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MARCS steering committee to discuss how to better serve local public safety forces

The Ohio Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS) Steering Committee will meet from 2 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 19 in the Rhodes Tower, 30 E. Broad St., Columbus, in Room 2925.

Agenda items include a report by a subcommittee that has been studying how MARCS can better serve the needs of local public safety forces. The findings of a survey of local public safety forces will be shared and a discussion will be held with representatives of local public safety forces.

In addition, updates will be given about the status of the statewide system upgrade and the MARCS in Schools program.

The upgraded system will offer computer-aided dispatch services in a shared service environment to local public safety agencies as well as a field-based reporting and records management system for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Currently, the MARCS system is at capacity with roughly 48,000 radios on the system and is reaching the end of its reliable life. The upgrade will expand capacity to more than 100,000 radios.

The goal of the State of Ohio is to encourage local government entities to become customers of the upgraded MARCS system. The upgrade will provide customers with a long-term solution while allowing the state as a whole to leverage assets and deliver one comprehensive radio system.

The MARCS in-School Emergency Communication Radio is a user-friendly radio for use in school buildings. Grants are available for public schools to purchase emergency communication systems through the School Security Grant Program administered by the Ohio School Facilities Commission.

MARCS, which is administered by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, is the State of Ohio's comprehensive wireless communication system for police, fire, emergency medical services and other public safety forces. MARCS provides wireless voice and mobile data for state agencies, including the Ohio departments of Natural Resources, Public Safety, Rehabilitation and Correction, and Transportation. MARCS also provides wireless radio service for more than 700 county, township, federal and private first-responders.