

Local Service Initiatives

Name of Initiative: Homeland Security Emergency Communications

Station: NJN Public Television and Radio

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Briefly describe the initiative and be as specific as you can be about the products or services that the initiative includes.

In the post 9-11 world and with its new wireless broadband capabilities, NJN has expanded its role as the State's emergency broadcast network, using its high-speed, wireless digital broadcast capabilities to support a regional homeland security alert system that can alert, mobilize and provide situation awareness to first responders, government agencies and the general public in response to acts of terrorism, weather emergencies and natural disasters.

NJN has developed a number of pioneering projects in the area of emergency communications that will provide substantial benefits to the people of New Jersey. Four of NJN's current homeland security projects in development include:

Oyster Creek: March 2003, NJN partnered with the State Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to use NJN's datacast capabilities to send emergency management data to OEM sites in the Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) around the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station. An MOU is pending with the OEM to make this project fully operational and have NJN deliver emergency information to additional EPZs around the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Facility and around the Salem Nuclear Power Plant.

U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Research, Development, and Engineering Center (CERDEC): NJN has a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with CERDEC to use NJN's digital towers and datacasting capabilities to transmit and receive CERDEC's Shared Situational Awareness information; broadcast federal and inter-regional information; communicate to those not included or directly connected to the Regional Information Joint Awareness Network; broadcast training and awareness programs, provide traffic and weather advisories and more.

NJN DigitalSecure: NJN is working with key industry sector partners to provide business and industry with a wireless all-hazards preparedness network for emergency management and ongoing training

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey: NJN is partnering with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Planning Group to explore the potential of this digital emergency communications system to support a regional homeland security alert system.

How does this initiative fit into your "portfolio" of other Local Service Initiatives? Is it one of many initiatives and projects, or does it take the bulk of your "Local" resources?

For more than three decades, NJN has used the power of its reach to provide quality educational programming that promotes literacy for children and adults; to offer public affairs programming that fosters statewide civic discourse; to chronicle New Jersey's history; to provide universal access to culture and the arts; and to celebrate the state's diversity. Since 9/11, NJN has intensified its role as the State's emergency broadcast network and has developed an extensive track record in emergency communications. It has taken a leadership role in using digital broadcast technology in support of the region's homeland defense and security capabilities. It remains one of many initiatives and projects.

What station assets, competencies and/or relationships does the initiative build upon?

NJN has taken a leadership role in using digital broadcast technology in support of the region’s homeland defense and security capabilities. NJN has forged strong working partnerships with the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, New Jersey Office of Counter Terrorism, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Planning Group, and the New Jersey Department of Education, as well as with technology industry leaders, and will draw on these relationships to achieve its objectives outlined in this grant application.

How would you describe the community benefit of this work? What needs are being addressed?

This benefits all people of New Jersey by addressing the ongoing need for disaster preparedness.

Who is the “customer?”

First responders, government officials, industry sector leaders, and the general public

How do you know or measure if the customer’s needs are being met?

NJN serves on the New Jersey Domestic Security Infrastructure Advisory Task Force and has been part of the planning efforts for statewide emergency communications plan. We also convene meetings with end users to assess their needs.

Who benefits from the initiative?

First responders, government officials, industry sector leaders, and the general public.

How do you measure the benefits?

We have established advisory groups to review and plan and gain feedback. Here are some examples of support:

“Through the use of datacasting, we can reach more of the people, more of the time ,over a variety of re-transmission mediums” Reynold Hoover, Director, Office of National Security Coordinator, Director, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security

“The New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, chaired by the Attorney General, has formally recognized the need to incorporate (NJN’s) digital spectrum as part of our state domestic security preparedness strategy. “It is critical to these plans that the NJN digital network be completed, including the integration with the nationwide public television digital network. There is no other source for these services to meet our long term digital communication needs in the manner offered by NJN network and its national affiliate network.” New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force White September 2002

“We have been able to capitalize on the NJN technology to improve our ability to communicate during stressful times of emergency within the state, using the datacasting capabilities and our own helicopters.” Major General (Ret) Tom Garrett, Former Chief, Homeland Security, NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

(During the TOPOFF 3 terrorism response exercise that took place April 4-8, 2005), “When the satellite network receiver equipment, sponsored by the Federal government, failed, NJN’s wireless digital signal sent the vital information through to the people who needed it most – securely and in a timely manner.” Lori Hennon-Bell, former Lieutenant Colonial Commanding Officer, Homeland Security Division, New Jersey State Police, Office of Emergency Management.

**Describe the financial model for the initiative, being as specific as possible. How much does it cost?
What are the sources and amount of revenue? How does it fit into your station's overall economic model?**

We have entered into agreements that cover the cost of equipment. We have developed a business plan that includes a fee-for-service model. Each receiver site and installation varies according to usage, and may be approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000. We just submitted a proposal to the National Institute of Justice for a school safety initiative and are pursuing other federal homeland security funding

Could other stations use this idea or model? Would it work for any size station or licensee type?

Yes – the DEAS project will be expanding and other applications are replicable

***Please send this information to Brian Edstrom: bedstrom@tpt.org**