

To: Dane County Towns

Fr: County Executive Joe Parisi; Jerry Derr, President Dane County Towns Association

Re: Signing agreements to join new countywide emergency communications network

The Executive Board of the Dane County Towns Association met recently with the County Executive to discuss questions and concerns regarding our ongoing work to implement a new countywide emergency communications network known as "DaneCom."

We agree all of our citizens will benefit from this significant improvement in public safety infrastructure. The towns and rural areas of our county will experience some of the greatest enhancements through "DaneCom" given the current challenges emergency responders experience with consistent radio coverage in outlying areas.

It's for that reason the county, the towns, and the cities and villages committed last year to re-design and re-bid the system that was initially proposed. Because we worked together, the system now proposed represents a nearly 50% cost savings to our taxpayers. It will greatly improve the ability of our police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) providers to communicate and work together on every day emergencies like heart attacks and strokes to the more complicated events that require more regional responses like large fires.

For this system to succeed, everyone's participation is vital.

That's why we're writing to encourage your town to approve the proposed intergovernmental agreement you recently received.

It's important to note the system will be governed by an 11 member body that includes representatives of the Dane County Towns Association (2 members), Dane County Cities and Villages (3 members), Dane County Fire, Police, and EMS (1 member each) and Dane County government (3 members). No one entity has majority control - the county has three of the 11 seats.

Should we secure the intergovernmental agreements necessary and move forward and build "DaneCom," this governing body will review emergency radio usage data and determine the most equitable means of apportioning operating costs moving forward. A couple of years of this data is necessary for the most accurate review so the governing board will revisit the operating cost sharing formula in 2015.

Given the budget challenges we all face, it's our shared priority to pursue longer term funding solutions.

The county certainly has an interest in this - - the county has agreed to pay the full capital construction costs of about \$18 million for this project. In addition to debt service payments for the next 20 years on that amount borrowed, the county will also pay its share of the operating costs - - about \$230,000 - - starting in 2013 (about 30% of the total).

Under the direction of the County Executive, county staff have already been part of a public/private work group preparing a series of state legislative recommendations to address concerns about stable public safety communications funding sources. One of those recommendations may very well include pursuit of a Wisconsin Legislative Council study committee to review potential funding sources to address the growing needs both at the state and local levels of ensuring the most state of the art emergency communications technologies and practices.

Through collaboration, we believe the county and its 34 towns could be effective partners on working toward a solution. Together, we will lobby the state legislature to explore the feasibility of achieving an exemption from the state revenue caps.

At the request of the Dane County Towns Association, Dane County modified language from the original intergovernmental agreement you received to ensure better protections of your town's investment in the system.

Together, we need to work to ensure maximum participation and seamless public safety response, regardless of municipal boundaries. Collaborative construction and maintenance of this system shows our commitment to doing great things and enhancing the quality of the life for the citizens we serve.

We strongly encourage your active participation and enthusiastic support for this opportunity to improve public safety.