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On Tue, Jan 28, 2025 at 2:22 PM McClure, Justin P. <jmccclure@chesco.org<mailto:jmccclure@chesco.org>> wrote:

Paging Project

The Glenayre paging system was originally deployed in the early 1990's. In 2012, a refresh was completed of the tower site RF transmission equipment as well as the deployment of new two-tone voice pagers to the Fire and EMS responders of Chester County. Since that time, that equipment has exceeded its lifespan. Not only is DES unable to find replacement parts, but vendor knowledge of both systems has since retired or passed away. DES has spent the last 10 years looking for a suitable replacement, specifically of the store-forward technology the Glenayre paging terminal offers. Unfortunately, after an exhaustive search, which involved lengthy discussions with technology vendors and other emergency communications centers, DES was unable to find a like-replacement.

The next replacement options which were available were a text-to-speech automated voice system, live voice paging, or POCSAG text paging. A text-to-speech automated system was extensively tested but could not provide the mission critical reliability the Department of Emergency Services requires and the Fire and EMS responders deserve. Conversely, a live paging system becomes prohibitive due to the volume of dispatches processed by the Emergency Communications Center. A POCSAG text paging solution, which is utilized by other counties in the region, became the most viable option.

The new POCSAG system, utilizing infrastructure and end user equipment from SwissPhone, will provide reliability and redundancy over a VHF paging network, which leverages the current DES microwave network for connectivity. This system will ensure Fire and EMS responders receive critical dispatch data even when cellular phones and station printing capabilities, which rely on commercial provider's connectivity, is available 24/7/365. Chester County will provide a one-time allotment of the SwissPhone pagers to Fire and EMS agencies.

As part of this process, the legacy rebroadcast of the East, Central, and West Fire dispatch channels will be decommissioned. Fire and EMS responders will need to transition to P25 Phase II digital scanners or pagers, internet-based scanner apps, or P25 Phase II radios to monitor radio traffic across those three districts. This is both due to the feasibility of maintaining the infrastructure as well as available tower site antenna loading. Recall announcements will continue to be broadcast across the main paging channel until the decommissioning of the voice paging system is complete.

The rebroadcast will be decommissioned in early March of 2025 and the new paging system is anticipated to go live at the end of 2025/beginning of 2026.

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