



## **MEGA Coverage!**

(Written March, 2001)

In our on-going updates on the new 800-Megahertz radio system, we will continue to discuss various facets of this communications tool. The system will not be on-line for a couple of years, so this is the perfect time to introduce it to those who will be using it. Last month, you learned about “trunking.” This month, the topic is Coverage.

When it comes to coverage area, the new radios operate in the same way a wireless phone does. When you pick up your wireless phone to call someone across town, you are connected immediately, and have clear reception. The network area of the 800 MHz system will also cover the entire valley. A unit in Anthem will be able to communicate with a unit in Ahwatukee, while a unit in Goodyear will be able to talk to another in Apache Junction. This capability is due to a large number of transmitter sites, which send the signal over the entire valley; this is called "**simulcast.**"

Not only will the PFD be able to communicate with other Valley fire departments, but they will also communicate with other agencies. Currently, public safety radio frequencies cover more than 10 different megahertz bands – with each agency using a different band. That would mean you might have to carry 10 different radios to make communication possible! The new radio system will put all participating public safety agencies into once common frequency band, therefore enabling them all to communicate with a single radio! This will give the incident commander an easier way to disseminate vital and urgent information without delays.