

NEWS LETTER

Outage in Avonlea: a Successful Recovery From an Unfortunate Mishap

On Tuesday, March 22, 2011, at 7:18 a.m, RCMP Network Monitoring in Ottawa knew something was wrong in Avonlea. By 7:28 a.m, the local on-call RCMP Technician had been alerted. He determined that the site was completely down and no remote troubleshooting could occur. The expected cause was ice buildup on the tower. Users were notified of the outage by 9:23 a.m.



Extreme weather warnings and no-travel advisories were in effect so RCMP technicians were unable to get to the site until the next morning. Even then, they had to use snow machines to make the journey. After a four-hour trek, the technicians arrived at the site to discover that not only was the antenna iced, it was on the ground and it had pulled the entire shelter over as well.

With the site offline for the near future, the RCMP immediately contacted the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing (CPSP) to request that a PPSTN Mobile Communications Trailer (MCT) be deployed to Avonlea. Less than an hour and a half later the MCT was fuelled and en-route. Engineers worked to ensure the system was adequately prepared to make full use of the mobile site the MCT provides.

The extensive damage also necessitated some type of temporary shelter until a new shelter could be erected. Prairie Mobile, who also makes use of the Avonlea area antenna, graciously agreed to move PPSTN equipment inside its shelter until a more permanent arrangement could be made.

Unfortunately, there was still some significant difficulty in getting the new network equipment

out to the site, requiring CPSP to deploy its Hagglund tracked vehicles.

Working with Prairie Mobile, RCMP technicians were able to get a new rack, router and switch installed in their building. Permission was granted by Industry Canada to use a different frequency group for the site on an emergency basis.

The site was activated on April 8th.



While it certainly wasn't easy, cooperation and ingenuity allowed the PPSTN partners to successfully recover from an unfortunate mishap with a minimal disruption to front-line communications. Full replacement of the site commenced as soon as weather permitted.

PPSTN Operational Transition

The PPSTN is moving forward into its operational phase and John Leitch has joined the team to lead the PPSTN through the transition process. John comes to the project from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police where his most recent posting was the Officer in Charge of Informatics for F Division RCMP (Saskatchewan). As part of that role, John managed the RCMP portion of the PPSTN. He has an extensive background of frontline operational service with the Force and is keenly aware of the needs of frontline responders. Welcome to the team, John.

Radio Coverage

The PPSTN continues to move forward with its commitment to address coverage concerns. Work continues to rollout Phase 5b which will see eleven new sites commissioned across the province this summer and a number of repeater sites created to improve coverage in localized areas.

Further development continues on mobile, in-vehicle repeaters, which may provide significant support for tactical portable radio communications for front-line users.

PPSTN User Committee

The newly reformed User Committee (UC) met on March 29th in Regina to review its Terms of Reference. The UC's mandate is to bring forward the needs of various PPSTN users to help establish priorities and make recommendations to the Management Committee.

The UC's mandate also focuses heavily on interoperability. While the PPSTN certainly provides the technical platform for interoperable communication, considerable work must be done to develop effective front-line protocols to make use of the PPSTN's capabilities.

The UC selected Robin Litzenberger of the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure Transport Compliance Branch to serve as Chair for the next year. The PPSTN User Committee representatives are:

Name	Representing	Role
Robin Litzenberger (Ministry of Highways)	Provincial Government Agencies	Chair and Primary Rep
Ron Erickson (Ministry of Environment)	Provincial Government Agencies	Alternate Rep
Norbert LeBlanc (Sask Assoc. of Fire Chiefs)	Fire Service	Primary Rep
Erwin Jackson (Sask Volunteer Fire Fighter Assoc.)	Fire Service	Alternate Rep
Gerry Schriemer (Sask Emergency Medical Services Association)	EMS	Primary Rep
Ross Reaburn (Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region)	EMS	Alternate Rep
Troy Cooper (Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police)	Police Services	Primary Rep
Howard Georgeson (Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police)	Police Services	Alternate Rep
Richard Kent (Prince Albert Grand Council)	Special Services	Primary Rep
Sharla Winter-Martin (Canadian Border Services)	Special Services	Alternate Rep
Lisa Cooper	RCMP	Primary Rep
Thomas Stewart	RCMP	Alternate Rep
Ken Rebrinsky	SaskPower	Primary Rep
Sean Wierl	SaskPower	Alternate Rep
Rick Galloway	Corrections Public Safety and Policing	Primary Rep & Facilitator

PPSTN and STARS

The Province has recently announced that the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS), based in Alberta, will be expanding its services into Saskatchewan. It will deploy from Regina and Saskatoon.

As PPSTN users and members of the public safety community you may have a role to play in supporting these aircraft as they land at and depart from medical emergency sites. Safe helicopter landings and takeoffs require significant coordination between ground and air crews. This helps ensure that emergencies are safely and successfully addressed.

The PPSTN enthusiastically welcomes STARS to the province and looks forward to working with them in the future.

Did You Know?

Every front-line responder has access to the interoperable radio talk-groups “Public” 1-6. These are the first flush of talk-groups that EMS, Fire, Municipal Police, the RCMP and other public safety groups will utilize to facilitate tactical inter-agency communication.



**Saskatchewan
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