



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Prevent. Protect. Prepare.

Pat McCrory, Governor

Frank L. Perry, Secretary

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairs of House Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety
Chairs of Senate Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety
Chairs of Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety

From: Frank L. Perry, Secretary, DPS
William Grey, Commander, State Highway Patrol

Subject: VIPER Annual Report

Date: March 1, 2016

Pursuant of Section 16B.2. of Session Law 2015-241, The Department of Public Safety shall report annually no later than March 1 to the chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety on the progress of the State's VIPER system.

Network Status - 241 total sites planned for statewide coverage of which 211 sites are constructed and on-the-air representing 89% completion. 30 sites require State-appropriated funding (\$7M legislative funds began FY14-15). These additional sites represent \$30M in additional site construction funding. There are also 5 new sites which are being added by counties joining VIPER to increase coverage required by the local users. These 5 are in addition to the 241 and are added at no cost to the state by the counties. Currently there are 81,226 users on the VIPER Network consisting of 314 Emergency Responding agencies (including federal, state and local agencies).

Tower Upgrade Status – Fifty-two (52) sites required modifications to the tower structure to be able to accommodate additional microwave dishes in support of the P25 migration which was completed in June 2014. The additional microwave dishes were required to support the increased network requirements for P25. The tower upgrades required to support P25 were completed ahead of the June conversion, however significant additional costs were incurred due to changes in tower structural standards (ANSI-F standard moved to ANSI-G) prior to funding for P25 being available which was converted from annual maintenance and tower construction funding.

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Procurement and Funding Progress - An additional \$7M recurring commenced on 1 July, 2015 for site construction and will continue annually until the remaining unfunded tower sites are completed. At that time a portion of the recurring funding is scheduled to continue to provide ongoing maintenance and support once the system buildout is complete. Based on the initial VIPER Operations and Maintenance Plan, the annual recurring maintenance budget should be \$7,200,000 based on the number of sites currently operational.

Position Management Status - Of the thirteen (13) new positions approved, twelve (12) have been hired. The remaining one (1) position, Tower Maintenance Technician remains to be filled. The position is currently in the hiring process for the fourth time, having remained unfilled after the three previous attempts.

New Tower Construction Progress – Recent site activations include Potato Knob as well as the construction of a replacement tower at Barium Springs and upcoming new site activations will include Rendezvous Mountain and the reestablishment of the site at High Windy. Fifteen (15) new sites have been identified for new construction as funding becomes available. No additional site construction from Federal grant dollars is expected due to changes in the performance period for use of federal funding.

As new towers are built, this may necessitate upgrading an older tower to accommodate additional loading of the older tower. This was the case during the P25 upgrade with the average cost to upgrade an older tower costing \$273,000.

P25 Moving Forward – We continue to add additional users to the system, now that ID's are available. We have approved six (6) vendors to supply P25 compliant radios for use on VIPER. Additional sites are coming on-line resulting from several new counties joining VIPER and purchasing supplemental sites to improve coverage or to replace coverage lost through changes in some of our current partnership agreements. Additional channels are being added to some sites to balance load and VIPER has been able to reduce overall system busies to below 0.1% compared to an industry acceptable standard of 3.0%.VIPER continues to investigate locations receiving system busies to determine the agency(ies) responsible to then work with the agency(ies) responsible to add additional capacity.