



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

State Highway Patrol

Roy Cooper, Governor
Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

Freddy L. Johnson, Jr.
Commander

MEMORANDUM

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

From: Erik A. Hooks, Secretary, DPS *EAH*
Freddy L. Johnson, Jr., Commander, State Highway Patrol *F.L.J.*

Subject: VIPER Quarterly Report

Date: May 15, 2021

Pursuant to Session Law 2016-94, Section 17B.1, The Department of Public Safety shall report annually no later than March 1 and quarterly thereafter 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 234 sites are constructed and on-the-air representing 97% completion. The remaining seven sites are currently underway and in varying stages of the construction process, either site engineering, resolution of leases or the completion of site construction. Four sites are fully funded however three sites still require funding in upcoming FY 22. The system currently supports 143,875 emergency users. This quarter gain represented slightly more than 2,300 additional user radios.

SUA Status - The Service Upgrade Assurance (SUA) program with Motorola is a nine-year contract with subsequent system upgrades scheduled every three (3) years. This contract has a defined, recurring funding appropriation of \$1.5M from the Legislature, which began 1 July 2019 and will be due in equal installments of \$1.5M in each budget year through FY 27-28. The completion and installation of the new GTR base station equipment in 2020 permits VIPER to move from Release 7.17 to Release 7.20 by Q4 2021. All VIPER local government partners with connected console equipment will upgrade to the latest release by Q4 2021 as well.

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May 15, 2021

Page 2

VIPER Quarterly Report

New Tower Construction Progress – VIPER completed construction and activated the new site at Charlotte (Mecklenburg County) during this last quarter. Three (3) new sites previously identified as High Top (Buncombe County), Anson W/T (Anson County), and Hayesville (Clay County) are all under construction. VIPER expects to have the Anson W/T site on the air in Q3 2021 and the Hayesville site by the end of CY 2021, weather permitting. VIPER continues to work on leases or perform engineering work at Aho in Watauga County, Hot House in Cherokee County, Big Haw in Avery County and Jones Park in Anson County. The sites at Hot House (Cherokee County), Big Haw (Avery County) and Jones Park (Anson County) are the three sites that will require funding in FY 22 to complete the construction process.

Other Significant Projects/Funding Needs:

- Microwave Upgrade: VIPER operates a statewide microwave network in conjunction with the University of North Carolina Public Television. This network utilizes T1 technology (circuit based) which has been the national standard for connectivity for over 50 years. With the transition over to Ethernet and the ability to manage bandwidth needs more efficiently, the Manufacturer (Alcatel) will no longer support our MDR-8000 microwave radios past the end of CY2021. The anticipated funding requirement for the replacement of the out dated microwave radios system wide is \$19,200,000. This funding requirement has increased from \$18,000,00 due to the increase in current equipment cost. The MDR-8000 microwave has provided sterling service to VIPER and UNC-TV, dating back as far as the mid-1990's and like most electronic equipment, they simply cannot be expected to last forever.