

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Barbara Cross; I am Chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners and also Chairman of the Governance Committee of the County Commissioners Association.

Cumberland County recently moved to the Third Class having seen a 10% population growth over the past decade. Our General Fund totals approximately \$67 million dollars and of every dollar \$0.39 goes to public safety-

**Background/History** In 2001 the County began a partnership with the Commonwealth that remains in effect today- first through Tyco Corporation and now with Harris Corporation.-

This interoperability did not happen overnight but took months of planning and required a commitment and dedication by numerous agencies.

The benefits for both are best demonstrated through this site map – This site sharing has reduced redundancies in materials and tower construction, saving both dollars and the environment-

You will see the joint venture at Reeser's Summit- in this example the Tower is owned by the Turnpike, while the shelter is a Commonwealth asset. Our 800 MHz equipment is on the shelter with leased antenna space from the Turnpike Commission and in turn we use their microwave.

We currently have 17 Radio Sites- 6 multi and 10 single channel sites- Cumberland uses the Commonwealth microwave to access 2 sites, they are the Commonwealth Technology Center and Reeser's Summit- and the Commonwealth uses County microwave to access 3 radio sites.

The Commonwealth uses our microwave to the County Prison site and from the Prison to South Mountain, Three Square Hollow and Waggoner's Gap. The Commonwealth also has collocated radio sites and equipment at Lambs Gap and 4 other locations. From the Lambs Gap site they take microwave to Cumberland's Emergency Operations Center and then on to the South Mountain site. –

This is not to say Cumberland has not faced any challenges in ensuring adequate coverage, but most recently I believe our success has and will continue to be grounded in collaboration rather than confrontation-

You are well aware, terrain issues are experienced throughout the Commonwealth. In Cumberland County Middlesex Twp. has a particular area that has been problematic through a lack of coverage and repeated concerns from local Law Enforcement that both mobile and hand held devices were experiencing dropped calls. After too many meetings to count and lengthy discussions on the best solution regarding the construction of a new tower and the associated costs, I asked if we could run a test before any bids or contracts

went out to see if the proposed solution would correct the problem- Could we get the COW- Cell on Wheels for a few days? This exercise would give everyone an opportunity to benefit: State Police get their training in, Middlesex Police Department can weigh in and the County gets an evidence based answer through a real world scenario; all of this before taxpayer dollars are spent. The bottom line is it worked. The County then knew exactly what we needed and could enter into a bid/contract process to put up a new tower using the test results and tailoring the needs based on the facts.

Another example of regional cooperation is the South Central Task Force microwave radio system. This system was built using Homeland Security grant money to interconnect the eight counties of the South Central Task Force. Earlier this year this system was interconnected with the PA-STARNET radio system and played a key role in support of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. This microwave network and interconnection provided radio interoperability for the State Police, the National Park Service, Adams County public safety agencies and other National assets including Task Force during the seven days of commemoration in July and will again be mobilized for support during the upcoming anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, this November.

**To Date**- Cumberland County has rolled out 1,847 portable radios and 708 mobiles, with usage by approximately 69 agencies- including Public Safety, local governments, the State radios on the County system used by Shippensburg University Police, DCNR State Parks Pine Grove Furnace, King's Gap Environmental Education and Training Center, Col Denning and DNCR Forestry at Michaux State Forest.

In 2012 there were 4,959,088 radio transmissions on the County's radio system. We have also made available a County Radio Blog – it provides an opportunity for users to post comments and concerns, announce training opportunities and inform users of updates.

I believe communications needs to be treated as a complete system- whether the technology is a radio- a pager- mobile phone- in a vehicle or hand held- texting or social media – it is the flow of information through variety of platforms- Chasing the next best technology is very expensive- but we need a State wide system that works- CCAP lists interoperability and reliability as priorities – The radio system is an integral component to County 911 Centers and our Emergency management responsibilities and there are concerns, the first as you can expect is funding, but I'd like to address a few others:

1. The recent Federal law that allocated a portion of the 700 MHz band to public safety and the requirement to return radio frequencies used in the upper UHF band to the Federal government for spectrum auction in the next ten years. This will force a number

of county and city public safety radio systems across the state to relocate to other frequencies and replace radio systems with no financial reimbursement guarantee. Locally this impacts our neighbors in Dauphin, Franklin and York counties since their systems use this portion of the UHF band being returned to the Federal government. This is unlike the rebanding of the 800 MHz spectrum that affected both the Commonwealth and Cumberland.

2. Rebanding mandates from the Federal government do not come with a funding source. Few municipalities are able to absorb the financial burden associated with these mandates so they look to County resources for assistance-

3. All Counties are facing mandatory Tower modifications based on the new guidelines coming from the State Building Code. Compliance will come with a very hefty price tag, and with no external funding source.

4. But perhaps the most significant issue is the possible migration of the State to the P-25 standard- Interoperability may be lost in counties that do not migrate – others may be in the position to build new systems along with the Commonwealth- I am sure the investment that Cumberland County made approximately 10 years ago will now conservatively cost 4 times that amount if a change is made and take multiple years to complete.

**Moving forward**, the Commonwealth of PA is encouraged to continue those partnerships that exist with counties and develop partnerships where none currently exist to work towards fully integrated public safety solutions. Cost sharing and funding opportunities are welcomed as newer technologies emerge. Public safety emergencies don't always occur within a specific municipality or stay within county boundaries, and in many cases involve a coordinated response between local, state and sometimes federal agencies and resources. Setting the goal for a fully integrated communications system will provide a means to successfully manage what may otherwise be a very chaotic event.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these remarks.