



**CITY OF LODI
COUNCIL COMMUNICATION**

AGENDA TITLE: Approve specifications and authorize advertisement for bids for purchase and installation of Fire Department radio base station emergency alerting systems (FD)

MEETING DATE: May 19, 2004

PREPARED BY: Michael Pretz

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the City Council approve the specifications and authorize advertisement for bids for the purchase and installation of Fire Department radio base station emergency alerting systems.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The existing system through which the emergency dispatch center sends alerts to the department's station radios utilizes loud, high-pitched tones which may cause occupational hearing loss.

To help reduce the tone sound levels (and potential for hearing loss) department staff has installed volume controls on the alerting speakers in the stations. However, reducing speaker volume also affects audible clarity.

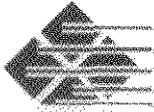
The department's 2003-2004 Financial Plan and Budget includes funding to replace the existing system

FUNDING: Fire Department 2003-2005 Financial Plan and Budget - estimate \$12,000


Michael Pretz, Fire Chief


Finance Department

APPROVED: 
H. Dixon Flynn, City Manager



FIRE STATION ALERTING



THE MODEL 10
FIRE STATION
ALERTING SYSTEM

ABOUT COMTECH

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CURRENT PRESS RELEASE

Publicity Release

Date: April 22, 2003

To: News/Features Editors

From: Elk Grove Community Services District (CSD) Fire Department

SMART ALERTING TECHNOLOGY AIDS ELK GROVE FIREFIGHTERS

Elk Grove, CA - In a field where the main goal remains "putting the wet stuff on the technology is coming to the aid of fire service responders in surprising new ways. T Community Services District (CSD) has purchased a new Fire Station Alerting syste its fire stations that will help improve the reliability of the alerting system and reduc for adjacent homeowners.

The system at Fire Station 71 on Elk Grove Boulevard was installed last August and as a test case for the new system designed and installed by ComTech Communicatio Sacramento. ComTech developed the new system after working on Elk Grove's old listening to the needs expressed by firefighting personnel. ComTech's creation com functions of two older units into one and adds additional enhancement features. Bas system's tested success in Elk Grove, ComTech hopes to launch their product nation coming months.

"The system has worked extremely well for us here," said Elk Grove CSD Fire Dep Battalion Chief Mike Zehnder. "It offers better notification to the crews and shaves seconds here and there which is good since in our business, every second counts."

Fire stations across the country are responsible for managing their own alerting tech Alerting technology works in conjunction with radio and phone dispatching transmi relayed from the 9-1-1 emergency center. Alerting technology cues firefighters of an emergency dispatch using special lights and sounds. The new Fire Station Alerting s expands on these standard features to include activating fire station lighting and res

"The automatic shutoff feature has helped us to be a better community neighbor," ex Zehnder. "With the old system, the exterior fire station radio speakers would blare t someone returned to the station to manually reset the system, now it shuts off autom within a few minutes of the crew's departure."

Additional upgrade features also enable the system to automatically shut down fire s appliances when firefighters are called away during meal times or during peak energ

periods.

Elk Grove CSD Fire Department plans to retrofit four other fire stations with the Fire Station Alerting system within the next year. The Fire Department will also be sharing its experience with the new Fire Station Alerting system with other Fire Department's across the country through a streaming media feature on the ComTech web site at www.comtechcom.net

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Our station doesn't have computer aided dispatch. Can we still use your system?

Yes, the Model 10 can integrate with any combination of 3 audio sources and CAD.

2. Can we use some of our existing equipment with your alerting system?

Yes. Since our equipment was designed with nonproprietary hardware, it is capable of integrating into existing light, speaker and communication systems. In many cases we add low voltage lighting and speakers to enhance an existing system.

3. Our personnel change dorm room assignments nightly. Can we still do individual room alerting?

Yes. The Model 10 has been designed with an optional touch screen interface which allows for changing dorm room assignments with a touch of a button. For stations that change room assignments periodically, the front data panel on the Model 10 can program the room assignments.

4. Is there a pre alert notification of an incoming call?

Yes. The system will have an announcement such as, "Station 4, incoming alert" which notifies station personnel to be notified of an incoming alert and also wake them in a manner consistent with a "heart smart" system.

5. Is your system expandable?

Yes. The basic Model 10 is capable of whole station alerting. If you wish to have individual dorm room alerting and/or apparatus specific light bars, expansion modules are available. Each expansion module has 16 inputs and 12 outputs. A fully enhanced Model 10 is capable of controlling over 500 functions in an alerting sequence. Also if you wish to have your system cover more than one building, this can be accomplished by our Remote Expansion Module. The Remote Expansion Module has the same 16x12 configuration and can be installed up to 10,000 ft from the system hub.

6. Can I use low voltage lighting with your alerting system?

Yes. Many fire stations use low voltage lighting for dorm room and hallways. This lighting is independent of the existing 110 lighting system and is used to light the way from the dorm room to the apparatus bay. Our low voltage lights are red in color which help retain the night vision of the system personnel.

7. We are in a quiet residential neighborhood. How do you handle the volume of the alerting system?

alerting sequence?

We design our fire station alerting and speaker systems with being a good neighbor. Since most station personnel are in the house in the evening, we mute the outside speaker so the neighborhood remains quiet. The volume of the speakers in the house also lowers the volume of the house itself being quieter at night.

8. In our city the fire station is considered a community safe house. Have you any provisions for this?

Since many fire stations are becoming community safe houses, we have integrated the radio alert of the station into the speaker system. Similar to the radio alert, a voice alert will notify station personnel that someone is at the door. This notification will go thru the stations' speaker system so station personnel can hear it even if they are in a remote area of the station.

9. Why do you recommend putting apparatus specific light bars in the house?

In most houses, there are places that can become quite noisy. In these instances, we recommend putting apparatus specific light bars to assist station personnel. For example, if there is an emergency call in the apparatus bay while an alert is coming into the station, station personnel only need to look at a light bar to see if the call is for their particular company. Some examples of places where light bars are the apparatus bay, dorm rooms, weight rooms, tv rooms and outside basketball courts.

10. What kind of fail safe features have you built into your system?

There are a few features of the Model 10 that will help to ensure the station will always receive their alert. If for any reason, the main hub should lose power, an audible alert tone will be sent to the speaker system to notify station personnel of the problem. If the main logic controller should fail, the alerting process will revert to whole station alerting. The system will lose its "whistles" but the station will not lose the alert.

11. Are there any recurring monthly expenses? No. The Model 10 Fire Station Alerting System is a stand alone piece of equipment which does not require any additional monthly expenses.

12. How does your warranty work?

The Model 10 Fire Station Alerting System has a one year factory warranty for parts and labor. This warranty is upgradeable to 3 years and service contracts are also available. If the system is found to be in need of service, Comtech will ship a replacement unit to the station. The replacement unit will then be shipped back to Comtech Communications. Preliminary trouble shooting can be done with the data panel on the front of the hub or thru your local service provider.

13. Can we buy your system one station at a time or do all the stations have to be bought at once?

Since the Model 10 integrates into your existing communication system it can be purchased on a station by station basis.

14. We have a multi-building fire station complex. Can your alerting system work in a multi-building fire station complex?

multiple buildings?

Yes. With the use of our Remote Expansion Module, the Model 10 is capable of handling the alerting process which requires going into multiple buildings.

15. How do we make changes/modifications to your system? The data panel located in front of the Model 10 can handle most of the modifications that a station will need. These changes include timers for lights and speakers as well as dorm room assignments. If you wish to reconfigure your systems' capabilities, it may require a software upgrade. In some cases, we will ship a modem and download the changes directly into the system hub.

16. Why do you emphasize that you don't use proprietary hardware?

By not using proprietary hardware, we are able to easily integrate into existing systems and provide the best products available to suit our customers' needs.

17. Is your alerting system a "one system fits all" solution or is there room for customization?

The Model 10 Fire Station Alerting System was engineered with the most popular features in mind. The versatility of design does allow for system customization. Please contact us if you know what you have in mind.

18. In your system can stations be alerted remotely or does the alert have to be from the 911 dispatch center?

The Model 10 Fire Station Alerting System is capable of handling most types of radio dispatch. This allows a department the option of utilizing a redundant signaling path in cases of radio or on site dispatch. With this feature, other departments in the district can be set up to use the dispatch centers.

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