

LA-RICS inks deal with Motorola Solutions for public-safety LTE network

Urgent Communications By Donny Jackson March 6, 2014

Board members for the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System Authority (LA-RICS) today approved a \$175 million contract with [Motorola Solutions](#) to construct a public-safety [LTE](#) network that is scheduled to be completed next summer.

"Proceeding with this wireless public-safety broadband network for the Los Angeles region will assist LA-RICS in fulfilling its goal of providing the finest public-safety-grade, mission-critical communications to the region's public-safety professionals," LA-RICS Executive Director Patrick Mallon said in a prepared statement.

Funded primarily with \$154.6 million in federal grants from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) administered by the [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) ([NTIA](#)), the 231-site LA-RICS network will be the largest public-safety broadband network in the U.S. until [FirstNet](#) begins its deployments in earnest. Under existing NTIA rules, LA-RICS must complete the public-safety LTE project by Aug. 15, 2015.

LA-RICS will use the 20 MHz of 700 MHz spectrum licensed to FirstNet under the terms of a spectrum-lease agreement that was signed last August. The primary condition of that agreement is that LA-RICS officials will ensure that the LTE network being built by Motorola Solutions will meet the [interoperability](#) and reliability standards of the FirstNet system.

LA-RICS is one of only four entities that has signed a spectrum-lease agreement with [FirstNet](#) to use the 20 MHz of contiguous spectrum in the 700 MHz band that is licensed to FirstNet for the purpose of supporting a nationwide broadband network for public safety. As a condition of that agreement, the LA-RICS project must integrate with the nationwide LTE network that FirstNet eventually will build.

As part of the new contract, Motorola Solutions will provide an evolved packet core, a Band Class 14 eNodeB for each of the 231 sites, and 1,000 VML 700 LTE vehicle modems "for the initial testing" of the LA-RICS LTE network, according to a Motorola Solutions press release.

"Public-safety agencies throughout the Los Angeles region will benefit tremendously from a new LTE broadband network delivering mission-critical data every day," Mark Moon, Motorola Solutions executive vice president, said in a prepared statement. "The region places a high priority on its first responders, and this broadband public-safety network will help them communicate more effectively with advanced video and data capabilities.

"Motorola Solutions knows the importance of public-safety communications, and we greatly appreciate being chosen by LA-RICS to use our experience to build an advanced data network as well as an interoperable radio system to serve the entire region."

Of the 17 LA-RICS board members, 14 voted for the [Motorola Solutions LTE](#) contract, with one member voting in opposition, one member abstaining and one member absent from the meeting, according to sources. The contract was signed shortly after the LA-RICS board meeting. Last week, LA-RICS board declined to vote on the contract with Motorola Solutions, opting to conduct more due diligence before considering the contract during today's meeting.

Last August, Mallon and other [LA-RICS officials made a presentation to the FirstNet board](#) to outline the long-term communications plan for LA-RICS that includes the use of both [P25](#) LMR and LTE technologies.

Mallon told the [FirstNet](#) board that the LTE project is critical for public-safety communications, because Los Angeles public-safety entities are required to vacate their LMR operations from the T-Band spectrum (470-512 MHz) by 2021, and there is not enough spectrum available in other bands to simply migrate existing narrowband systems. Instead, LA-RICS hopes to offload enough non-mission-critical voice traffic to the LTE system to allow mission-critical voice communications to be carried over narrowband public-safety channels in the UHF and 700 MHz bands.

[LA-RICS signed a contract with Motorola Solutions to build the P25 network](#) at a cost that could total \$149.6 million, if all phases of the plan are deployed. LA-RICS issued an RFP for the LTE network in August and began contract negotiations with Motorola Solutions in December for the project.

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