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New Simulcast System Will Protect Public, First Responders

When police officers, firefighters and EMTs are rushing to an emergency, even a few seconds of lost communication can make all the difference in public safety.

In September, the City of Carlsbad moved into a new Motorola simulcast radio system designed to provide more radio channels and to eliminate potential technical glitches between dispatch and public safety first responders. The simulcast radio system utilizes three communication towers at different locations, each with a simulcast radio system dedicated to both the Carlsbad Police Department and the Carlsbad Fire Department radio channels.

With the new simulcast radio system, when dispatch talks to a unit in the field, there are three different radio towers waiting for a radio signal from dispatch, explained Carlsbad Police Chief Kent Waller.

The radio tower that gets the strongest signal from dispatch then sends the information out for the units in the City to hear. The same is also true, Waller explained, for police and fire units in the field attempting to communicate with each other and dispatch.

“With this system, if one of these tower sites should go down for any reason, that does not affect the other two sites,” Waller explained. “Our radio system will still function.”

The previous system relied on a single repeater for each of the two departments, meaning that repeated communication from dispatch was lost should that repeater fail.

The project cost around \$1.2 million to complete, “this is one of the best investment we can make for public safety here in Carlsbad,” explained Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway. “This system makes sure that our firefighters and police officers have the information they need to save lives, and the information they need to protect themselves as well.”

The new Motorola simulcast radio system went operational on Sept. 20.

Caption: The City of Carlsbad recently added three new communications towers and radio equipment to improve communications between public safety first responders and dispatch.

