



COMMISSIONERS OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Bruce Barclay
Chairman

Gary Eichelberger
Vice Chairman

Richard L. Rovegno
Secretary

Testimony of Bruce Barclay, Chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners

**Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness
and Communications & Technology
Wednesday, October 3, 2007, 11:00 a.m.
Hearing Room 1, North Office Building**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Emergency Preparedness and Communications Committee. My name is Bruce Barclay and I am Chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners and a member of the State Office of Administration's Public Safety Communications Council. Thank you for the opportunity of testifying before you regarding the State's 800 MHz radio communications system and the importance of interoperable communications between the State and our local first responders.

Cumberland County selected the MA/COM Open Sky System in 2000 partly because of the potential of interoperable communications with the State Police and other agencies in order to improve public safety. In the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the State, counties, and local municipalities have gained a painful lesson on the importance of emergency responders to be able to talk to each other.

In January 2005 the South Central PA Counter-Terrorism Task Force consisting of eight counties including Cumberland County, recommended purchasing Open Sky Radios for the Task Force Response Agencies in order to allow interoperability in the event of a disaster. In December of that same year Cumberland County transitioned our local police departments to the system followed by the fire police organizations in 2006 and fire and EMS earlier this year. For the first time, all of Cumberland County's public safety providers share a common radio platform.



COMMISSIONERS OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Bruce Barclay
Chairman

Gary Eichelberger
Vice Chairman

Richard L. Rovegno
Secretary

In June of this year, the Commonwealth hosted a Statewide Interoperability Summit where the State Police and the County demonstrated the successful connectivity of our systems. Shortly thereafter, three Cumberland County police communications talk groups were opened to all direct radio communications between the PA State Police and the Cumberland County Municipal Police. This same capability has been provided to the State Police Troopers' helicopters.

This system immediately proved its worth in fighting crime by assisting local police in responding... On June 26th the State Police Helicopter Trooper provided aerial surveillance in assisting the Silver Spring Township Police in the pursuit of a stolen Corvette.

Just last week the State Police Helicopter assisted the North Middleton Police, County Sheriff's Department and County Detectives in the apprehension of suspects in a home invasion in North Middleton Township.

In conclusion, the potential for the State Police, the South Central PA Counter-Terrorism Task Force, Cumberland County, and local police agencies to improve public safety in our area cannot be understated. Cumberland County looks forward to working with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to take our technological partnership to the next level.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you this morning.