

Talk Group

ADCOMM Engineering Company

Bridging the Gap Between Operations and Technology®

Specialists in Public Safety Communications Since 1979

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Spokane's New Telephone System

—Dave Magnenat, PMP

Spokane is the largest county in Eastern Washington. In a region of smaller, less populated counties east of the Cascades, Spokane is unique in its size, needs, and approach to public safety communications.

Within the Combined Communications Building (CCB), four agencies work in separate dedicated spaces: Spokane 9-1-1, Spokane Fire Department dispatch, Spokane Police Department dispatch, and Spokane County Sheriff's Office dispatch. The building provides shared space as well; conference rooms, eating areas, and equipment rooms are used by all agencies. While some agencies have common tools — law dispatch and 9-1-1 use the same CAD system, for example — only the telephone system ties all agencies together.



When this vital system began deteriorating, they knew it had to be replaced with a system that was robust and diverse enough for the varied needs of all users. Some departments would use computer-based telephones while others relied on desk sets. Reporting and alerting requirements were widely varied, too. The system also had to support a remote dispatch operation at Cheney Police Department and a shared 20-position backup center (BUC). To properly specify, guide, and manage the acquisition and installation of a new system in such a complex environment, Spokane hired ADCOMM Engineering.

With Spokane 9-1-1 as the lead agency, ADCOMM supported Director Lorlee Mizell with engineering and project management services. Following a unified requirements gathering process, the Request for Proposal was issued. Mizell and ADCOMM led a proposal evaluation team of management, operational, technical, and line personnel through each proposal, validating and explaining the technical and operational issues, then helping the team consider how each would change the existing work flow. ADCOMM also led risk assessments for each proposal and helped clarify the role of Next Generation 9-1-1 requirements.

Spokane selected Plant/CML's VESTA system combined with Nortel Meridian's PBX units. QWEST was the primary vendor, and ADCOMM worked closely with them and Plant/CML. Two PBXs were deployed at the CCB (one for redundancy) and one at the backup center. VESTA was deployed in two agency spaces at the CCB, one agency at the backup center, and at Cheney. New transport links had to be built to connect the systems as well.

Early planning identified two major risks: failure of the current system and moving the new equipment into the old equipment's space. The solution was to accelerate the BUC implementation so it could operate as a safety net and as the primary center while the CCB implementation was occurring. We cut the BUC about a month before the

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Thinking About ...

Spokane

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CCB was ready, and this also gave us a good opportunity to train users and make changes. This paid off in a relatively small “punchlist” of items following the main center cutover.

The CCB cutover went smoothly, due in large part to the planning and rehearsal the entire team had done leading up to the final date. As the last pieces of the old system left the building there was a general sigh of relief, and lots of smiling faces as the new system came online. The new system is working well for all of the diverse users, and ADCOMM extends congratulations to Lorlee Mizell and her team for a job well done!

CJIS Security Compliance

—Dave Magnenat, PMP

As the computer networking and data world continues to evolve at a break-neck rate, the need for more stringent security becomes even greater. The federal government’s Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) will issue a new revision to their security requirements in July 2009, but most systems need to be compliant with most of the rules by June of 2009 (in Washington State).

So what does compliance mean? There are three major elements to compliance:

1. **Personnel management:** fingerprint backgrounds, user and technical training
2. **Access management:** the physical location of CJIS-connected de-

vices (including patrol vehicles, strong and changing passwords, two factor authentication, and the handling of CJIS documents including destruction

3. **Infrastructure management:** the physical and logical connections that make up your data network, data encryption, and device protection measures like anti-virus and intrusion detection systems

At the local level, the public safety agency is responsible for meeting these requirements. Most agencies do a great job with parts of the compliance requirements already – there aren’t many communication centers that don’t already require background checks and system training, and there are already CJIS rules requiring fingerprint checks. Other requirements are new or outside the agency’s purview. Most communication centers and records departments connect to a larger network in addition to the state’s network, and CJIS requires all of those connections be secure. ADCOMM recommends these steps for every agency with access to CJIS information:

1. Appoint one person to specialize in CJIS compliance for the entire agency, top to bottom.
2. Complete the training available in your state covering CJIS system security. You can get details from your state’s lead agency (WSP’s ACCESS in Washington State, CLETS in California, etc.) Training is often online.
3. Engage your IT resources early and get them on your team. Someone with knowledge of the network setup is essential (a network diagram is a required component of compliance), and requirements like

encryption and two-factor authentication need IT involvement.

4. Work with your state office. Local agency compliance is a requirement of every state, and the states are judged by how well they do by the federal government. It is in everyone’s best interest to reach compliance.

ADCOMM is happy to assist agencies through the compliance process as well. We offer assessments, recommendations, and guidance to reach and maintain compliance.



Meet ADCOMM’s Newest Team Member

Gary Lancaster is the newest member of the ADCOMM team, bringing over 40 years of public safety communications experience.

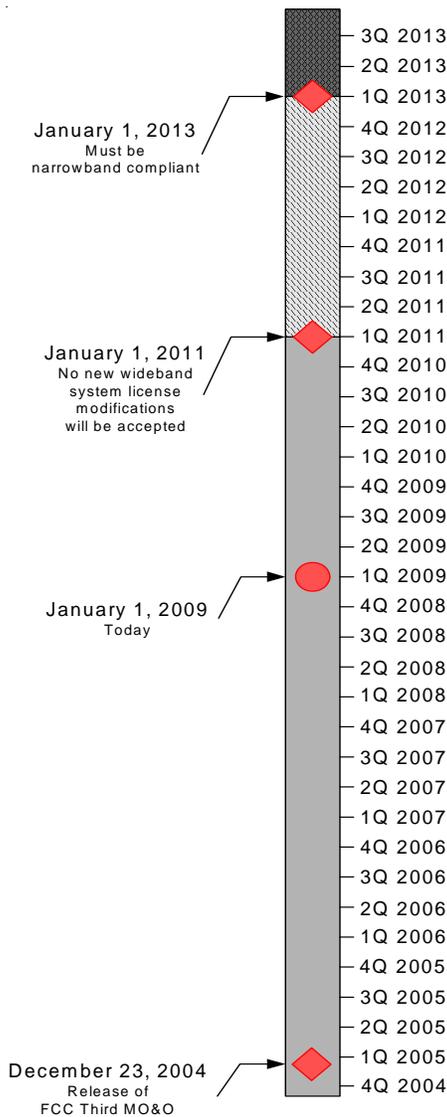
He previously served as Assistant Director for Salt Lake Valley Emergency Communications Center (VECC) located in West Valley, Utah for 12 years until his retirement. He also spent 25 years in police services with Sandy City Police Department (Utah) serving in various capacities from officer to police chief. During his tenure at VECC, he served as part of the public safety communication component for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Gary resides in Monroe, Washington, and enjoys traveling, golf, and fishing in his spare time.

Narrowbanding

Concerned about narrowbanding? Need help with your narrowbanding tasks?

The ADCOMM team is here to help. Remember, there are only 48 months before the FCC's deadline to become narrowband compliant.



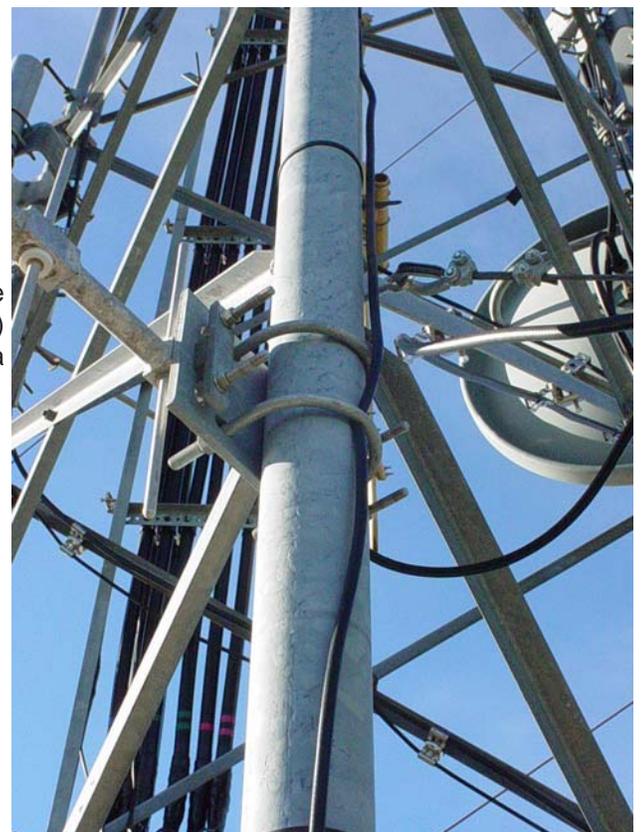
narrowbanding, they are finding some technical issues are coming up. The primary two are that the coverage is reduced and level settings are much more critical than before. This can really be a problem for those agencies that are not responsible for maintaining their own user equipment. Proper maintenance of mobiles and portables has long been a problem. When operating in narrowband mode, being on frequency and having the deviation and audio levels adjusted correctly are much more critical. Those that provide infrastructure may find the complaints from the users increase because their mobiles and portables have not been adequately maintained. It will take time to show the users that the infrastructure is operating properly and it is their equipment not operating correctly. Radio shops and other technical personnel will have to be more careful when making adjustments and settings. Remember to watch the dates! They will come up fast.

Rebanding Status

The sometimes twisted and torturous process of rebanding is near completion for many places in the country. ADCOMM's non-border rebanding projects are nearing completion with the biggest being the UCAN system in Utah. (http://www.adcommeng.com/UCAN_Case_Study.pdf). The path is still not clear for many areas near the Canadian or Mexican borders. The Canadian border area frequency plans for public safety licensees in the northwest areas have not been released yet. This critical piece is needed to complete the planning puzzle for the Pacific Northwest. Frequencies for the B/ILT users were released a couple of months ago and those results are still being evaluated. Meanwhile, the planning process for border area public safety is either in negotiation or has started. The Puget Sound region will be working on rebanding for at least the next couple of years.

Can you find the problem here?

The first person to email me (j.blaschka@adcomm911.com) with the correct answer gets a \$10 Starbucks card.



Narrowbanding Status

There seems to be more licensee awareness that narrowbanding is not really that far away. As some licensees are making the conversion to

THE LAST BYTE

How did we get in this mess? Was it lack of government oversight? Poor tax policy? Not enough regulations? The real reason: the people involved lost their moral compass. Not just the big guys. The little guys too. No amount of regulation, rules, or oversight can handle every possible situation. Ultimately, each of us needs to take personal responsibility for our actions whether from poor judgment resulting in too much debt to taking advantage of others for our personal profit.

Where should our moral compass point? It should point someplace other than ourselves. We are rarely the best judge of our actions. We may think otherwise but history usually proves us wrong. Would your Mom, Dad, brother, spiritual advisor, neighbor, or best friend make the same judgment? Would you be proud to read about it in the newspaper? Give it some thought.

—*Joe Blaschka, Jr., P.E.*

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