



Marin County Sheriff's Office

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 3, 2006
To: Marty Nichols, MERA Executive Director
From: Bill McMurray, Communications Manager
Regarding: MOSCAD Fire Station Alerting System

I have provided two documents along with this email that provide an overview of the MOSCAD fire station alerting system status.

At the last Executive Board meeting, it was agreed that we would develop a testing procedure to identify problem areas and generally try to get a better handle on the issues concerning use of the system. As you know from the earlier report, the installation at Novato FD was fraught with problems and was causing us to be very concerned about further implementations across the county.

It would seem that our high level of concern served to encourage Motorola to resolve the problems. Working in concert with the Marin County DPW Radio Shop, Richard Chuck, the local Motorola technical staff and the Motorola MOSCAD team in Illinois, problems with the fire station Remote Terminal Units (RTU) and the radio transceiver connecting the MERA system to the RTU were identified and systematically resolved.

While it is regrettable that the solution was so long in coming, the good news is the solutions have seemed to be working.

I developed a "pressure" test for the system designed to replicate normal operations with three fire dispatch centers using the system simultaneously. The description of the test procedure is at the end of the document called "MOSCAD Recommendation".

In short, MOSCAD survived the pressure test far better than expected. I felt confident enough to recommend to the Fire Operations Chiefs group, and subsequently to the Fire Chief's Association that the other agencies proceed with the implementation.

Working through Larkspur Deputy Fire Chief Scott Shurtz, a plan for cutting the Ross Valley regions stations over to the MOSCAD alerting system were set. Unfortunately, the damage to two Ross Valley Fire Authority stations has caused us to postpone the cut over until they can assess the damage and come up with an alternative plan. Otherwise we are ready to proceed.

The document called "MOSCAD Ross Valley Cut Over" describes how we were going to proceed. Depending on the amount of damage, we will likely proceed next week, but that is not certain. It is possible that we may skip the Ross Valley region for now and begin cutting over the Southern Marin region stations instead.

These reports do not address San Rafael FD specifically. I had been told that they were not going to cut over in the near future because of a lingering problem with their ability to interface their CAD to the MOSCAD Front End Processor.

It is important to underscore one undeniable fact. While the system is working, it is an extremely complicated design that will forever more require technicians and operations staff to be very fluent in the system features, capabilities, back up processes and network blueprint. There are a lot of factors and variables to be considered when troubleshooting problems, many more than the system it is replacing.