



Wednesday
July 23, 2008
2:33 pm

Latest News

July 23, 2008

Problems reported with county's digital police radios

By **Rusty Marks**
Staff writer

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A multi-million dollar plan to convert Kanawha County's emergency service agencies to a digital radio system may not be all it's purported to be.

County officials had planned to switch all communications between the county's fire departments, police departments and other emergency agencies to a new digital system within the next three years.

In June, Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper announced a \$1 million grant to buy new digital radios for the county to tie into the system. The Charleston Fire Department is already on the digital system.

But police and fire departments all over the country that are using similar digital radio systems are starting to report problems with the digital technology. According to a May report by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the digital radio signals can be stymied by background noise, oxygen masks or simply walking into a building.

Officials for the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue in Virginia believe the digital system's inability to cope with field conditions even contributed to the death of a firefighter at the scene of a house fire in April 2007.

Firefighters in Indianapolis are asking local officials to rethink a \$37 million project to switch to the digital radio system because of concerns that the technology doesn't work in the field.

Local emergency services officials are aware of the reported problems. Carper has asked for a complete review of the digital radio plan.

0 Comments on "Problems reported with county's digital police radios"
[Post a comment](#)

[More Comments »](#)