

Marin Emergency Radio Authority

Next Generation System – Outreach Plan

Draft Update – September 12, 2012

Outreach Subcommittee Meeting: 9/12/12 Agenda Item C

Goal, Objectives & Strategy:

1. **Goal** – Achieve next generation system funding through the successful passage of a parcel tax bond measure.
2. **Objectives:**
 - a. Create and implement a membership and community education and outreach effort
 - b. Obtain the unanimous support and involvement of all MERA representatives for the project
 - c. Obtain the unanimous support from member organizations
 - d. To the extent possible, educate Marin citizens to garner positive support for the project
3. **Strategy:**
 - a. Finalize project cost, funding, financing, next generation technology and all other related details – to properly prepare a public opinion survey and explain and promote the project
 - b. Hire Deputy Executive Officer for Special Project (DEO) and Administrative Assistant (AA) to work with MERA’s members and committees in a structure that can best implement the outreach plan
 - c. Identify key roles and responsibilities and assign to MERA representatives
 - d. Educate members (especially new members) about MERA and the project and solicit their support and involvement
 - e. Educate city, town and agency managers about the project and the outreach plan
 - f. Conduct public opinion polling to assist with finalizing the project funding and financing decisions
 - g. Make presentations to, and hold meetings with, county, city, town and agency governing boards
 - h. Conduct a public education effort to inform residents and various stakeholders about the urgent need to upgrade Marin’s emergency communications system

Management & Coordination of Outreach Effort:

1. Deputy Executive Officer for Special Project (DEO) – Leads execution of approved Outreach Plan, including primary responsibilities to:
 - a. Identify key roles and responsibilities and recruit MERA representatives to fill these roles
 - b. Oversee Outreach Consultants to create Next Generation System informational material and media and development of the MERA Membership Workshop and other presentations

- c. Educate members (especially new members) about the project and solicit their support and involvement
 - d. Educate city, town and agency managers about the project and the outreach plan
 - e. Make presentations to, and hold meetings with, county, city, town and agency governing boards
 - f. Lead public education effort to inform residents and various stakeholders about the urgent need for upgrading Marin’s emergency communications system
2. **Roles & Responsibilities** – As a member organization with limited staff, it is essential that MERA’s members be organized and motivated to move forward with the outreach plan. The Deputy Executive Officer will play a key role in directing each of the standing committees to have specific responsibilities and tasks. In addition, a special project oversight committee needs to be formed to ensure proper and timely implementation across this large network of members.
3. **MERA standing subcommittees are responsible for the Outreach Effort as follows:**
- a. **Finance Committee** – Provides information on the budget and financing of the project. Responsibilities include providing all the financial facts about the project, bond financing and parcel tax measure specifics (amounts, definitions, exceptions, etc.)
 - b. **Outreach Committee** – Oversees the implementation of the Outreach Section of the Strategic Plan, budgeting of outreach activities and supervision of the outreach consultants.
 - c. **Technology (Marin County Staff)** – Provides information on all aspects of the next generation system upgrade, including permitting, design, system capability and compatibility, procurement process, etc.
4. **Project Oversight Subcommittee** (or “Next Gen Project Team”) – The creation of a new Committee specifically to oversee the ~~community project’s~~ finance, technology, outreach and education effort. This would likely replace the “Joint Subcommittee” meetings that MERA has used thus far for this project.
- a. **Membership** – Project Oversight Committee members will be as follows:
 - i. All members of the Outreach Committee
 - ii. Chairs of the Executive Board and Finance Committee
 - iii. Deputy Executive Officer
 - iv. MERA’s bond counsel
 - v. MERA’s general counsel
 - vi. Fiscal expert
 - vii. Marin County Public Works Director
 - viii. Marin County CAO (if not already included above)
 - ix. Select Ex Officio member(s) as “Elder Statesmen”
 - x. MMA (Marin Managers Association) representative
 - b. **Responsibilities:**
 - i. ~~Oversee all activities of~~ Provides guidance to Executive Officer, DEO and the overall Outreach effort for this project
 - ii. Assists with implementation of the Outreach Plan
 - iii. Monitors progress of outreach effort and provide guidance where needed

- iv. Reviews and approves all communications, including FAQ, Fact sheet, and presentation material – this function may be delegated to the DEO and/or a three person “Sign-Off” committee designated by the Oversight Committee

5. **Consultant Responsibilities:**

- a. **Indie Politics (Dan Mullen) and Price Campaign Solutions (Terry Price)** – Focus on helping MERA and its various subcommittees coalesce around a broader communications strategy, including:
 - i. Manage and implement deliverables and a timeline (detailed below)
 - ii. Advise and attend subcommittee meetings for Outreach, EC documents review, governance (if any), finance and joint meetings of these groups, as needed
 - iii. Work with MERA’s Executive Officer, DEO, AA and other public agency consultants (CBG Communications, Inc.), as needed
 - iv. Verbal and ad-hoc consulting and advice
 - v. Consultants will be overseen by the DEO, but still answer to the Outreach Subcommittee – and when determined by them to be appropriate, they would work with MERA’s other committees to ensure MERA’s various parts are moving in a coordinated fashion to reach the same communications and message goals

- 6. **New Member Orientation and Education** – Due to the high turnover of MERA members, special attention needs to be given to the rapid integration of new members so they can fully participate in the outreach effort. This should include:
 - a. Identify all new members since the last MERA new member orientation
 - b. Commitment and assignment by Executive Officer:
 - i. Ask for 2-year MERA commitment
 - ii. Assignment to a MERA committee based on best use of skills and capabilities
 - c. Training and education:
 - i. Provide MERA orientation
 - ii. Provide information specific to their Committee assignment
 - iii. DEO provides Outreach Plan information and project training specific to their involvement (if any)

Major Activities:

1. **Internal Communications:**

- a. ~~Outreach Team~~ **Deputy Executive Officer Leads Team Approach** – All member agencies need to be fully supportive and engaged in the passage of the parcel tax measure for us to win the broadest possible public support. The ~~Outreach Team~~ Deputy Executive Officer will contact all MERA members and their governing entities to schedule presentations.

We’re also looking at pairing up local police and fire leaders with countywide experts in technology and finance. This team approach is designed to help sell the Next Generation System to local governing councils and agencies with the help of known and trusted public safety leader(s), while also providing technology and finance answers from a few qualified experts. Due to size and diversity of MERA’s membership it is recommended that we assign specific individuals to liaison with

~~each member.~~ Selecting ~~each liaison~~ these local contacts will be based on the person's familiarity, with a priority placed on peer-to-peer relationships.

Specifically, the DEO is expected to lead internal communications to: ~~We expect each Outreach Team member to liaison with several MERA members.~~

- i. Identify and recruit local public safety leaders, plus county experts in tech and finance
 - ii. Train and orient local public safety leaders to project details, providing marketing materials as needed
 - iii. Train and orient county experts to local issues and concerns, providing marketing materials as needed
 - iv. Manage the scheduling of presentations
 - v. Assess response to presentations and revise messaging and materials when called for.
- b. **Local Spokespersons** – While the DEO is expected to act as lead spokesperson for the project, he/she will work with local Police and Fire Chiefs to educate them on how to explain the new project to their local governing boards and media outlets.
- c. **Creation of Next Generation System Informational Material and Media:** DEO will oversee Outreach Consultants to create Next Generation System informational material and media and development of the MERA Membership Workshop and other presentations, such as:
- i. Facts Sheet and FAQs, including:
 1. Technology – what
 2. Financing – how much
 3. Public Safety – who, why and how
 4. Parcel tax specifics – who, for how much and how long, plus exceptions
 5. Timeline – for both project and parcel tax measure
 - ii. Presentations – Multi-media presentation (Powerpoint style multi-media)
 - iii. Project and budget narrative
 - iv. Endorsements and testimonials
 - v. Packaging of reports and documents (including project and budget narrative, outside independent assessment of life span of current system, related media reports, technical data)
 - vi. Instructional material for members
2. **MERA Member Workshop** – ~~at Late September or early October~~ December 2012
Governance Meeting
- a. Purpose – Formal launch of Outreach Effort. Motivate member's involvement. Educate members to the system's next generation upgrade, proposed parcel tax measure and outreach effort. Answer questions. Solicit input on how to improve outreach plan.
 - b. Finalize date/time/location
 - c. Save the Date announcement
 - d. Final invites – Formal invitations to all members and other selected guests
 - e. Workshop Design and Content
 - i. Program Agenda
 - ii. Master of Ceremonies – Steve Kinsey
 - iii. Keynote – Steve Kinsey
 - iv. Powerpoint presentation – MERA (brief) history and project needs

- v. Expert presentations on:
 1. Public Safety – (TBD)
 2. Technology – Craig Tackabery
 3. Financing and Parcel Tax explanations – Bond Counsel, Tom Gaffney and Matthew Hymel
- vi. Next steps and call to action
- f. Handout materials

3. **External Communications:**

- a. **Voter Survey** – Knowing exactly what issues, messages and messengers are most persuasive with the public gives us the best chance of winning on this issue. Survey results will be analyzed and recommendations made to the Project Oversight Subcommittee.
 - i. Prerequisite information to conduct the poll:
 1. Final project costs
 2. Financing options (types of bonds)
 3. Likely ballot language (coordinate with bond counsel)
 4. Test of potential exception and add-ons that the bond could fund
 5. Bond terms (including parcel tax amount and sunset)
 - ii. Survey Design and Content – We propose to conduct 300-400 surveys of citizens living in Marin County. Each poll will be from 15-20 minutes long and will include 40 to 50 questions, including demographic information
 - iii. Survey Phases – The survey will be completed in four phases:
 1. Phase One – Draft polling instrument
 2. Phase Two – Conduct survey
 3. Phase Three – Data processing and cross-tabulated voter responses
 4. Phase Four – Analysis, recommendations, presentations
- b. **Member Organization Communications:**
 - i. Member representatives – contacts from local leaders (detailed above)
 - ii. Council and agency – repeated and incremental public presentations designed to introduce the project, address questions and concerns, and ultimately win their support
- c. **Business Community Outreach:**
Initiate conversations with local business leadership and major landlords to assess reaction to proposed parcel tax measure. Address questions and concerns as appropriate.
- d. **Grassroots Outreach:**
Engage local citizens and community leaders in a well-orchestrated “word of mouth” campaign, designed to educate the uninitiated, gauge reaction and overcome soft resistance. This process will help identify individual supporters and organizations to help lead the charge through a variety of activities.
- e. **Stakeholder presentations:**
Presentations to educational, neighborhood, Rotary/Lions, chambers of commerce and other similar citizens’ groups interested in the project
- f. **Local Media and Advertising:**
Effective media and advertising requires not only a persuasive message, but disciplined and repeated delivery. We must all be on the same page, saying the same thing, consistently. Consultants Mullen and Price would ~~oversee and~~ manage the following coordinated media pieces, with the oversight and participation of the DEO and local public safety leaders:

- i. **Local Media:**
Consultants will work with the DEO and Project Oversight Committee to craft press releases and op-eds that effectively convey our poll-tested messaging. Early ideas include releasing polling summaries, earthquake and disaster engineering reports, independent audits of need to replace aging equipment and offering tours to media of radio towers and aging equipment. We will approach reporters and media outlets to maximize our positive press coverage, including the concept of a feature story on the project.
- ii. **Branding (Slogan – Tag Line):**
The consultants will work the DEO and Project Oversight Committee to develop a cohesive and easily digestible brand that the public will be able to recognize and appreciate.
- iii. **Website:**
Using results from the poll and public responses to Fact and FAQ sheets, we will make various recommendations for how the website should be revamped to advance not just MERA, but to give the Next Gen project the best chance of winning needed funds.
- iv. **OPTIONAL:**
Targeted direct mail, public access cable spots, other distribution channels like member organizations’ billings, etc.

Timeline:

We are proposing a nearly two-year timeline to implement this Outreach Plan:

2012

September

- 1. Outline publicly available equipment needs information
- 2. Outline workable long-term funding options and planning
- 3. Continue to edit written Outreach Plan, including new subcommittees and roles for:
 - a. Project Oversight Committee
 - b. ~~Outreach Team~~ Deputy Executive Officer for Special Project (DEO)
 - c. Administrative Assistant

October

- 1. Executive Director conducts New Member Orientation
- 2. Workshop preparation – Consultants create Next Generation System Informational Material and Media for use in Workshop:
 - a. Presentations – Multi-media presentation (Powerpoint, inc. video integration)
 - b. Complete Round 2 of internal communications – Fact sheets, FAQs
 - c. Project and budget narrative
 - d. Endorsements and testimonials
 - e. Packaging of reports and documents (including project and budget narrative, outside independent assessment of life span of current system, related media reports, technical data)
 - f. Instructional material for members

November

- 1. Continue Workshop preparation (as detailed in October)

2. Initiate hiring process for Deputy Executive Officer and Administrative Assistant for a January start date
3. Finalize members of Project Oversight Committee

December

1. MERA Project Workshop – use this workshop to build internal support and organization and then pivot to educating and consolidating support from member agencies
2. Hire polling firm

2013

January

1. Begin Polling process by determining these prerequisites:
 - a. Final next generation project costs
 - b. Financing options (types of bonds)
 - c. Likely ballot language (coordinate with bond counsel)
 - d. Test of potential exception and add-ons that the bond could fund
 - e. Bond terms (including parcel tax amount and sunset)
2. Project Oversight Committee approves final poll language
3. DEO and AA begin employment.

February

1. Conduct poll
2. Public presentations of Poll results to MERA Executive Board and key committees, member councils, boards and agencies
3. Consultants & DEO coordinate with various MERA leaders to finalize public talking points, script, media presentation, marketing materials, etc.
4. DEO identifies and recruit local “Spokespersons” for Police, Fire, plus Technical and Financial experts from the county

March

1. Begin redesign of Website, with several layers of approval from MERA committees expected
2. Deputy Executive Officer continues to educate and train remaining MERA members on Next Gen Project background and need
3. DEO identifies all councils to receive presentations, and puts them in priority order
4. DEO begins scheduling ROUND 1 presentations

April

1. Continue website edits and approvals
2. ROUND 1 presentations to Councils

May

1. Finalize Branding / Slogan with MERA members
2. ROUND 1 presentations to Councils

June

1. Re-launch MERA website for greater public awareness of the project
2. Begin local media outreach, with aim of reaching elected officials and key constituencies as well

3. ROUND 2 presentations to Councils (follow up answers)

July

1. Request member councils, boards and agencies vote to support Next Gen project, seeking unanimous approval from each
2. ROUND 2 presentations to Councils (follow up answers)

August

1. ROUND 2 presentations to Councils (follow up answers)

September

1. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)
2. Begin conduct Business Community and Major Landlord Outreach

October

1. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)
2. Continue Business Community and Major Landlord Outreach

November

1. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)
2. Begin Grassroots Outreach
3. Presentations to various stakeholders

December

1. Continue outreach efforts, including presentations, targeted direct mail, public access cable spots, social media, etc.
2. Implement Bond Counsel timeline for ballot measure (usually takes 3-6 months to complete all required tasks)

2014

January

1. Continue outreach efforts, including presentations, targeted direct mail, public access cable spots, social media, etc.

February

March

1. (For a JUNE election) MERA Board/Board of Supervisors votes to place measure on the ballot, at which point a private citizens' committee would undertake any campaign

April

1. Continue outreach efforts, including presentations, targeted direct mail, public access cable spots, social media, etc.

May

June

July

1. (For a NOVEMBER election) MERA Board/Board of Supervisors votes to place measure on the ballot, at which point a private citizens' committee would undertake any campaign

Budget:

As listed in the latest Strategic Plan update, we are expecting Outreach costs for these projected amounts:

a. Consulting	\$30,000 in 2012
b. Website Vendor	\$5,000
c. Media Production & Airing	\$10,000
d. <u>Public Survey (Poll)</u>	<u>\$30,000</u>
TOTAL	\$75,000

This Outreach Budget is predicated on receiving technical, fiscal and legal expertise funded by other areas in MERA's overall budget, such as Marin County Public Work staff time, bond counsel assistance, and financial and legal advice.