition to the City of Brooklyn already on Parma's radio system, the Brooklyn Fire Department has received a grant to upgrade to the P-25 standard. Brooklyn Heights is exploring a similar upgrade and move to Parma's radio system.

Parma Fire Chief John French said that "the details of any expansion would have to be worked out based on the demand, individual community needs and equipment locations." He said that it is possible to link Cuyahoga County municipal safety forces at a cost substantially lower than the \$115-million price tag presently being considered by the county.

"The City of Parma is being proactive with the latest technology to enable our safety forces to talk to other municipalities," said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. "Parma would be happy to talk to any suburb in Cuyahoga County about how they can have the latest emergency communications technology while saving taxpayer's money."

DePiero said that Parma is willing to work with Cuyahoga County officials to provide the city's radio communications system with other municipalities.

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