

MD FIRST System Managers Committee

Quarterly Public Meeting

DATE: March 6, 2025

TIME: 10:00 – 11:18 am

LOCATION: 100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032

▪ **Members in Attendance**

- Andrew Cummins (DNR)
- Bill Nutter (Wicomico County)
- Brad Russum (Kent County)
- Brian Wood (MDEM)
- Christine Hamrick (Queen Anne's County)
- Dave Christner (DNR)
- David Larsen (MDOT)
- Dave Tyler (Talbot County)
- Donnae Reedy (MDTA)
- Earl Erickson (FBI)
- Harold Taylor (Howard County)
- Irvin Church (MD DHS)
- Mark Arsenault (MDH)
- Jack Markey (MDEM)
- James Hambright (US BLM)
- John Butts (DNR)
- Justin Hoyer (Adams County, PA)
- Justin Orendorf (Garrett County)
- Mike Himmer (MDTA)
- Nate Ratnofsky (Montgomery County)
- Murray Hunt (DNR)
- Patrick Weber (Johns Hopkins PD)
- Phil Via (Allegany County)
- Randall Cunningham (Harford County)
- Rich Berg (MIEMSS)
- Rick Esenwine (Adams County, PA)
- Robert Larimer (Dorchester County)
- Shawn Haynes (ATF)
- Tim Perry (Wicomico County)
- Tom Gagnon (DHS/CISA)

- Tony Clare (Queen Anne's County)
- Troy Plutschak (Caroline County)
- Wayne Anderson (WSSC)
- Wes Rogers (CISA/ECD)
- Willy Gayle (SHA)

- **Board Support Staff**
 - Brandon Renehan (DoIT/Chairman)
 - Norm Farley (DoIT)
 - Cindy Cole (DoIT)
 - Pat King (DoIT)
 - Justin Ellingwood (DoIT)
 - Jennifer Zambito (DoIT)
 - Ebun Oni (DoIT)
 - Curt Andrich (DoIT)

Call to Order – 10:00 am

Review Minutes from 12/3/2024– Brandon Renehan

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee approves the minutes from the June 5, 2025, meeting.

Moved – Murray Hunt (DNR)

Second – Phil Via (Allegany County)

The vote was taken, and the minutes were approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Proposed New Interop User

US Army Corps of Engineers (UACE) – Represented by James Green

UACE has ~45 users sharing 25 Harris XL-200M multi-band TDMA capable radios. UACE has their own system/channels for their primary radio communications through JTF_NCR network. MD FiRST would only be used as an alternate line of communication when interoperability with State/Local jurisdictions is needed. MD FiRST would be used to communicate with local and state agencies such as MDEM during emergency events such as the Key Bridge collapse, potential flood events and other emergencies.

Expected capacity impact: Minimal due to Interop only usage.

Proposed Motion: System Managers Committee suggests approval of U.S Army Corps of Engineers application to become a Communications Interoperability User on Maryland FiRST.

Moved – Tony Clare (Queen Anne's County)

Second – Murray Hunt (DNR)

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Proposed New Primary User

Bowie State University Police Department

Bowie State UPD has a full-service, 24-hour, 7-day-a-week police department serving Bowie State University with ~30 police officers and approximately 1.5 sq mile patrol area. They currently operate on a UHF repeater system that provides limited off-campus coverage, which is not easily accessible by mutual aid partners that respond to an event on campus. Prince George's County has agreed to allow Bowie State UPD talkgroups to utilize ISSI connection for increased in-building coverage if necessary. Bowie State UPD intends to be interoperable with Prince George's County Police, the City of Bowie Police, MDTA Police, and UMD Police Dept during emergencies and special events.

Expected Capacity Impact: Minimal due to low number of users, talkgroups

The System Managers' Committee recommends the Radio Control Board Bowie State University Police Department application to become a Primary User on MD FiRST.

Moved – Murray Hunt (DNR)

Second – Dave Larsen (MDOT)

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

MD SWIC Introduction – Brandon Renehan

Brandon introduced Jack Markey, MD's new Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) under MDEM.

Jack Markey addressed the group, emphasized building relationships and cooperation of many existing and emerging groups (RCB, DIG, SIEC, etc.) Jack also acknowledged the important role System Managers play for Emergency Communications across the State of Maryland and asked the group to help him understand the challenges and successes they experience so we can all move forward together.

jack.markey@maryland.gov

Project Status Update – Jen Zambito, Brandon Renehan

Jen presented the Project Status. T1 to ethernet conversion phases 1-4, all zones should be cut over by July 1, 2025. The system upgrade starts September 12, 2025. The upgrade has many intricate moving parts that require weeks of preparation and pieces of equipment. Each County should address how many upgrades they actually received vs contractually entitled to via their contracts with Motorola.

Brandon presented the virtualized site controllers. Simulcast cells do require switch over and some cells will be down for a few minutes. MD FiRST will work with the users when it is known which cells will switch over and plan the best time to do it.

Jen presented the Coverage Improvement Program – nine (9) new RF sites are in progress. Bi-directional amplifiers are being added to some buildings such as schools, courthouses, etc., these installations are ongoing. Users should let MD FiRST know if they have a building that may qualify for a bi-directional amplifier. Geo Redundant Primes have been and are being added fiscal 2024 - 2029

Technology Modernization Projects – Jen Zambito, Brandon Renehan

Jen and Brandon presented Technology Modernization ongoing Projects.

Coverage & Capacity Improvement – Brandon Renehan

Brandon presented the Project Status, Coverage Improvement and Channel Capacity Project.

Resiliency Improvement Projects – Jen Zambito

Jen presented updates on the Geo Redundant Primes and Fiber Backhaul Projects.

Operations and Maintenance Status Update – Brandon Renehan

Brandon emphasized the need to plan and budget for equipment that will become obsolete. Motorola has announced that MCC 7500 Consoles are supported through the year 2030, user-agencies should plan/budget to replace their consoles before they go out of support. End of support of GTR-8000 base stations announced for end of 2032. DoIT to evaluate options for replacing these base station radios at the ~150 MD FiRST sites, all new site equipment purchases will include D-series equipment. In the near future the Everbridge Application will be used for planned and emergency notifications, users/recipients will see some testing before MD FiRST notifications are switched over.

MD FiRST System Usage in Recent Special Events – Brandon Renehan

Brandon discussed how MD FiRST has become an integral part of communications in the National Capitol Region, especially since the addition of the DC Site. Events such as the Election Certification on January 6, Presidential Inauguration on January 20, and the Potomac River midair collision on January 29 saw extensive use of MD FiRST resources, providing First Responders in and around DC with capabilities that were previously not possible.

Open Discussion/Good of the Order

Election of Vice-Chair for a one-year term. Murray Hunt is the current Vice Chair and has volunteered to be Vice Chair again. The floor is open for nominations. No other nominations were made, Brandon nominated Murray Hunt for an additional one-year term as Vice-Chair.

Moved – Brandon Renehan (DoIT)

Second – Dave Christner (DNR)

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Randy Cunningham – Provided an update on CMARC. Randy announced the Motobridge system has been decommissioned. CMARC considering end-of-life of sites 2 & 3 of the trunked radio system (site 1 will remain operational as it is Harford County's primary system). CMARC plans to work with MD SWIC / MD FiRST to discuss the potential of integrating /replicating some of CMARC's capabilities on the MD FiRST system.

General Discussion: Multiple participants discussed Delaware's timelines to cut over to their new system, progress of their subscribers in upgrading to TDMA. Consensus was that DE's cutover was being pushed out to the later part of 2025.

Closing/Adjournment

Proposed Motion - I move that we adjourn and reconvene on June 5, 2025

Moved – Murray Hunt (DNR)

Second – Phil Via (Allegany County)

The vote was taken, passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 11:18 am.


Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0


Chairman System Manager Committee APPROVAL:

(Signature & Date)

 12/15/2025

Director of Board APPROVAL:

(Signature & Date)

 for Norm Farley
12/15/2025