

# MADISON COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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“nothing travels faster than light, with the possible exception of bad news or gossip, which usually follows its own rules”

## NEW 911 PHONE SYSTEM IN PLACE

The new Patriot CML E911 telephone system has been installed in the Madison County Communication Center. The progressively capable \$82,000 telephone system comes highly recommended by the state, and is in service in a multitude of dispatch centers across the nation as well as a number of PSAP's in the state of Montana..

The system was put into service and “cut over” on June 25th after a nearly two week long installation process. Once training for all Communication Officers took place, the system was placed in service.

Equipment for the center was purchased through a Grant obtained by the Madison County Communication Department from the Montana State Public Service Safety Bureau. Installation and training was provided by Century-Tel.

Patriot CML is a new E911 phone system providing capabilities that the older equipment couldn't match - including instant call retrieval, push button ring-back, comprehensive speed dialing, automatic TTY (hearing impaired caller equipment) conferencing and transferring capabilities and a host of other powerful tools previously unavailable .

PHOTO AT RIGHT: This was the PSAP (Public Service Answering Point) as seen before the 2009 remodel of the Communication Center. The large Motorola Console in the lower left of the photo was removed because parts were not available and the console took up about 1/5 of the floor space available in the center.

PHOTO BELOW: The newly remodeled dispatch office— complete with two identical E911 communication stations, a third supervisors radio and phone answering station and an internet desk / computer station.



In addition to the new C-Soft radio consoles, new E911 phone consoles and new remodel, the dispatch center also acquired two new Bullberry Mapping systems. This system will help with mapping, finding locations throughout the county and will interact with our telephone system to help provide necessary emergency locating of callers by phone number address locaters. Special thanks to Karen Brown and Janet Fortner for getting this system operational.

# Changes in our Communication Department

There have been many important changes in the Communication Center recently. These changes include a complete remodel of the dispatch office allowing us two identical dispatch stations, the addition of a Supervisors phone/radio station (3rd emergency dispatch station), a new Bullberry mapping system, a state of the art \$82,000 Patriot CML 911 phone system and a completely new courthouse radio repeater system installed this past winter.

I realize that change for the sake of change is not good - but I believe we are on the right track and are making alterations that are necessary and will enhance our capabilities and efficiency countywide.

Unfortunately, for those of us who are not exactly fond of changes (me included) there are even more significant and substantial changes on the horizon. To help keep everybody on the same page, the following info will briefly outline some plans for the near future.

**1. New Repeater Towers:** As of Thursday July 16th, we have received an AWARD LETTER DOCUMENT for the installation of the Virginia City Pass Repeater Tower. I am scheduled to have these documents signed by the Commissioners on July 21st @ 3:15PM. Late last month I had similar documents signed for the Sierra Site. We should be starting work on these sites within the next 30 - 60 days. These awards entail approximately \$620,000 in grant money for the two Madison County Repeater Facilities.

**2. Dispatching Changes:** We will be altering our manner of dispatching in the near future. We are currently looking into the number of times we dispatch a page out - and are evaluating ways to reduce the frequency of pages for a call. There are also other changes requested by the Sheriff's Management regarding the manner in which we notify deputies for a response. More to follow - however these changes will probably require extra training sessions.

**3. Memo Book:** A "Memo Book" will be placed in in dispatch that will hold any recent memo's that apply to the dispatch center. The intention is to have the memos readily available for review etc - for a period of 3 months - after which they will be filed into a memo file for record keeping purposes. This book should help to keep us better aware of information that is sent out by me or the Sheriff's Admin.

**4. Reorganization:** We are discussing the mild re-organization of the Communication Center so that we can effectively have a supervisor available in dispatch each day of the week. Considerations include the appointment of a weekend Assistant TAC officer to perform as a Supervisor on weekends, to learn the requirements and responsibilities of being an Assistant TAC Officer and to have available an additional Supervisor for the dispatch center when necessary.

This is an in house, inter-department competitive test.

**5. Portable Emergency Console:** We are having a "portable emergency dispatch console" made up. This console will be a UHF radio and an encoder (pager system) that will be placed in a Pelican Box for mobility purposes. We will then have the ability to use our pager system to alert county first responders, utilize repeaters in the

county and still be moderately functional should our courthouse radios go down, or should the courthouse become untenable for any reason. This console is currently being assembled by Bridger Communications Technicians.

**6. Command Trailer:** The Command Trailer has just returned from Bridger Communications after having additional radio equipment installed. Since it is not appropriate to "scan" Command frequencies at an incident, there was a need to install an additional radio so Incident Commanders using the Command Trailer have the capability to monitor 3 different channels.

Additionally, the Bridger techs are attaching a UHF radio antenna that will have a quick connect for the emergency dispatch radio console described above in item 6—so the Command Trailer can effectively be a mobile dispatch center if necessary.

**7. Dispatch Help:** Starting July 6th, Lynda Holt has begun working Mondays as the Communication Center Dispatcher from 0800-1400. This will allow Janet 6 hours to perform the requirements of TAC Officer, including Validations, Record Keeping and other supervisor responsibilities without having to be interrupted with dispatching needs or walk-up customer needs.

In addition to helping Janet, this move also helps Lynda acquire enough scheduled hours to allow her the opportunity for partial Madison County Health Benefits - an opportunity we also provided to Communications Officer Junie Miles recently when we assigned her an additional shift for the same benefit opportunity.

**8. PSAP Managers Meeting:** Janet Fortner and I attended a PSAP managers meeting that followed the SCMIC meeting in Livingston on July 15th. One of the items we are working on is a process to switch PSAP phone service to another agency in the event of an emergency situation where our phones are down. We will be meeting again in early October to further pursue the means of accomplishing this procedure. Believe it or not, transferring phone service (which is fairly complex in itself) opens a can of worms that becomes increasingly complicated - including how to dispatch the other agencies calls, to whom the calls are sent, documentation and radio procedures and the interoperability of different CAD systems.

**9. Table Repeater and Idaho Interference:** We are in the process of arranging for a helicopter to fly Bridger Techs to the Table Mountain repeater site (@ \$850 an hr.) in order to maintain and repair the repeater and also to change the sub-audible tones so we no longer get bleed over from Idaho. We are hoping to be able to accomplish this task by the end of the month.

**10. Training:** We will be looking at ways to increase our continuing educational training - to better fit the needs of our county after our trainees graduate from the 6 weeks of in house training and the MLEA Academy Training for dispatchers. Currently, other than MLEA, there are no "state standards" and most training is accomplished by agency specific means. More to follow.

Check out the emergency web-site at: [madison.homestead.com](http://madison.homestead.com)