

"EXTRA EXTRA Read all about it!"

Latest 800MHz Radio News Update!

- Late 80's early 90's FCC began advising public safety they would have to move from the VHF frequencies. The target dates were extended several times. The new date set by the FCC for getting off the VHF frequencies is 2013.
- Radio System manufacturers began planning and researching state of the art radio system technology in preparation for the move onto new frequencies.
- The 800 MHz, Trunked, Project 25, Digital Radio Systems became the state of the art radio systems available and were touted as the best available at the time the City chose that system....wide area coverage, excellent interoperability between public safety agencies, with the ability for cities to add their other municipal departments onto the system saving taxpayer dollars.
- When the fire department transition team formed and began to research and test the new radio system under simulated hazard zones following standard operational procedures, we found the radio system was not as effective as the fire service needed inside structures. The system worked sufficient during EMS incidents (approx. 80% of our call volume), but inside structures in hazard zones (approx. 20%) the system did not adequately meet our needs.
- We performed more in-depth testing and found the trunked/repeated system did not meet our (fire department) needs due to the particular way the fire service operates on the scene of a hazard zone.
- We are leaning towards waiting for several years - staying connected with the technology - and determine later the best system to use when ff's are operating in the hazard zone.
- The system we have now is very safe - our (old) current system does not have the inbuilding coverage weakness that the trunked repeated systems have.
- **We will tune-up our current infrastructure - make it last through the next several years, allowing us more time to make the best decision.**
- Mesa has operated on a repeated system for many years, but with only three channels. The coverage in their old system had many holes and was not adequate. The new 800 MHz trunked system is much safer than their old system. Mesa needed to move forward onto the new system and we support that.
- Interoperability with Mesa Consortium (Mesa, Gilbert, Apache Junction) is an important part of our Regional Response with our Fire partner cities. The following is our plan:
 - ❖ We have created a "patch" that links the 800 MHz system to the VHF frequencies which will be seamless for the responding troops in the field.
 - ❖ A Command Officer (Battalion Chief) will be dispatched on all Mesa Consortium Incidents and will act as a dedicated Communications Safety Officer and monitor all hazard zone radio traffic as a safety factor.
 - ❖ Our radio team is continuing to look at other options to refine our communications interoperability plan.
- We are working together with the public safety community (local and federal agencies that include law enforcement agencies) to take advantage of the technology and interface regularly with our "operating procedures" to ensure good communication interoperability when our agencies come together on unified command incidents.