





June 30, 2015

Members of the Colorado General Assembly:

In accordance with the provisions of SB 14-127, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) entered into a contract with Federal Engineering, Inc. (FE) to conduct a needs assessment of the Digital Trunked Radio System (DTRS), as well as various other public systems in the state. The purpose of the study is to determine current and future public safety communications needs in Colorado and how they may impact the DTRS network, interoperability, and other non-DTRS systems operating in Colorado. The contractor was also asked to present a second report that is a business plan for sustainability of the DTRS and interoperability measures.

After a brief review and comment period involving DHSEM, the Public Safety Communications Subcommittee (PSCS) and the Statewide Interoperable Communications Coordinator (SWIC), we herewith submit those reports in their entirety highlighting the following recommendations:

1. **DTRS Coverage Improvement**: Many parts of the state have inadequate coverage from the DTRS system. FE identified 109 proposed sites to increase coverage from 79% to 90%. The majority of these sites are in the western portion of the state. See Section 6, of the Needs Assessment Report; page 128.
2. **Governance**: DTRS is a system of systems with approximately 50% of the assets owned by the State and 50% owned by various counties, municipalities, and special districts. At this time, there are numerous stakeholder groups that control and manage aspects of the system. It is the recommendation of FE that the General Assembly consolidate governance as much as possible to prevent duplication of efforts and create a more efficient governance structure to meet the needs of system users. See Section 9 of the Business Plan Report; page 106.
3. **Sustainability**: A permanent funding stream is needed to support the DTRS and staff that manage and promote it. The system itself requires regular upgrades to software, and the hardware has known life-cycle limitations. A regular funding stream would allow system managers to plan for those upgrades as well as provide for maintenance and replacement of aging equipment before it fails. FE cites a number of possible revenue streams including those employed successfully in other states. Some of the options proposed may be difficult to realize in Colorado because of provisions in the TABOR Amendment. See Section 9.2 of the Business Plan Report; page 109.
4. **Interoperable Communications**: FE recommends that improvements to coverage, governance, and sustainability be done in such a way as to improve interoperable communications among the systems and among the users of DTRS. It is recommended that the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, along with the Public Safety Communications Subcommittee be the primary champions for interoperability including coordination, outreach, and education. See Section 7 of the Needs Assessment Report; page 147.

These recommendations are broad strokes further defined in FE’s final reports. The attached Executive Summary outlines some of the more specific recommendations including costs for the necessary coverage improvement, reorganization suggestions for streamlined governance, possible sources for long term financial sustainability, and methods currently being explored to ensure interoperability among all public safety radio communications networks in Colorado.

Sincerely,



Kevin R. Klein

Division Director, DHSEM

Enclosure: Executive Summary, System-wide Needs Assessment, System-wide Business Plan