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Statewide upgrade plan of MARCS overviewed April 18

The Ohio Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS) Steering Committee will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesday, April 18 at the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy, 740 E. 17th Ave., Columbus, 43211, in Classroom C.

Agenda items include a detailed overview of the statewide upgrade plan. DAS has been OK'd to seek the Controlling Board's approval to issue certificates of participation to fund the MARCS upgrade to Project 25 standards, which are standards for digital radio communication for use by federal, state and local public safety agencies in North America to enable them to communicate with other agencies and mutual-aid response teams during emergencies.

Currently, the MARCS system is at capacity with roughly 48,000 radios on the system and is reaching the end of its reliable life. The upgrade will expand capacity to more than 100,000 radios. In addition, a new U.S. Federal Communications Commission requirement taking effect Jan. 1 will require many local government entities to upgrade their radio systems. The goal of the State of Ohio is to encourage local government entities to become customers of the upgraded MARCS system. The upgrade will provide customers with a long-term solution while allowing the state as a whole to leverage assets and deliver one comprehensive radio system.

MARCS is the State of Ohio's comprehensive wireless communications system for police, fire, emergency medical services and other public safety forces. MARCS provides wireless voice and mobile data for state agencies, including the Ohio departments of Natural Resources, Public Safety, Rehabilitation and Correction, and Transportation. MARCS also provides wireless radio service for nearly 1,300 county, township, federal and private first-responders.

MARCS is administered by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services.