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ed response, you can't put a value on being able to communicate seamlessly with all responders involved. Without an integrated system we would have had to rely on cellular phones or face-to-face communications."

A total of 8 fire trucks and 32 firefighters were utilized for the response, with two extra crews later called in to assist.

E-Comm fire staff successfully arranged for Richmond Fire-Rescue to receive mutual-aid from Vancouver, New Westminster and Delta, all of whom are on the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio System.

While this event was a tragic incident involving two fatalities, the ability of the departments to speak with each other on a common channel proved to be highly effective and a true endorsement of how a shared radio system enhances emergency response.

"During this event it was a comfort to know that our dispatchers at E-Comm were able to quickly initiate a mutual-aid request," says Richmond Fire-Rescue Deputy Chief, Ron Beaman. "Plus it was a great reassurance for us to know that Vancouver, New Westminster and Delta are all using the same radio system. Because of this, responder and public safety were definitely enhanced."



Guests trapped in the Richmond Inn used bed sheets to climb to safety.

New Westminster Fire/Rescue Services Moves its Dispatch to E-Comm

On July 12th, 2005 the province's oldest fire department, New Westminster Fire/Rescue Services (NWFRS), successfully transitioned its dispatch to E-Comm.

The official cutover was at 0915hrs, with the first call received being a mutual-aid request from Richmond Fire-Rescue (motor vehicle accident). A call was created at 1003hrs and was taken and dispatched by E-Comm fire dispatcher Todd Gardiner (now a firefighter in training for NWFRS!)

NWFRS Chief Carl Nepstad says the entire process took months of planning and training to ensure all policies and procedures were in place for fire response. "The success of our transition is testament to the hard work and dedication of the employees in our two organizations."



L-R: Margaret James, Amy Aporta, Patty Felch, Lisa Ballarin and Tonya Bieman model their NWFRS shirts.

E-Comm Dispatch as of July 2005



The transition of New Westminster Fire/Rescue Services brings E-Comm's fire dispatch customer base to a total of 11 departments (joining Vancouver, Richmond, Port Moody, Delta, Sunshine Coast (5) and Whistler/Garibaldi).

Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO Canada) 2005 Conference & Trade Show

E-Comm was the proud host agency for APCO Canada's 2005 conference and tradeshow, which was held in Vancouver (October 3rd - 6th).

Throughout the week there were many exciting discussions on critical emergency communications issues. This included sessions on the impact of Voice over IP; the future direction of radio for public safety; and responding to large multi-casualty incidents.

E-Comm police dispatchers Michelle Rain and Jennifer Philip were both nominated for the APCO Communicator of the Year Award, for their work during a sinking vessel incident on Pitt Lake in March.

"If it was not for the quick actions of Michelle and Jennifer, these two mariners may have perished before rescue personnel could reach them," said Deborah Cherry, Director of E-Comm Operations. "We are extremely proud of their efforts not just on this day, but every day," Cherry added.

E-Comm is also proud to congratulate paramedic Derek McClure of the BC Ambulance Service, who received APCO Canada's Communicator of the Year Award for his work on creating enhanced protocols for computerized dispatch.



L-R: Vicki Gulliford (Operations' Manager), Julie Ramage (Team Manager), Deborah Cherry (Director of Operations), Jennifer Philip (Dispatcher), Beverley Busson (RCMP Deputy Commissioner, Pacific Region & Commanding Officer "E" Division), and Kim Engelsjord (Team Manager)



Director of IT, Glen Miller, plays Glenn Miller's "In the Mood" during the APCO Gala Banquet Reception.

Number of 9-1-1 Calls Placed to E-Comm

includes abandoned calls

January	99,709	May	115,836
February	97,533	June	108,950
March	103,405	July	112,130
April	104,266	August	112,459
		September	100,643
		October	101,952
		TOTAL (YTD)	1,056,883

E-Comm's Service Report (third quarter) is now available in hard copy or online at www.ecomm.bc.ca

E-Comm is committed to the use of environmentally responsible papers. By choosing 100% post-consumer recycled fiber instead of virgin paper for this printed material the following savings to our natural resources were realized:

Trees Saved	Wood Reduced (Lbs)	Landfill Reduced (Lbs)	Energy Reduced (btu)	Water Reduced (Gallons)	Net Greenhouse Emissions (Lbs)
.5	292.93	45.7	710.06	430.72	88.62

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ECS300 Dec 05

Local Fires Battled in Richmond and Delta

The Burns Bog blaze covered two square kilometres (200 hectares) with a large portion of Greater Vancouver reporting poor visibility, heavy haze and noxious fumes.

During September E-Comm's fire dispatch was put to the test, helping to battle major blazes in both Delta and Richmond. Each fire saw resources being stretched to the max, and required great teamwork, creative solutions and collaborative efforts. Both events were expertly managed by the Delta and Richmond fire departments, with the support of E-Comm staff.

BURNS BOG:

On September 11th, 2005 at approximately 1600 hrs, E-Comm fire staff were inundated with 9-1-1 calls (more than 100 calls in an hour) for the devastating fire at Burns Bog.

With each daily shift, an average of 20-25 Delta firefighters were deployed to fight the fire along with additional personnel from the GVRD and BC Forest Services. Four ATV Bog Mobiles, two Pumper Trucks and aircraft units from forest services were also utilized during response efforts.

"The E-Comm radio system worked very well for this type of situation, especially at the start of the fire when from a response perspective it's vital to have seamless radio transitions and clarity," explains Delta Fire & Emergency Services Deputy Chief, Rick Lehbauer.

"One of the hardest parts for our firefighters was having to go home at night once it became too dark for continued fire operations. That's one of the biggest differences when fighting a fire in a bog—you're left entirely at the mercy of the fire."

Rick Lehbauer

A high-level of professionalism along with the ability to multi-task under extreme pressure allowed staff to ensure resources were dispatched efficiently, including the deployment of helicopters.

"This event is a good example of different agencies (ground, air and dispatch) working together at their best. The proof of the success of this response is that the largest bog fire in Delta's recent history was ended in the shortest amount of time," concludes Lehbauer.

RICHMOND INN:

On September 22nd, 2005 a fire at the Richmond Inn forced the evacuation of 398 occupants and caused two fatalities.

"Having a shared radio system is invaluable during events such as this," explains Richmond Fire-Rescue Chief, Jim Hancock. "In terms of a coordinat-

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PoliceCAD & RMS Transitions UPDATE

E-Comm has been extremely busy over the last year managing the numerous transitions of provincial police departments onto the Versadex Multi-Jurisdictional PoliceCAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch) System and Versadex Records Management System (RMS). Thanks to the careful planning, preparation and adaptability of everyone involved, all transitions have been successfully deployed, including the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Police Service (GVTAPS).

Below is a brief recap of the project to date:

Training

Prior to the transitions, E-Comm's Training department successfully developed and completed a nine-day PoliceCAD "Train the Trainer Course" for Abbotsford Police, Port Moody Police, West Vancouver Police, Delta Police, New Westminster Police and GVTAPS. Attendees were taught how to master the new system before going back to their respective agencies in order to train their staff. The course covered call-taking and dispatching skills, and introduced the new trainers to adult learning techniques.

Supplemented with Acting Trainers from Operations, the Training department excelled during what can only be described as an intense schedule. In addition, post transition Trainers led numerous one-on-one reviews with Operations staff to ensure they were up to date with final policy and process decisions related to the transitions.

IT Department

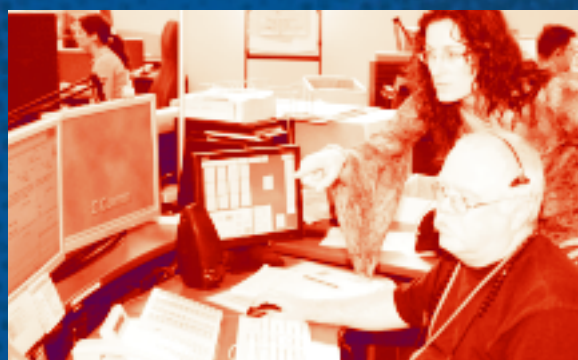
The IT staff were kept busy with the PRIME (Police Records Information Management Environment) transitions, and successfully completed a significant update of the Mainland Municipal Departments (MMD) PoliceCAD street database. They also updated the MMD RMS street database whose enhancements are identical to those of PoliceCAD, thus resolving several issues of inconsistency that have frustrated users for some time. The most significant of these resolutions is the elimination of conflicting street type abbreviations.

Jurisdictional data (district, zone and atom) were also changed in the RMS for Vancouver Police, Richmond RCMP and Port Moody Police. The data now conforms to the standards followed by the other MMD agencies.

Operations Department

On May 8th, 2005 Vancouver Police went live on the new PoliceCAD. Within ten minutes of going live dispatchers had fielded three priority calls including a hold-up. Richmond RCMP has been utilizing the PoliceCAD since April 2004.

The Vancouver Police transition was made easier due to staff's thorough preparatory work and as a result, few changes or clarifications were required post GO LIVE.



Operations' Brook Thompson and Rachel Stevens using the new PoliceCAD during Vancouver Police's GO LIVE

"This project was a wonderful experience because it was a great example of what defines E-Comm's identity; the people of E-Comm, their expertise in their respective fields, their dedication to success, and their passion for their profession."

Cindy Defazio, Operations Manager

e-communiciqué

MEET OUR BOARD...

E-Communique is pleased to continue with its profiles of E-Comm Board members. This issue we speak with David Korbin and Patti Marfleet.



David Korbin

David Korbin joined the E-Comm Board of Directors in 2001, where he served two years as Chair of the Audit Committee. David is a Chartered Accountant who currently works as a Management and Financial Consultant. He is a former managing partner with Deloitte Touche and former President & CEO of the BC Development Corporation. David has also served on the Boards of Vancouver Hospital, ICBC, Crimestoppers and Legal Services Society. David assumed the position of Chair of the E-Comm Board in 2003.

How did you come to be involved with E-Comm?

A colleague approached me about being on the E-Comm Board as I had just left the Board of Vancouver Hospital. I've always enjoyed being involved in community-focused organizations. When I first came to E-Comm it was a much different organization than it is today. It has matured in many ways, but there are still many challenges ahead. When I first got involved, I didn't really appreciate the significance of emergency communications. It's not something you lay awake thinking about... you just sort of expect it to be there. It is so much more than just dialing 9-1-1. Given what's transpired in the world over the past several years, it certainly puts emergency communications in a different perspective.

How important is public safety among all of the issues facing municipalities?

I think it's of critical importance and should be a priority. What concerns me is what happens after a significant event such as Hurricane Katrina. How do we keep emergency communications and preparedness front and centre once all the pictures fade from our television screens? An earthquake is inevitable in this region and I wonder if everyone is ready for that? I am not just talking about police, fire, and ambulance... but every aspect of a community... transit, hospitals, schools and each of us as individuals.

What are your thoughts on the E-Comm Radio System?

You have to give a lot of credit to the people who recognized the risk of not having shared emergency communications and are actually doing something about it. It takes a lot of leadership for a worthwhile endeavor especially when it crosses so many political boundaries. It's actually amazing to me that more regions haven't created the same kind of system, but change is a very difficult thing. When you look at how much a shared radio system can enhance response there's no legitimate argument against it. Look at the recent tragic hotel fire in Richmond. Firefighters were able to speak with police and ambulance personnel, in addition to the firefighters that were called in from neighbouring jurisdictions. That contributed significantly to the response effort.

What are some of E-Comm's notable achievements?

The radio system works beautifully and it's wonderful that the ability now exists to communicate with each other to improve public safety. It was just an idea that transformed into reality. I do think that the main achievement so far, is that we have both police and fire dispatch in the same building. That is an amazing accomplishment and one that many said would not happen. I am also particularly proud of the efforts that have been made on the financial front. E-Comm is on a course to break-even by 2007 and its long-term strategic financial strategies will keep the company financially viable.



Patti Marfleet

Patti Marfleet is no stranger to the world of emergency communications. She spent 15 years as the Director of Risk & Emergency Management at the City of Vancouver and was the project coordinator for E-Comm from 1995-1997. Patti was the Acting General Manager of E-Comm from 1997-98 and since then, has served five terms on the Board of Directors.

Why did you want to be on the E-Comm Board? There are certainly less challenging prospects than consolidating emergency communications.

I feel privileged to be part of E-Comm. It's such an important service and such a great success story. It's interesting to note that even now, with what's happening in the world in terms of terrorist acts, hurricanes and other natural disasters, we still see the problem of emergency personnel unable to communicate with each other. It is so gratifying that so many agencies here have addressed that challenge by joining the E-Comm radio system.

How did E-Comm get started?

I've been lucky to be involved with the E-Comm project from the outset. The concept for E-Comm surfaced when it became apparent the City of Vancouver needed to replace its aging emergency radio system. It didn't take long for other municipalities to indicate they were in the same boat and support for a shared system started to grow. While the need was first identified by the City of Vancouver, it's always been a region-wide project because it was embraced by municipalities, the Attorney General and the RCMP. It simply would not have been possible without all that support and cooperation.

What are your frustrations with regard to emergency services/communications?

It's frustrating that solutions like E-Comm are not more widespread. Throughout North America emergency personnel and government representatives continue to call for shared radio systems and yet, so often, it doesn't happen. Having been through the process of creating E-Comm I know how difficult it is to achieve. Governments and agencies have to be willing to work together toward a shared vision. They have to move quickly so that the technology they implement is still relevant. The governments and agencies in this area should be commended for their foresight and tenacity in putting the E-Comm solution together.

What are some of your future goals for E-Comm?

We live in an age where technology changes so fast that it's very difficult for large bureaucratic organizations to keep pace. And yet public safety depends on having access to the latest and best tools available. As a small, lean company specializing only in public safety communications, E-Comm has a huge advantage. It has the focus and expertise to anticipate changes to CAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch) or wireless technology or developments like VoIP (Voice over IP). It can incorporate these into its services and ensure that emergency responders continue to keep pace and are supported by the best resources available. The goal for E-Comm is to continue in this leadership role – to continue to be the best at what it does.