



DATE: June 4th, 2026

TIME: 10:02 am – 11:48 am

LOCATION: Virtual

MD FIRST System Managers Committee

Quarterly Public Meeting

Members in Attendance

- Adam Jorjorian (DC)
- Andrew Cummins (DNR)
- Austin Pencinger (AMTRAK PD)
- Bill Nutter Sr (Wicomico County)
- Brian J. Wood (MDEM)
- Andrew Burnett (USSS)
- Chris Thompson (St Mary's County)
- Dave Green (Carroll County)
- David Christner (DNR)
- David Krass (AMTRAK PD)
- David Larsen (MDOT)
- David Tyler (Talbot County)
- Dylan Griffith (Cecil County)
- Eric Morton (Wicomico County)
- Greg Orr (Frederick County)
- Gregory Lewis (ESVA)
- Harold Taylor (Howard County)
- Jack Markey (MDEM)
- James Hambright (BLM)
- John Coll (SHA)
- Justin Orendorf-GCEM (Garrett County)
- Mark Allen (MDOT)
- Mark Arsenault (MDH)
- Mark Schaefer (MTA)

- Matthew Meekins (Dorchester County)
- Michael Boston (St John's College)
- Michael Fondjo (SHA)
- Michael Harrod (Howard County)
- Michael Lamb (Loudoun County)
- Mike Himmer (MDTA)
- Murray Hunt (DNR)
- Nate Ratnofsky (Montgomery County)
- Nick Bonturi (Montgomery County)
- Phillip Via (Allegany County)
- Randall Cunningham (Harford County)
- Rick Esenwine (Adams County, PA)
- Robert Larimer (Dorchester County)
- Steve Smith (Garrett County)
- Tim Perry (Wicomico County)
- Tony Clare (Queen Anne's County)
- Valerie Hawkins (Carroll County)
- Wes Rogers (CISA/ECD)
- William Rosebrough (DC)
- Yann Tamdem (Howard County)

Applicant / Guest Representatives

- Barbara Harshman (Franklin County, PA)
- Patrick O'Mara (Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall)
- Chuck Matheson (US ARMY)

Committee Support Staff

- Brandon Renehan (DoIT/Chairman)
- Pat King (DoIT)
- Justin Ellingwood (DoIT)
- Ebun Oni (DoIT)
- Cesar Leon (DoIT)
- Sean Javins (DoIT)
- Jennifer Zambito (DoIT)
- Richard Addis (DoIT)

Call to Order – 10:02 AM

- Brandon Renehan opened the second-quarter System Managers / System Users Committee meeting.

- The meeting was changed to virtual-only after DGS reported that 100 Community Place had no power or internet access and advised staff to telework. The MD FiRST team plans to identify a backup location for future meetings if the Crownsville site becomes unavailable.

System Users Committee

MD FiRST Interop Resources / Region 20 Interoperability Template

Presenter: Pat King

- Pat King reviewed the MD FiRST interoperability resources available to member agencies, including MD CALL / MD TAC, MD EVENT, MD LAW, and MD MARINE. Access to MD FiRST trunked resources requires system membership, authorization, and proper radio programming.
- NIFOG interoperability resources remain available subject to FCC licensing and NIFOG restrictions. Most are simplex, line-of-sight resources, while some are repeater-capable for specific events. Planners were reminded to use the ICS 205 and ICS 217A when identifying and assigning communications resources.
- The Region 20 interoperability template combines MD FiRST, deployable, and NIFOG resources. Region 20 continues to encourage agencies to include the template in applicable first-responder radio programming.
- Use of MD FiRST interoperability resources is encouraged, but the resources must be coordinated before use. MJOC manages MD CALL, MD EVENT, and MD LAW resources. DNR Dispatch / Natural Resources Police manages the MD MARINE resources.

Upcoming Major Events Utilizing MD FiRST

Presenters: Pat King and Brandon Renehan

- The committee reviewed the large number of regional events scheduled for June and July, including America 250 activities and other major events expected to draw large crowds.
- MD FiRST has reserved interoperability resources to support these events if local resources are not sufficient or operations expand beyond a local coverage area. Members were reminded that a quiet talkgroup may still be reserved for another event.
- Requests must continue to be coordinated through the appropriate control point to avoid conflicts. DNR is also tracking reservations for MD MARINE resources through a separate event calendar.

System Managers Committee

Review Minutes from March 5th, 2026 – Brandon Renehan

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee approves the minutes from the March 5th, 2026, meeting.

Moved – Murray Hunt

Second – Tony Clare

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

New Member Consideration

Proposed New Interoperability User: Franklin County (PA) Department of Emergency Services

Presenter: Brandon Renehan

- Franklin County requested Interoperability User status to support multi-agency coordination, responder safety, and reliable communications during mutual-aid incidents and large-scale events, especially with neighboring Frederick County.
- The application represents 21 fire departments and 16 EMS departments. Approximately 100 radios are initially expected to access MD FiRST, and all proposed radios are TDMA capable.
- Barbara Harshman, Franklin County E-911 Communications Coordinator, participated in the discussion. Expected capacity impact was considered negligible because use is expected primarily during mutual-aid or interoperability events.

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee recommends the Radio Control Board approve Franklin County (PA) Department of Emergency Services' application to become an Interoperability User on MD FiRST.

Moved – Murray Hunt

Second – Greg Orr

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Franklin County was asked to participate in the June 17, 2026 Radio Control Board meeting for the next step in the approval process.

Proposed New Limited-Primary User: Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Directorate of Emergency Services

Presenter: Brandon Renehan

- Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall (JBM-HH) Directorate of Emergency Services requested Limited-Primary status. The organization provides law enforcement, fire suppression, and EMS services for JBM-HH and Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., and supports personnel and visitors associated with Arlington National Cemetery.
- JBM-HH works with neighboring jurisdictions through mutual-aid relationships and participates in the MWCOG interoperability community. The request would support joint operations, major events, continuity-of-government missions, and backup communications when the installation's primary LMR system is not sufficient.
- The application requests four talkgroups - two for police and two for fire/EMS - and approximately 400 TDMA-capable radios. Use is expected to be limited and event-driven rather than day-to-day.
- Patrick O'Mara explained that MD FiRST would improve interoperability with regional partners. Chuck Matheson added that reliable communications back to the base dispatch center are important for protective details and other missions that travel throughout the region.
- Expected capacity impact was considered minimal. Jennifer Zambito confirmed that Chuck Matheson would be added to the June 17 Radio Control Board meeting invitation.

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee recommends the Radio Control Board approve the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Directorate of Emergency Services' application to become a Limited-Primary User on MD FIRST.

Moved – Michael Harrod

Second – David Larsen

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Project Status Update – Sean Javins

Geo-Redundant Primes:

- Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County geo-redundant prime cutovers are complete. Garrett County remains in procurement. The team is working around service-contract limitations by prioritizing equipment purchases, which have the longer lead time, while the required services follow.
- Future geo-redundant prime work remains planned through the outyears for Cecil County, the Alle-Gar cell, Worcester/Somerset, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Howard County.

New RF Sites:

- Patapsco permitting and stakeholder coordination continue, with construction targeted for spring 2027 if the remaining steps stay on schedule.
- Cumberland completed its community meeting with supportive feedback. Permits are conditionally approved, contractor procurement is the current long-lead item, and the LMR equipment is already available.
- Queenstown is moving into environmental due diligence; Barton is in contractor review/award; Bretton Woods has permits approved and work is scheduled to begin June 16; New Germany State Park - 1 is moving through pre-construction work with a July 9 public meeting at Grantsville VFD.
- St. Michaels, Cambridge, Accident, and Burtonsville remain in various stages of MOU development, due diligence, permitting, procurement, and LMR planning.
- Jennifer Zambito clarified that the budget for New Market, New Germany State Park - 2, and Jericho Park has been approved, with FY27 funding becoming available July 1. Preliminary work is already underway for New Market because of ongoing coverage concerns.

Bi-Directional Amplifier (BDA) Projects:

- MD Port Administration is moving toward its bid walk; MDEM Headquarters remains in TORFP planning; the Frederick Law Enforcement Center purchase order is in process; and North Dorchester Middle School funding was reported as approved, with planning continuing.

County Channel Capacity:

- DoIT continues working with Motorola engineering on additional capacity for Anne Arundel, Howard, and Harford counties. The purchase-order scope is being refined to use D-Series equipment to avoid purchase of equipment that already has an end-of-support timeline.

Fiber Backhaul Projects:

- Assateague-to-Berlin is complete and integrated. Denton-to-Federalburg and Still Pond-to-Chestertown are complete, with remaining integration activity being coordinated as needed.

- Sudlersville-Massey-Galena, Carole Highlands, Smallwood-Douglas Point, Indian Head-Smallwood, and Lusby-Leonardtown MSP remain in implementation. Mt. Savage is being updated to accommodate new pole attachments.

MD FiRST Operations Status Update – Brandon Renehan

System Performance Statistics:

- Monthly system activity is again in the mid-to-upper three million push-to-talk range and is expected to increase during the summer event season. The system is approaching 140,000 total subscribers.
- April recorded 24 busy events; 17 were associated with the April 23 SARX event, where a small number of FDMA radios consumed additional channel capacity. May recorded 18 busy events, all at sites already identified for channel-capacity improvements.
- The Genesis software upgrade temporarily broke the interoperability PTT report. Genesis developers are working on a fix, and the historical data is expected to be backfilled once the report is restored.

Recent and Upcoming Maintenance Activities:

- RF-site preventive maintenance concluded May 27, 2026, with all 144 RF sites complete. Console preventive maintenance continues through local coordination with the applicable console-site owners.
- Core-site UPS replacement work is complete for the previously scheduled core locations and BWI. The Hagerstown prime and subsite UPS units were replaced May 29.
- Recent site events included Still Pond on March 6, Massey on March 18, Safety Drive on April 1, Dan's Rock on April 22, Mar Lu Ridge on April 30, Route 439 on May 7, and the Washington County cell on May 25. Causes included microwave connectivity, APM work, RF power-coupler replacement, commercial-power/generator issues, site re-optimization, transmit-antenna replacement, and a UPS failure.

MD FiRST Help Desk:

- The MD FiRST Help Desk is live for non-emergency support at mdfirsthelpdesk@maryland.gov. Agencies were encouraged to route subscriber provisioning, alias changes, account support, codeplug/programming requests, site/coverage issues, and other routine support through the centralized Help Desk.
- A 24/7 phone-routing solution using OnPage is still being developed. Once active, calls will route to Help Desk personnel during normal business hours and to the scheduled on-call responder after hours.

Coverage Investigations - Frederick / Washington Counties:

- DoIT and Motorola continued investigating intermittent talk-in and coverage complaints in Frederick and Washington counties. Tower climbs, antenna/line checks, MSP ride-alongs, and a Motorola subject-matter expert review were used to narrow the issue.
- The Motorola review found no evidence that trooper-vehicle equipment or nearby cellular sites were causing the reported problems. The team did reproduce the intermittent talk-in issue in the field, which shifted the investigation toward receive-side noise and RF-site conditions.
- A configuration issue was found at Mar Lu Ridge. The site was taken offline, recommissioned, and re-optimized with the correct settings. DoIT is checking other nearby sites for similar configuration issues.
- Next steps include receiving Motorola's final report, analyzing collected noise-floor data, evaluating antenna replacements at selected sites, accelerating the New Market site, and reviewing whether Frederick County would benefit from a future simulcast-cell configuration. Washington County will be considered as part of the related coverage review.

Juniper Router Migration:

- Core-site migration from the legacy Motorola routers to Juniper is complete. Remote RF prime and subsite migration will follow after equipment procurement, with field work expected to extend from late 2026 into 2027.
- Remote router replacements will require brief simulcast-cell impacts. DoIT will coordinate timing with affected county partners before the work is performed.

Motorola Managed Detection and Response (MDR) Deployment:

- MDR is replacing SECMON as the security platform of record for the Motorola RNI environment. Zones 1 and 2 were complete as of May 29. Zones 5 and 6 were underway with a June 12 target, and Zones 3 and 4 were scheduled for June 15-26 with a zone-controller roll planned for June 24.
- DoIT will continue using its own managed security portfolio for applicable CEN environments. County partners may be offered MDR as Motorola maintenance agreements are renewed.

Virtualized Prime Site Controller Cutovers:

- Six of the 22 simulcast cells have completed the virtualized-prime conversion: Wicomico, Worcester/Somerset, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Charles, and Calvert. Sixteen simulcast cells remain.
- Future cutovers will cause brief simulcast-cell outages. Most completed cutovers have produced only a 20-30 second impact, although troubleshooting can extend the outage. DoIT is coordinating dates and times directly with affected counties.
- Sixteen of 47 conventional site controllers were also complete, leaving 31. Conventional-site-controller testing requires temporary disconnection from the cores to confirm console operation but is not expected to affect normal radio operations.

Genesis Upgrade:

- The latest Genesis release introduced a new web-based dashboard with agency-specific activity views and real-time visibility into radio registration and authentication issues.
- A known software issue is preventing some radio-location and trunking-call activity from displaying correctly on the map view. A ticket is open with Genesis developers.

Moving Forward: TDMA-only vs TDMA/FDMA – Brandon Renehan

- MD FiRST currently uses three Dynamic Dual Mode (DDM) channels at each RF site so talkgroups can operate in TDMA or FDMA based on the least-capable radio participating in the call.
- FDMA uses twice the talkpath capacity of TDMA, and one FDMA radio can force the active talkgroup into FDMA mode. This increases loading and the likelihood of busy signals, particularly because only a limited number of channels are DDM enabled.
- DDM licensing is also a significant cost in the D-Series replacement program. At approximately \$13,500 per channel across roughly 150 sites and three DDM channels per site, the system-wide cost would exceed \$6 million.
- No decision has been made to move MD FiRST to TDMA-only. DoIT will first survey stakeholders, evaluate available Genesis/system reporting, identify remaining FDMA-only radios, and confirm whether TDMA-capable radios are programmed correctly.
- Jack Markey noted that codeplug configuration is as important as radio capability. Greg Orr advised that Frederick County is largely prepared for a TDMA transition and supported setting a future target date to help agencies complete their planning.

- Jennifer Zambito emphasized that this is a long-term planning discussion, likely extending into 2027. Cost savings will not take priority over interoperability, and agencies will be given time to identify and address remaining FDMA dependencies.

Good of the Order / Open Discussion

Site Security Working Group:

- Murray Hunt provided an update on the Site Security Working Group. The goal is to develop a practical baseline of tower-site security best practices that agencies can use as a starting point or add to existing policies.
- The working group is collecting existing tower-site security policies and related practices from state, local, and federal partners. Agencies willing to share policies or participate were asked to contact Murray Hunt at murray.hunt@maryland.gov.
- Mike Himmer and Phillip Via volunteered to participate during the meeting. Additional volunteers are welcome.

Open Floor Updates:

- Frederick County: Greg Orr reported that the county plans to begin using MD FiRST on August 1 as a backup radio system and in areas where MD FiRST provides better coverage. Neighboring agencies should ensure the FDK zone is current in their codeplugs and that their radio IDs have been submitted to MD FiRST.
- Frederick County also plans to activate TDMA on its system during the summer while initially maintaining DDM support for FDMA radios. At the Gambrill site, the county plans generator and shelter work and asked state partners to identify any inactive equipment that must be retained before old equipment is removed.
- Harford County: Randall Cunningham advised that the county's 2026 upgrade is scheduled for June and will include a short period of site trunking around June 15-16. Direct notifications were being sent to affected partners.
- Town Halls: Jennifer Zambito thanked public-safety partners who have attended recent community meetings and encouraged continued participation in upcoming tower-site town halls. A visible public-safety presence helps address community concerns and supports later procurement approvals.
- Training: Harold Taylor discussed forming a regional forum to share documentation and resources for radio-user and radio-technician training. Jack Markey noted that training content should reflect the operational resources and interoperability environment used in the National Capital Region.
- National Capital Region programming: Jack Markey shared a coordinated annual programming schedule being used by the NCR public-safety communications community. Greg Orr stated that Frederick County plans to align its annual radio-programming cycle with that schedule.
- Federal P25 IDs: Wes Rogers reported that CISA is reorganizing federal P25 ID assignments and establishing updated ID blocks, including a new block for National Guard users, to reduce duplication and improve management. Brandon Renehan agreed to provide the current MD FiRST federal radio-ID list to support the coordination effort.
- Sussex County: Robert Larimer advised that Sussex County, Delaware, is preparing changes to some EMS operational channels and naming. Agencies that interoperate with Sussex County were encouraged to coordinate directly for current information.
- Brandon Renehan and Jennifer Zambito invited members to recommend future meeting topics or information they would like the committee to cover.

No Scheduled Business

There was no additional scheduled business for the System Users Committee at this meeting.

Closing / Adjournment

Proposed Motion: I move that we adjourn and reconvene on September 3rd, 2026 – Brandon Renehan

Moved – Phillip Via

Second – Tony Clare

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 am.

Chairman System Manager Committee APPROVAL:

Signature: Brandon Renehan Date: 09/08/2026

Director of Board APPROVAL:

Signature: Jennifer Zambito -DoIT- Date: 09/10/2026