

# AMERA

Marin Emergency  
Radio Authority



## IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT MERA SERVICES

### WE'RE CONNECTED FOR YOUR SAFETY:

All Marin County public safety agencies can communicate through MERA, including police departments, fire departments, public works departments, animal control, transportation agencies, parks departments, and more!

#### MERA MEMBERS:

- County of Marin
- City of Belvedere
- Town of Corte Madera
- Town of Fairfax
- City of Larkspur
- City of Mill Valley
- City of Novato
- Town of Ross
- Town of San Anselmo
- City of San Rafael
- City of Sausalito
- Town of Tiburon
- Bolinas Fire Protection District
- Central Marin Police Authority
- Inverness Public Utility Dist.
- Kentfield Fire Protection District
- Marin Community College Dist.
- Marin Municipal Water District
- Marin Transit
- Marinwood Community Services District
- Novato Fire Protection District
- Ross Valley Fire Department
- Southern Marin Fire Prot. Dist.
- Stinson Beach Fire Prot. Dist.
- Tiburon Fire Protection Dist.

#### PARTNER AGENCIES:

- CHP Dispatch Channels
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area Dispatch
- Golden Gate Transit Dispatch
- National Mutual Aid
- Petaluma Police Dispatch
- Sonoma Sheriff Dispatch
- State Emergency Management
- State Mutual Aid
- US Coast Guard

#### MISSION:

MERA is a collection of public agencies formed in 1998 to plan, implement and manage a countywide public safety and emergency radio system for the use of all member agencies. MERA provides crucial communications to 25 member agencies, both day-to-day and after a major emergency or natural disaster.

#### ABOUT:

MERA radio communications is the backbone of the 911 emergency response system. MERA provides the communication link between 911 public safety dispatch centers and public safety units in the field that respond to emergencies. The MERA radio system gives the dispatch centers the ability to assign single or multiple responders (depending on the emergency) within just seconds of receiving a 911 call.

#### BUDGET:

Annual Operating Budget is \$1,651,432 in FY2013/14.

#### CHALLENGE:

The system was designed to accommodate 1,580 mobile and portable radios with expansion capacity to 2,500 radios. Today it serves 2,897 radios, which is significantly above the projected total originally anticipated over the 20-year life of the system. The current system is not only more extensively used than expected, it is getting older and we must plan for a replacement system to ensure we can maintain our reliable emergency communications.

#### SOLUTION:

MERA is planning for a Next Generation communications system that will:

- ✓ Sustain reliability during 911 emergencies and major disasters
- ✓ Enhance coverage due to more tower sites and other improvements
- ✓ Provide new radios with updated technology for first responders
- ✓ Improve response times due to hardware and software upgrades
- ✓ Comply with new regulations in force in the next few years
- ✓ Allow for expanded users and number of channels
- ✓ Offer regional interoperability in 10 Bay Area counties

#### FUTURE COST:

Approximately \$45 million, which would be financed with grants and a parcel tax bond issuance, requiring a two-thirds vote for passage. Based on our current estimates, we anticipate the cost for a single-family residence to be approximately \$2.50 per month. We are also discussing a low-income exemption for seniors.