

SERS

Snohomish County Emergency Radio System

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To: Snohomish County Fire and Police Chiefs

Cc: ff

From: Spencer Bahner, SERS Manager

Date: September 13th, 2001

Re: SERS update, costs, training, final talkgroup planning

I am writing to provide an update on where we are at with the SERS project and to provide some information on radio cost budgeting and ordering, as well as to outline the training process for users of the new system.

800 MHz System Operation

The first phase of SERS 800 MHz infrastructure is expected to be complete and ready to accept user agencies by July 1st, 2002. The second phase is expected to be completed the following year. This timeline is largely controlled with how our land use permitting processes unfold in the coming weeks and months. Delays may result should there be opposition to the land use permitting on new or replaced towers. We may ask for your support at our upcoming public hearings.

Radio System Support Cost Assessments

The on-going cost of supporting the SERS system infrastructure (tower, generators, buildings, technicians, etc...) is paid from assessments on the agencies making use of the system. The share of the costs assessed to each agency is derived from the formula immortalized in the SERS Interlocal Agreement. This allocation information is duplicated in the included table and has already been provided to your representatives to the SERS governing board. Note that the amounts identified assume no added Phase One users who might reduce the cost to other members through their contributions.

The process for the assessment cycle is as expected to be as follows: SERS establishes an annual budget for the year ahead and provides written notification of the expected amount in August and September of 2001. In later years, this notification will ideally take place no later than June of the preceding year. On April 1st of 2002, your jurisdiction will receive an invoice for your share of the 2002 costs. This will be the invoice you will need to issue payment against.

SERS: Providing Radio Communications Services to Public Safety Agencies Countywide

For 2003 and all following years, SERS will send the annual invoice for these costs no later than October 1st of the preceding year. The following table illustrates the annual assessments for 2002. Note that these costs will increase substantially in following years (since staff costs are partly paid by the Phase Two development effort). These amounts represent the 'worst case' for 2002.

2002 Member/User Assessments

<i>Member</i>	<i>% of Costs</i>	<i>Est. Assessment</i>
Brier	1.26%	\$ 2,982
Edmonds	7.76%	\$ 18,405
Everett	29.31%	\$ 69,500
Lynnwood	10.09%	\$ 23,935
Marysville	6.72%	\$ 15,937
Mill Creek	2.39%	\$ 5,674
Mountlake Terrace	4.34%	\$ 10,300
Mukilteo	3.82%	\$ 9,058
Woodway	0.29%	\$ 686
Snohomish County	27.44%	\$ 65,067
Fire District 1	6.58%	\$ 15,606
Fire District 7	0.00%	\$ -
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00%</i>	<i>\$ 237,152</i>

Note: Member assessments are based on the following criteria per the SERS Interlocal:

- 1. Population- 25% of formula (2001 data)*
- 2. Service area- 25% of formula (2001 data)*
- 3. Calls for service- 50% of formula (2000 data)*

Radio Budgeting and Radio Purchasing Processes

The time to budget for radios for Phase One agencies is now. SERS expects to begin operation in July of 2002 and agencies will begin conversion as soon as user agency trainers have received basic training in the use of the 800 MHz radios. Radio orders would be placed in the second quarter of 2002, with deliveries of agency radios starting late in the second quarter or early in the third quarter.

SERS has developed a costing worksheet that will be provided to each of you. A copy is attached to this memo. This is designed to assist you in selecting the correct radio types and options for budgeting purposes. This form is not to be used for actual orders, but is intended only to help agencies accurately predict your costs for when orders are placed next year. We are hoping to have in place an on-line version of this document to ease the ordering process.

The process for budgeting and ordering is as follows.

Now:

- Budgetary numbers are developed from the attached information or the electronic worksheet

In Q1 of 2002:

- A draft order is prepared by the agency and submitted to SERS
- SERS confirms details of draft order with agency contact
- A final, signed purchase order is placed by the agency (processed through SERS) with SERS or Motorola. We are in the process of confirming that orders may be placed directly by agencies with Motorola rather than through SERS in which case agencies will always place orders directly through Motorola
- The agency radios ship to SERS for preparation, Motorola will invoice agency
- Radios are picked up by the installation contractor or government install shop and installed

Radio User Training

Dispatchers and technical support staff are being trained with the new systems now. User agencies will be asked to identify a "leader" for each organization who will serve as the primary point of contact for the agency when working with SERS. This individual will be the conduit for all questions to SERS from users as well as the means by which SERS provides information and coordinates training with each agency. The assigned individual may or may not be an actual trainer (we suggest someone who is interested in technology since they can help serve as a 'translator' between the technical and operational worlds).

SERS will use a train-the-trainer approach with each agency. This will be an intensive process and we expect to spend 1-2 days with the designated trainer (s) for each participating agency. We will have prepared training materials and may well offer video versions of the training to assist the agency in providing "refresher" training.

Our expectation is that each agency will need to allocate a total of four hours of training for each end user (police officer or firefighter) of the SERS system. While we realize that this amount of training may represent a significant time commitment, it is essential that we spend the required time when dealing with more complex technologies such as trunked radio systems. *Many of the problems experienced by systems similar to the SERS system have been the direct result of inadequate training efforts.* I'd also caution you that we expect to offer continuing training beyond the initial four hour period to ensure that agencies stay "fresh" as the system grows or common user agency questions arise.

Final Talkgroup/Channel Planning

A draft plan for the channels (called 'talkgroups' when using the trunked radio system) to be used on the SERS system was developed over a year ago and was provided to Motorola so that they could confirm adequate system capacity. It is time to revisit this plan and adjust its structure so that we are ready to configure the system when it is installed next year. This will be an involved process that requires the participation of SERS, the communications centers and the technical and operation resources of the participating police, fire, and emergency management agencies.

The draft talkgroup plan did take into account input from many parties and serves as the 'cap' on the total number of talkgroups to be established at system start-up. Within that framework, we now want to make sure that this draft plan integrates well with communications center staffing and the operational needs of participating agencies. The communications centers will alert the various TACs as to when we expect to start holding planning sessions. Please stay tuned for more information!

Questions?

Please contact Spencer Bahner (the SERS Manager) or Ron Solemsaas (the SERS Project Coordinator) at (425) 257-8538 with any questions or concerns you may have. Note that we will be moving into the new SNOAC facility in October or November and our contact information will change at that time. We will keep you informed of all of the changed information.