

MARCS Strategic Roaming

- MARCS policy hasn't been updated since the start of the program. Most talkgroups have statewide roaming access.
- Due to the growth of MARCS, we are starting to see indications that resources may be made unavailable during emergency situations due to spurious out-of-area traffic.

How it all works

- When a radio is “tuned” to a talkgroup, it will “ask” the tower if the requested talkgroup is available on that tower. This process is called affiliation.
- Each time a Push-to-Talk (PTT) is executed on a talkgroup, all radios affiliated to that talkgroup will receive the transmission.
- If there is a radio “listening” to a talkgroup out of its local area, it will consume a channel on the tower the radio is registered to each time a PTT is executed. This reduces the number of available channels to local first responders.
- Most MARCS sites have 6-8 channels per site.

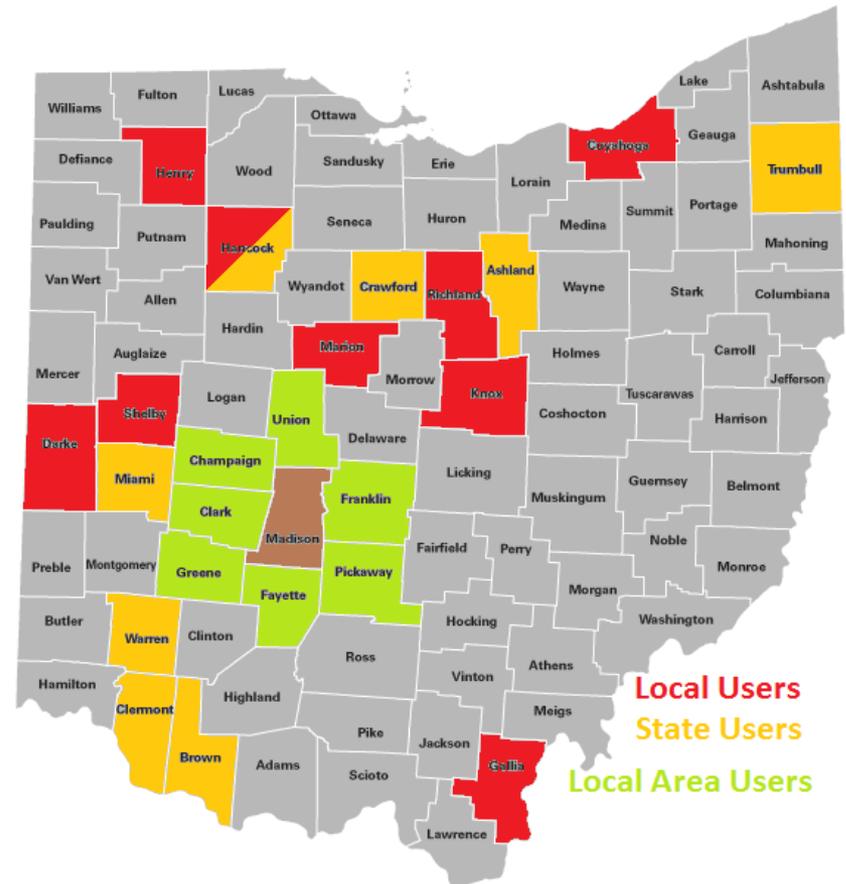
A recent example of roaming gone wrong Fallen Officers' Memorial Ceremony

On May 2, 2019 at 11am, the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission held a special memorial ceremony at their training academy in London.

During this time, the MARCS London site had 110 system busies during 24 distinctive events. The outage lasted about 10 minutes in total.

What happened to the London Site?

- MARCS Helpdesk received a call from Madison County EMA concerning busies they were receiving when attempting to communicate with the London tower.
- These busies followed a pattern. One set occurred from 10:00-10:40am. The second set occurred from 12:24-1:07pm. The site was operating normally after this period and between the two periods
- Talkgroups Involved:
 - 26 State Agency Talkgroups
 - 30 Local Agency Talkgroups
 - 17 Out-of-Area Talkgroups (Red and Orange)
- Had there been an emergency during these two periods, public safety would have been affected.
- A similar pattern affected the Franklin County – Darby Creek site during the same times.



Coordination

- This subject has been raised at numerous meetings since October 2018. Feedback received from these meetings has been overwhelmingly positive.
- SIEC SOP Committee aided in the development of the concepts in the new MPP 16.
- At a recent SWIC meeting, we learned Ohio is one of the few large systems left in the country to implement this concept.

Implementation Plan

- MARCS will work with each county and state agency on the talkgroup limitations and sites included in their profile. The area will usually be the home county and one surrounding county UNLESS there is a tower that provides beneficial coverage to a home county/region (like the Centerburg example). Counties served by a simulcast would be restricted to that simulcast configuration.
- Some exceptions to the above concept may be made for OPERATIONAL reasons.
- Each county already has a statewide Sheriff's Office hailing talkgroup provided by MARCS that can be used as a reachback by roaming units. Other "travel talkgroups" will be coordinated by MARCS with each county/state agency. These "travel talkgroups" will not be used as dispatch talkgroups. MARCS will monitor all travel talkgroups for usage.