



MEDIA RELEASE
STATE OF TENNESSEE
TEMA
TENNESSEE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2008

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TENNESSEE RECIEVES \$16.9M IN PUBLIC SAFETY GRANTS

AWARDS WILL ENHANCE INTEROPERABLE COMMUNCIATION SYSTEMS

NASHVILLE – Today Governor Phil Bredesen announced the release of \$16,946,107 in Public Safety Interoperability Communications (PSIC) grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. These six PSIC projects will help state and local first responders by improving emergency communications and coordination during a natural or man-made disaster.

“Good communications is vital to successfully responding to any disaster,” said Governor Bredesen. “We will continue to build on the capabilities we have developed in Tennessee, including projects like the ones to be funded by these grants, that can help us save lives.”

The PSIC grant program is designed to assist public safety agencies in the acquisition, deployment, or training in the use of interoperable communications systems for emergency responders. Under the PSIC program, Tennessee will receive a 5-to-1 match in federal dollars.

The PSIC projects approved for Tennessee include:

- Tennessee Valley Regional 700/800 MHz System, \$14 million
- Linked Emergency Telecommunications System, \$412,007
- Strategic Technology Reserve, \$1,358,500
- Obion County, Hand-held radios for first responders, \$285,600
- Department of Correction P25 Master Switch, \$275,000
- Portable Towers and Cache, \$615,000

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency applied for the PSIC grants in December 2007. Governor Bredesen’s Public Safety Wireless Interoperable Communications Advisory Board (WiCAB), which also advocated for these grants, is developing plans to improve emergency communications in Tennessee.

“It is critical that emergency responders have the tools to communicate,” said TEMA Director James Bassham. “The ability to coordinate an effective emergency response depends on a reliable, interoperable communication system at all levels of government.”

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, www.tnema.org
Wireless Communications Advisory Board, www.tnema.org/word%20docs/wicabindex.htm

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency's role is unique among state government agencies – we are literally the 9-1-1 of state government. When a situation escalates beyond a local government's capability to manage, TEMA is the first point of contact for obtaining state or federal assistance. The agency's normal day-to-day duties include monitoring developing situations across the state (i.e., weather, smaller emergencies, etc.), providing timely notification to other state and federal agencies about local emergency situations, plan development, exercise development, and response capability development.

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DETAILS OF THE PSIC PROJECTS

Tennessee Valley Regional 700/800 MHz System

Proposed by City of Chattanooga, this Project 25 (P25) 700/800 MHz regional interoperable communications system will be capable of simulcast trunking throughout nine counties in East Tennessee with connections to the State's Emergency Operations Center in Nashville.

LETS Talk (Linked Emergency Telecommunications System)

The LETS Talk is the development of a very high frequency (VHF)/ultra high frequency (UHF)/800 MHz system using mutual aid channels built on a simulcast platform that is accessible to federal, state and local agencies.

Strategic Reserve

Purchase of a radio cache and tower on wheels by TEMA for use to re-establish communications in the event of an earthquake on the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ).

Obion County – Hand-held radios for first responders

Obion County will purchase P25 hand-held radios for all first responder disciplines, the city and county school systems, as well as maintain a small reserve cache of radios at the county's operations center.

Department of Correction P25 Master Switch

The licensing of a master P25 switch will allow other agencies to utilize their equipment for interoperability.

Portable Towers and Cache

The Memphis UASI area is purchasing three caches of 25 radios and three portable towers, as well as providing Communications Unit Leader training.