

Marin Emergency Radio Authority

Next Generation System – Outreach Plan

Update – May 8, 2013

Approved: Executive Board 5/8/13 Accepted: Governing Board 5/15/13

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 Special Project Manager (SPM) under a part-time contract and a Special Project Administrative Assistant (SPAA) 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. **Special Project Manager (SPM)** – 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

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 - 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 Special Project Manager 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 committees 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** – Oversaw the implementation of the Outreach Section of the Strategic Plan, budgeting of outreach activities and supervision of the outreach consultants. This Committee was subsumed into the Project Oversight Committee (see below) on March 29, 2013.
 - 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 Committee** – The creation of a new Committee specifically to oversee the project’s finance, technology, outreach and education effort. This would likely replace the “Joint Subcommittee” and “Outreach Committee” meetings that MERA has used thus far for this project.
- a. **Membership** – Project Oversight Committee members will be as follows:
 - i. Committee Chair – Cusimano
 - ii. Vice Chair – Sinnott
 - iii. All other members of the Outreach Committee – Berg, Bishop, Brown, Doyle, McCarthy and Tejada
 - iv. President of the Governing Board – Pearce
 - v. Chair of the Executive Board – Hymel
 - vi. Chair of the Finance Committee – Hymel
 - vii. Special Project Manager – Jeffries
 - viii. MERA’s Bond Counsel – Stava
 - ix. MERA’s General Counsel – Ortiz
 - x. Fiscal Resources – Gaffney and Cassingham
 - xi. Marin County Public Works Assistant Director – Tackabery
 - xii. Marin County CAO (if not already included above) – Hymel
 - xiii. Select Ex Officio member(s) – TBD
 - xiv. MMA (Marin Managers Association) representative – TBD

b. **Responsibilities:**

- i. Provides guidance to Executive Officer, SPM and the overall project effort
- ii. Assists with implementation of the Outreach Plan
- iii. Monitors progress of project 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 SPM and/or a three person “Sign-Off” committee designated by the Project Oversight Committee

5. **Consultant Responsibilities:**

- a. **Indie Politics (Dan Mullen) and Price Campaign Solutions (Terry Price)** – Focus on helping MERA and its various committees coalesce around a broader communications strategy, including:
 - i. Manage and implement deliverables and a timeline (detailed below)
 - ii. Advise and attend committee meetings for Project Oversight, EB documents review, governance (if any), finance and joint meetings of these groups, as needed
 - iii. Work with MERA’s Executive Officer, SPM, SPAA 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 SPM, but still answer to the Outreach and eventually Project Oversight Committees – 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. **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 project effort. This should include:

- a. Identifying all new members since the last MERA new member orientation
- b. Commitment and assignment by Executive Officer:
 - i. Ask members 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. SPM provides Outreach Plan information and project training specific to their involvement (if any)

Major Activities:

1. **Internal Communications:**

- a. **Special Project Manager 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 Special Project Manager 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. Selecting these local contacts will be based on the person's familiarity, with a priority placed on peer-to-peer relationships.

Specifically, the SPM is expected to lead internal communications to:

- 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 supporting materials as needed
 - iii. Train and orient county experts to local issues and concerns, providing supporting 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 SPM 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:** SPM 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. Presentation(s) – PowerPoint multi-media presentation(s)
 - 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 January 2013 Governance Meeting, with invitations also sent to the Executive Board
- 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. Scheduled for Wed. January 16, 2013, 2:30 – 5:30 PM at San Rafael Corporate Center
 - c. Save the Date announcement – first notice sent Oct. 24, 2012
 - 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 (confirmed for above date)
 - 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 Committee.
 - 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 400-600 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 manage the following

coordinated media pieces, with the oversight and participation of the SPM and local public safety leaders:

- i. **Local Media:**
Consultants will work with the SPM 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 SPM 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 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 Generation 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

October

1. Continue to edit written Outreach Plan

November

1. Nov. 14 – Executive Board reviews and approves Project Oversight Committee. Also reviews Outreach Plan from Oct. 31 Outreach Committee meeting and January Workshop Agenda
2. Nov. 29, 2:00-4:00 PM – Executive Officer and Operations Officer conduct Member Orientation at County Comm. Center
3. Workshop preparation – Consultants create Next Generation System Informational Material and Media for use in Workshop: PowerPoint, Video, Fact sheets, FAQs
4. Continue search process for Special Project Manager and Special Project Administrative Assistant for a 2013 start date
5. Finalize members of Project Oversight Committee

December

1. Continue Workshop preparation (as detailed in November)
2. Solicit proposals from polling firms

2013

January

1. Jan. 16, 2:30-5:00 PM – MERA Project Workshop at San Rafael Corporate Center
2. Hire pollster and begin Survey process

February

1. Ad Hoc Survey Committee reviews and approves final poll language
2. Finalize and conduct Survey (into March)

March

1. March 13 – Executive Board meeting
2. March 29 – initial Project Oversight Committee meeting
3. Poll results presented to MERA Project Oversight Committee
4. Draft 1st Newsletter, to be emailed periodically henceforth
5. Database of members started

April

1. Email 1st Newsletter to MERA members
2. Edit Video 2 for public presentation
3. Fact Sheets and FAQs revised to reflect Survey findings
4. April 22 – present poll findings to Supervisor Kinsey
5. April 23 – interview SPM job candidates
6. April 24 – initial Project Oversight Committee meeting Begin redesign of Website, with several layers of approval from MERA committees expected
7. April 24 – MCCMC presentation on “Public Emergency Communications and Disaster Preparedness”

May

1. Begin redesign of MERA Website to make it more user-friendly
2. Prepare public presentations of Survey results for MERA Executive Board and key committees, member councils, boards and agencies
3. May 8 – Executive Board meeting
4. May 15 – Governing Board meeting
5. SPM begins employment
6. SPAA begins employment.
7. SPM identifies all councils to receive presentations, and puts them in priority order
8. Consultants & SPM coordinate with various MERA leaders to finalize public talking points, script, media presentation, marketing materials, etc.
9. SPM identifies and recruit local “Spokespersons” for Police, Fire, plus Technical and Financial experts from the county
10. SPM begins scheduling ROUND 1 presentations

June

1. Special Project Manager continues to educate and train remaining MERA members on Next Gen Project background and need
2. Finalize Branding / Slogan with MERA members
3. Re-launch MERA website for greater public awareness of the project
4. Begin local media outreach, with aim of reaching elected officials and key constituencies as well
5. ROUND 1 presentations to Councils

July

1. July 10 – Executive Board meeting
2. Request member councils, boards and agencies vote to support Next Gen project, seeking unanimous approval from each
3. ROUND 1 presentations to Councils

August

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

September

1. Sept. 11 – Executive Board meeting
2. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)
3. 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. Nov. 13 – Executive Board meeting
2. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)
3. Begin Grassroots Outreach
4. Presentations to various stakeholders

December

1. Dec. 11 – Governing Board meeting
2. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)
3. Continue outreach efforts, including presentations, targeted direct mail, public access cable spots, social media, etc.
4. Implement Bond Counsel timeline for ballot measure (usually takes 3-6 months to complete all required tasks)

2014

January

1. Jan. 8 – Executive Board meeting
2. Continue outreach efforts, including presentations, targeted direct mail, public access cable spots, social media, etc.
3. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)

February

1. Conduct shorter “Brushfire” Poll to confirm education efforts among residents
2. ROUND 3 presentations to Councils (endorsement votes)

March

3. March 12 – Executive Board meeting
4. (IF pursuing 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

1. May 7 – Executive Board meeting
2. May 14 – Governing Board meeting – This is likely the meeting where Gov. Board votes to send this to the Board of Supervisors

June**July**

1. July 9 – Executive Board meeting
2. (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

August**September**

1. Sept. 10 – Executive Board meeting

October

1. Campaign season

November

1. Nov. 4 – Election Day