



DATE: March 5th, 2026

TIME: 10:01 – 11:51 am

LOCATION: 100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032

MD FIRST System Managers Committee

Quarterly Public Meeting

Members in Attendance

- Andrew Cummins (DNR)
- Austin Pencinger (Amtrak Police)
- Dave Christner (DNR)
- Dave Larsen (MDOT)
- James Hamilton (Worcester County)
- John Butts (DNR)
- Matthew Houck (Montgomery County)
- Mike Himmer (MDTA)
- Murray Hunt (DNR)
- Nate Ratnofsky (Montgomery County)
- Nick Crawford (Allegany County)
- Phil Via (Allegany County)
- Tony Clare (Queen Anne's County)
- Tim Perry (Wicomico County)
- Wayne Anderson (WSSC)
- Kelly Brauning (JHPD)
- Irvin Church (MD DHS)
- Dave Green (Carroll County)
- James Hambright (BLM)
- Justin Hoyer (York County)
- Adam Jorjorian (DC)
- Mike Keiser (Ocean City)
- Robbie Larimer (Dorchester County)
- Douglas Lindsey Jr (BWI)
- Bradley Linkey (MD DHS)
- Jeremy Magorka (Anne Arundel County)
- Matthew Meekins (Dorchester County)
- Eric Morton (Wicomico County)
- Bill Nutter Sr (Wicomico County)

- Justin Orendorf (Garrett County)
- Greg Orr (Frederick County)
- David Tyler (Talbot County)
- Phillip Via (Allegany County)
- Gary Zamerski (MSP)
- Adam Karsin (US HHS)
- Michael Harrod (Howard County)
- Sean O'Connor (Talbot County)

Board Support Staff

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

Call to Order – 10:01 AM

System Users Committee

MD FiRST Interop Resources

Presenter: Brandon Renehan

- MR. Renehan reviewed the MD FiRST interoperability resources available to member agencies, including MD CALL / MD TAC, MD EVENT, MD LAW, and MD MARINE zones.
- Use of the interoperability resources is encouraged, but users were reminded that resources must be coordinated or requested before use. MJOC manages and coordinates the MD CALL, MD EVENT, and MD LAW zones, while DNR Dispatch / Natural Resources Police manages and coordinates the MD MARINE zone.
- Requests can be made by phone, email, or a radio call on MD CALL or MD MARINE CALL. Brandon Renehan also noted that the applicable SOPs are available on the MD FiRST website.
- Discussion emphasized the importance of consistent naming in subscriber radios and codeplugs so field users can locate the same resources during incidents. Members also discussed the need to reserve resources before use, to identify whether assigned resources are encrypted or unencrypted, and to continue educating dispatch and field users on the proper coordination process.
- Mr. Renehan will continue working with MJOC and DNR to reinforce expectations and develop practical best practices for assigning and managing interoperability resources.

System Managers Committee

Review Minutes from December 4th, 2025 – Brandon Renehan

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee approves the minutes from the December 4, 2025, meeting.

Moved – Gary C. Zamerski

Second – Nate Ratnofsky

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

New Member Consideration

Proposed New Limited-Primary User: Howard County, MD

Presenter: Brandon Renehan

- Howard County, represented by Harold Taylor, requested Limited-Primary status on MD FiRST and seven dedicated backup talkgroups.
- Howard County has been an MD FiRST interoperability user for many years and requested the dedicated talkgroups for backup use if the county P25 system becomes inoperable, during scheduled maintenance or exercises, and in rare circumstances where Howard County public safety users operate outside county system coverage and land mobile radio is the only practical communications path back to Howard County.
- The talkgroups would support Howard County Fire and Rescue Services, Howard County Police, Howard County Sheriff's Office, Howard County Department of Corrections, Howard County Recreation and Parks / Park Rangers, and the Howard County Technology and Communications Radio Group.
- Howard County currently has approximately 4,000 radios active on MD FiRST, and the expectation is that the radio count will not materially change because the radios already have MD FiRST interoperability access. The backup talkgroups would be made available to dispatchers through appropriate console or radio access.
- Expected capacity impact was reviewed. Brandon Renehan noted that the Howard County cell is on the higher end of utilization and that channel-capacity additions are already in progress. Given the emergency-backup purpose and the alternative of an entire county's public safety operations losing communications, the capacity impact was considered negligible during day-to-day use and acceptable during an emergency backup event.

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee recommends the Radio Control Board approve Howard County, MD's application to become a Limited-Primary User on MD FiRST.

Moved – Murray Hunt

Second – Phil Via

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Proposed New Limited-Primary User: United States Secret Service

Presenter: Brandon Renehan

- The United States Secret Service requested Limited-Primary membership on MD FiRST to enhance interoperability with state and local public safety partners.
- USSS requested three dedicated encrypted talkgroups for coordination of Special Operations and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) teams. The talkgroups would be included in the USSS PACE plan, improve long-range communications for unified command, and support coordination with state, local, and federal UAS and counter-UAS operations.
- USSS also intends to use MD FiRST interoperability zones and may seek talkgroup sharing agreements with Maryland State Police and other MD FiRST primary or limited-primary users.
- The application described an interoperability radio cache of approximately 150 portable radios and approximately 25 mobile radios for the mobile command post program. The radios are primarily APX 8000 units, TDMA capable, and use P25 IDs from the Region 20 ID plan.
- USSS confirmed that the proposed use would be event-driven and not day-to-day. Examples discussed included major events or protective details in Maryland, where connectivity to state and local partners is needed.
- Expected capacity impact was considered minimal due to the low number of radios and the non-routine, event-driven nature of use.

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee recommends the Radio Control Board approve United States Secret Service application to become a Limited-Primary User on MD FiRST.

Moved – Robert Crawford (Federal Air Marshals)

Second – Murray Hunt (DNR) and Adam Karsin (HHS)

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Proposed New Limited-Primary User: Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division

Presenter: Brandon Renehan

- The Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division, represented by Special Agent Charles Matheson, requested interoperable and Limited-Primary access to MD FiRST.
- DACID is a federal law enforcement organization responsible for investigating felony crimes where the U.S. Army and/or Department of Defense are a party of interest. The Washington Field Office is geographically responsible for investigations in Virginia, the District of Columbia, Maryland, West Virginia, and Delaware.
- DACID is an active participant in the MWCOG Interoperability Subcommittee and has interoperability agreements with several counties in and around the National Capital Region.

- The application requested two dedicated talkgroups for law enforcement operations where the agency's primary LMR coverage is degraded, along with access to MD FiRST interoperability resources for coordination with authorized Maryland-based law enforcement partners.
- DACID expects to use approximately 120 radios, including APX NEXT, APX 8000, and APX 8500 radios. All radios are TDMA capable.
- DACID confirmed the talkgroups would not be used for day-to-day operations, but may be used sporadically for Maryland investigations or urgent law enforcement operations when agents need reliable communications with dispatch and partner agencies.
- Expected capacity impact was considered negligible for interoperability use and low for limited-primary use, given the limited number of radios and rare-use circumstances.

Proposed Motion: The System Managers Committee recommends the Radio Control Board approve Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division application to become a Limited-Primary User on MD FiRST.

Moved – Murray Hunt

Second – Nate Ratnofsky; Gary C. Zamerski also seconded

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

2026 Vice Chair Election - March 2026

- Per the RCB SOP governing the System Managers Committee, the Vice-Chairman is elected by the Committee to serve a one-year term.
- Murray Hunt (DNR) was serving as the current Vice-Chairman and confirmed he was willing to continue serving. No other nominations were offered.
- Justin Ellingwood nominated Murray Hunt to continue serving as Vice-Chairman for 2026.

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Yea – All

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Project Status Update – Sean Javins

T1-to-Ethernet conversion:

- Phases 1 through 4 are live for operational use. Cleanup remains ongoing through March 31, 2026, with final documentation due from Motorola by March 31.

Virtualized Site Controller Effort:

- Motorola support for current GCP-based site controllers ends after System Release A2025.X, so MD FiRST must transition simulcast prime and conventional dispatch-site controllers to virtualized site controllers by approximately 2027 to support the A2026 upgrade.
- Motorola began installations in November 2025. Wicomico completed cutover on February 25, 2026, and the Worcester/Somerset cell completed cutover on March 4, 2026. Brief simulcast-cell outages occur during cutovers.

Geo-redundant primes:

- Anne Arundel County go-live was scheduled for March 10, 2026, and Baltimore County go-live was scheduled for April 8, 2026. Garrett County procurement is in process; Cecil County funding was requested for FY27.
- Additional outyear requests include the Allegany cell, Worcester/Somerset cell, Montgomery County cell, Prince George's cell, and Howard County cell.

New RF Sites:

- Received an update on current RF-site activity. Multiple projects remain in planning, permitting, procurement, or pre-construction phases, including Patapsco, Cumberland, Queenstown, Barton, Bretton Woods, New Germany State Park, St. Michaels, Cambridge, Accident, and Burtonsville.

New RF Sites – FY27:

- Funding was requested for FY27 sites in New Market/Frederick County, New Germany State Park/Garrett County, and Jericho Park/Prince George's County.

Bi-Directional Amplifier (BDA) Projects:

- Dorchester County PSAP is live for operational use, while MD Port Administration, MDEM Headquarters, Frederick Law Enforcement Center, and North Dorchester Middle School remain in planning, procurement, or funding stages.

County channel capacity:

- Purchase orders are in place for capacity expansion in Howard, Harford, and Anne Arundel counties. The scope was adjusted to utilize D-Series equipment, and frequency planning/licensing work continues to support future capacity needs.

Fiber backhaul projects:

- Ongoing fiber backhaul work intended to improve redundancy and reduce reliance on microwave where practical. Active work continues across several Eastern Shore, Central Maryland, and Southern Maryland paths; Mt. Savage remains in re-engineering.

MD FiRST Operations Status Update - Brandon Renehan**System Performance Statistics:**

- System performance data for December 2025 through February 2026. The system reported 137,553 total subscribers, including 35,610 MD FiRST primary users and 101,943 interoperability-only users.
- Channel-capacity planning remains focused on Anne Arundel, Howard, and Harford counties, with Anne Arundel identified as the highest current priority. Busy events were reviewed in context with total airtime and overall system traffic.
- Call volume and interoperability push-to-talk activity continue to trend upward. October call-volume data from the prior meeting was revised after Genesis recovered approximately one day of missing data.

Recent and Upcoming Maintenance Activities:

- RF site preventive maintenance began December 8, 2025. As of the meeting, 79 of 144 RF sites were complete, and the schedule was expected to continue through late April.
- Core site UPS replacements are complete at Pikesville, Hagerstown, Easton, Elkton, and BWI. World Trade Center will be addressed separately, with spare parts available from the completed replacements.
- Frederick County coverage work continues, including tower climbs, antenna checks, an MSP Frederick Barracks ride-along, and engagement with Motorola's interference subject-matter expert. FY27 funding has also been requested for a new site at New Market.
- Miscellaneous site issues reviewed included the February 16 Tollgate RF subsite outage in Harford County and Fair Hill transmit antenna alignment corrections completed on December 9.

Virtualized Prime Site Controller Cutovers:

- MD FiRST has 22 simulcast cells requiring conversion. Wicomico County completed on February 25 and Worcester/Somerset completed on March 4, leaving 20 simulcast cells remaining. Anne Arundel County was scheduled for March 11 at 0300 hours and Baltimore County for April 8 at 0300 hours. Both Anne Arundel and Baltimore are migrating to geo-redundant primes, which require additional testing and may involve multiple impacts during the off-peak testing window.
- There are 47 conventional site controllers at dispatch sites. Salisbury Barracks completed on February 25 and Princess Anne Barracks completed on March 4, leaving 45 conventional site controllers remaining. Brandon Renehan noted that the conventional-site controller cutovers should not impact operations, though testing requires disconnecting the console site from the cores to confirm console functionality.

Juniper Router Migration:

- Motorola S6000 and GGM8000 routers are reaching end of life and must be migrated to Juniper routers. The migration is covered by existing System Upgrade Agreements and does not add cost to the State or counties.
- Core-site router migration is scheduled for mid-March through early April. Zone controller rolls are scheduled for Zone 1 on March 17 and March 19, Zone 3 on March 24 and March 26, and Zone 5 on March 31 and April 2. Remote-site migration will follow the core sites, with the broader schedule expected to continue into 2027.

Motorola Maintenance Agreement / Contract Update:

- The new MD FiRST Motorola Maintenance and System Upgrade Contract was approved by the Board of Public Works on November 19, 2025. The contract covers Motorola proprietary and situationally proprietary MD FiRST infrastructure and includes four system upgrades over the ten-year term.
- Personnel changes under the new maintenance contract include Russ Jones serving as the new Motorola CSM/System Manager for MD FiRST and Richard Addis joining the DoIT MD FiRST team as a contractual employee.
- The Radio Communications Master Contract 2025 renewal remains in progress, with the current contract extended through June 2026. Brandon Renehan clarified that radio purchases and programming services remain available through the two-way contract while certain implementation services are limited until the new contract vehicle is in place.

New Security Monitoring: Motorola MDR:

- Motorola is transitioning customers from SECMON to its ActiveEye Managed Detection and Response (MDR) platform. The MD FiRST team selected MDR for the Motorola proprietary RNI environment to reduce risk on the mission-critical voice network.
- DoIT/MD FiRST will continue using its own managed security portfolio for applicable CEN/subnet environments. County partners may need to consider MDR or comparable security options as maintenance contracts are renewed.

New Initiatives:

- Wi-Fi device programming is being piloted in state buildings connected through SwGI. The Crownsville pilot is successful, though a device-programmer PC is currently required on each subnet where Wi-Fi programming is deployed.
- Genesis Provisioning Manager interface enhancements are now expected in Q2 2026 and will support authorized remote radio changes with access partitioned by agency.
- Justin Ellingwood reviewed the Cloudflare Zero Trust Network Access pilot as the likely replacement path for FortiGate SSL VPN, which is being sunset in a future FortiOS release.

MD FiRST Help Desk:

- The MD FiRST Help Desk is live for non-emergency requests at mdfirsthelpdesk@maryland.gov and routes requests to the appropriate MD FiRST staff to reduce reliance on individual inboxes.
- Since the January launch, the help desk processed 109 internal support requests and 57 external inquiries between January and February. A dedicated Teams voice support line is planned following DoIT's transition to Microsoft Teams.

Good of the Order / Open Discussion

- Tower site security and access-control best practices: Murray Hunt (DNR) raised the need for a consistent best-practice framework for tower-site access, particularly for vendors and contractors.
- Discussion included vendor vetting, background checks, security-awareness training, call-first access procedures, cameras/dispatch monitoring, contractor escorting, shared-site responsibilities, and intrusion-detection options.
- Brandon Renehan and Jennifer Zambito agreed that a working group should be formed to draft tower-site security and access-control best practices. Brandon Renehan noted that an announcement would be sent inviting interested agencies and partners to participate.
- Howard County update: Howard County noted that a final update to allied partners was expected within approximately three to four weeks, including changes and additions related to fire DDRs and other updates.
- Montgomery County update: Montgomery County noted an upcoming meeting scheduled for March 25, 2026, at the BWI Marriott at 8:30 am.

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 June 4th, 2026 – Brandon Renehan

Moved – Gary C. Zamerski
Second – Phil Via

The vote was taken, and the motion was approved.
Yea – All
Nay – 0
Abstain – 0

The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 am.

Chairman System Manager Committee APPROVAL:

Signature: Brandon Renshan Date: Jun 10, 2026

(Acting) Director of Board APPROVAL:

Signature: Jennifer Zambito -DoIT- Date: Jun 9, 2026