

MRGDC Regional Trunk System in Danger of Shutting Down due to Declining Funds



Forrest Anderson, MRGDC Director for 911 & HLS addresses audience of law enforcement agencies and the nine county region Sheriffs departments of critical situation regarding decommissioning the Regional Trunked Radio System RTRS).

The Middle Rio Grande Development Council held a meeting on Thursday July 23rd at the Uvalde County Fairplex Facility, on the possibility of having to decommission the Regional Trunk Radio System (RTRS) if funding is not made available by state and federal funds.

The presentation by Forrest Anderson, 9-1-1 & Homeland Security Director and Spade Condry , Telecommunications Coordinator, explained the critical situation that Sheriff's Departments ,City Police Departments , Volunteer Fire Departments, as well as state and federal agencies that included: National Park Service, Texas Department of Public Safety, TXDPS Department of Emergency Management, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Parks

and Wildlife Department, United States Border Patrol, and the United States Marshall Service, would have, if funds are not secured to continue providing the interoperable communications system that has been in place over the past ten years.

The RTRS provides 2-way radio roaming coverage to over 27,000 square miles along and away from the Texas-Mexico border through major highway corridors that cross the MRGDC nine county region and beyond. With TXDot partnership, the seamless radio coverage beyond the region is extended beyond 32, 000 square miles. Operating within the Texas "System of Systems" radio coverage can be extended across the state of Texas and beyond.

To fund the basic maintenance of the RTRS will require approximately \$250,000 per year and does not include administrative cost or future equipment upgrades.

Nick Gallegos, Executive Director of MRGDC stated that *"Our region cannot afford to lose this vital communication system that has taken a decade to complete at a cost of over \$10 Million Dollars. Our COG is the only COG in Texas that has 100% participation and has reached a Level 5 Status which is the highest level possible with the state. We are working with our elected officials and legislators in getting their support in procuring emergency funding to continue providing our communities with a communications system that first responders critically need to protect and save lives"*.

The Middle Rio Grande Development Council and their elected officials have reached out to both state and federal elected, but more help is needed from the first responder community.

For a copy of the information provided at the meeting on the MRGDC RTRS System, please go to following link:

<http://www.mrgdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/RTRS1.pdf>