

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

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**DATE:** May 28, 2014  
**TO:** MERA Project Oversight Committee  
**FROM:** Dave Jeffries, Special Project Manager  
**SUBJECT:** AGENDA ITEM **E-2**: REPORT ON POLICE/FIRE CHIEFS AND RANK AND FILE BRIEFING INFORMATION

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**Recommended Action:** Receive, discuss and file Report on additional MERA Member Outreach.

**Background:**

As part of the ongoing effort to reach out to MERA member agencies and the new effort for public outreach, this effort focuses on reaching out to MERA Member Agency End Users as well as a discussion on member participation at the July 22 Board of Supervisors meeting.

**Discussion:**

The attached document is a simple, one page overview of the project. The document is designed to be provided to MERA Member Agencies for distribution to their employees. The first draft of this document was reviewed by the MERA Operations Committee and has been revised based on their comments and suggestions. Any additional comments would be appreciated.

A second item for discussion involves the upcoming presentation to the Marin County Board of Supervisors on July 22, 2014. As this will be our one and only presentation between now and the election, do we want a presence by MERA Public Safety Agencies and if so, how should we coordinate that effort?

**Attachment:**

MERA Employee Outreach Flyer - Draft

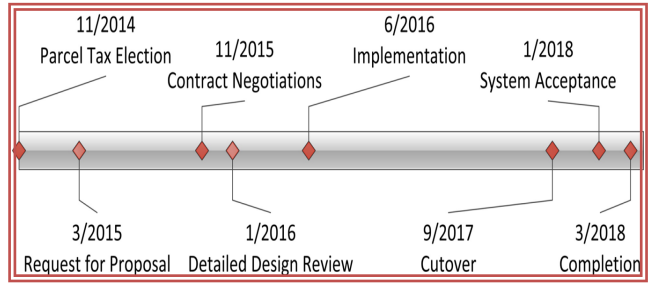


For additional information or to request a presentation, contact Special Project Manager Dave Jeffries at: [mera.djeffries@gmail.com](mailto:mera.djeffries@gmail.com) or go to [www.meraonline.org](http://www.meraonline.org).

## *MERA's Gen II System: A Brief Overview for Current MERA Users*

MERA is looking to replace the current MERA radio system with a new system in 2018. While 2018 is still a long way away, we need to begin the project in 2015 to have the system up and running by 2018 .

The projected budget for this project is \$40,000,000, not including bond financing charges. After exploring several options, MERA had decided to seek a Parcel Tax in November, 2014. The Parcel Tax is based on an annual \$29 per parcel tax for single family homes for 20 years.



### **Why do we need to replace the existing Gen I system in 2018?**

**RELIABILITY:** The existing system is aging and approaching obsolescence. The system is experiencing component malfunctions causing system reliability to decrease. Replacement equipment is being phased out by the manufacturer, with certain elements already no longer manufactured and increasingly difficult to source.

**CAPACITY:** MERA has nearly 2,900 users today on a system built for 1,580. The system must expand capacity to eliminate busy signals during major emergencies and to add additional mutual aid partners. The Next Generation system is planned for 5,000 potential users.

**COVERAGE:** Coverage must be extended to high priority areas that have limited coverage today. The Next Generation system will expand coverage with the addition of new tower sites.

**OUT OF COMPLIANCE:** The Gen I system does not meet new FCC technical requirements that will be in place in 2017.

**FREQUENCY GIVE BACK:** Currently enacted federal legislation will require that we give back our current UHF-T band frequencies in 2021.

### **What if the Parcel Tax fails?**

MERA would then be looking for another funding alternative. One likely scenario would be MERA member agencies funding the Gen II bonds as they did the Gen I bonds. For six years, this would require member agencies make payments for both bonds, in addition to operating and maintenance accounts. This would likely result in impacts to other areas of member budgets for the next twenty years.

### **What can YOU do to assist?**

Please help us in explaining the importance of the MERA Public Safety Communications System and why it is time to move forward with the Gen II system.