



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

State Highway Patrol

Roy Cooper, Governor
Cassandra Skinner Hoekstra, Interim Secretary

Freddy L. Johnson, Jr.
Commander

MEMORANDUM

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

From: Cassandra Skinner Hoekstra, Interim Secretary, DPS
Freddy L. Johnson, Jr., Commander, State Highway Patrol

Subject: VIPER Quarterly Report

Date: August 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. Five sites are fully funded however two sites still require funding in upcoming FY 23. The system currently supports 150,704 emergency users. This quarter gain represented slightly more than 6,820 additional user radios.

New Tower Construction Progress – VIPER completed no new sites 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 and Hot House in Cherokee County and Jones Pond in Anson County. Two sites are in development which are Hawshaw Mountain (Avery County), which took the place of Big Haw (Avery County) and Jones Pond (Anson County). These two sites will require funding in FY 23 to complete the construction process.

SUA Status - VIPER is scheduled to perform a Service Upgrade Assurance (SUA) update during the first two weeks of November 2021 to move the system to release 7.20.2. All VIPER local government partners with connected console equipment will also upgrade to the latest release in November 2021 as well.

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Other Significant Projects/Funding Needs:

Microwave Upgrade: VIPER is optimistic in the support demonstrated not only in Governor Cooper's budget proposal but also in the Senate and House budget proposals in obtaining funding for this essential upgrade. As stated in previous quarterly reports, the VIPER network utilizes T1 technology (circuit based) which has been the national standard for connectivity for over 50 years. With the transition over the 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 microwave radios is \$19,325,000. This funding will support the replacement of the current, end of life microwave radios beginning in FY2022.