

NEWS RELEASE

Oakland County Celebrates Enhanced Public Safety with New Radio System

- Oakland County's new P25 Radio System is integrated into the Michigan Public Safety Communication System (MPSCS), ensuring near-seamless communication for first responders within the county and beyond, significantly improving their ability to protect and serve communities.
- This state-of-the-art system not only bridges communication gaps within the county but also extends connectivity for the county's first responders statewide. It will enable some Oakland County agencies to help with security around the 2024 NFL Draft in Detroit.
- Oakland County invested \$61 million to place more than 6,000 Motorola radios in the hands of Oakland County's first responders and to upgrade 20 dispatch centers to operate on MPSCS.

March 27, 2024, Pontiac, Mich. – Oakland County has successfully implemented its new P25 Radio System, a pivotal advancement in bolstering public safety and emergency response capabilities across the region. Integrated into the Michigan Public Safety Communication System (MPSCS), this state-of-the-art radio system ensures seamless communication for first responders within the county and beyond, significantly enhancing their ability to protect and serve communities.

"This important milestone highlights our commitment to public safety in Oakland County," said Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter during a news conference hosted at the Donald F. Fracassi Municipal Campus in Southfield. "With enhanced radio coverage we are now better equipped to ensure the safety of all our residents."

Limitations of the previous OpenSky radio system, which began operating in 2005, posed significant challenges for first responders, with coverage gaps emerging shortly after crossing county lines, as well as dead spots within Oakland County itself. However, the introduction of the new P25 Radio System marks a transformative moment in public safety communication and ensuring residents receive excellent public safety services.

"Communications are critical, both on a daily basis and when large emergencies occur. One of the major findings of the 9-11 Commission was that public safety needed an interoperable communication system that would allow different agencies to communicate in the event of a large-scale event. I have personally responded to those events, such as 9-11 at Ground Zero and New Orleans after Katrina. The lack of communication increased the loss of life," said Sheriff Michael Bouchard.

“This new system allows real-time communication on a daily basis, but also to be able to communicate with responding partners in a large-scale emergency. Without that, lives would be lost. This is one important step for public safety as we meet new challenges literally every day. Additionally, I insisted on having this new system have an emergency locator button for when a public safety person was in grave personal danger and could not communicate that fact. I hope that button never has to be used, but I have a great comfort knowing it is there if it is needed,” he added.

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners gave their full support for the updated system, appropriating \$61 million to place more than 6,000 Motorola radios in the hands of Oakland County’s first responders and upgrading 20 dispatch centers to accommodate the new radio system. Features include a GPS locator for the emergency button, a recording system that records all radio traffic, and two additional channels which enable first responders from a variety of agencies to work together more efficiently.

“Without gaps in coverage, our first responders can help residents no matter where they’re responding to an emergency, and we are better protecting those who protect us,” said Oakland County Commissioner Penny Luebs of Clawson. “This was a no-brainer to the Board of Commissioners, which was why we supported the upgraded system. It’s great to see it fully implemented around the county and improving safety for residents.”

This state-of-the-art system not only bridges communication gaps within the county, but also extends connectivity and uninterrupted radio coverage for the county’s first responders statewide. It also eliminates the need for dispatchers to set up cumbersome patches.

“The new Oakland County simulcast radio system is a much-needed update to an outdated system that not only improves coverage, but also functionality,” said Farmington Hills Fire Chief Jon Unruh. “Now, first responders will be able to communicate more efficiently with departments locally, regionally and throughout the state, which will improve incident response and help to ensure firefighter safety while working in hazardous conditions.”

The P25 Radio System will enable some Oakland County agencies to help with security around the 2024 NFL Draft, which takes place April 25 - 27 in Detroit.

“The implementation of the P25 Radio System in Southfield has not only increased officer safety, but has allowed the officers to participate in events outside of the city, such as responding to mutual aid requests and the upcoming NFL Draft in Detroit,” said Southfield Police Chief Elvin Barren. “By having the ability to hear neighboring jurisdictions and respond in real time, officers can communicate with each other directly providing an appropriate response and collaboration during major events.”

Fast facts about the Oakland County P25 Radio System

- There are 6,379 radios on the network.
- It supports 41 fire departments, 34 police agencies, seven public safety agencies, and 20 dispatch centers in the county.
- Oakland County first responders can now directly connect with 2,231 public safety agencies and 126 dispatch centers around the state also operating on MPSCS.