



**Warren C. Evans**  
**Sheriff**

# News Release

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## Sheriff & County Executive announce major Homeland Security upgrade

### ◆ *Sheriff's Office nears completion of new \$2M all digital radio/dispatch system*

Residents of Wayne County soon will have a much greater level of protection in the event of a major Homeland Security incident, thanks to a new \$2 million state-of-the-art communications system being unveiled this week, Sheriff Warren C. Evans announced today.

Deputies have begun transitioning from the department's old analog radio system to join the Michigan State Police, Detroit Police Department and many other agencies on the new statewide standard 800MHz digital system. Doing so, Evans said, will allow the state's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest law enforcement agency to communicate seamlessly with other major police departments across Michigan in the event of an emergency.

"During a critical incident, information is our most precious commodity and, quite frankly, we've been at a disadvantage in recent years," Evans said. "Upgrading to the digital statewide system is a major step forward in our efforts to keep Wayne County residents safe and our region's critical assets secure."

With the help of Wayne County Executive Robert A. Ficano, Evans' office was able to obtain funding for 600 digital handheld radios and new consoles and other equipment for its Regional Dispatch Center. The work on the Dispatch Center was completed earlier this week and the radios are currently now deployed throughout the department.

Evans said that improving his agency's communications system has been a top priority since August of 2003, when a massive blackout across the northeastern United States left 50 million people in the dark. The biggest hurdle, he says, was finding the funding during tough budgetary times.

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“The blackout revealed to us perhaps our greatest weakness at that time and I knew we needed to make a change before the next critical incident occurred,” Evans said. “It has been a long road, but thanks to County Executive Ficano, we were able to obtain the funding we desperately needed for this important upgrade.”

Ficano, who created the County’s first Department of Homeland Security five years ago, said he wanted to make sure that First Responders have the most reliable and up to date equipment at their disposal.

“Citizens rely on us to protect them in times of crisis and Wayne County has made a commitment to providing sheriff’s deputies and our local police departments with the resources they need to do their jobs safely and effectively,” Ficano said. “The Department of Homeland Security and the Sheriff’s Office have been working very closely to prepare for the unexpected.”

#### New system fixes other shortcomings

Not only will the Sheriff’s Office be able to more effectively communicate with other agencies, Evans said, internal communications will improve significantly.

“This new system will eliminate the problem of radio “dead zones” in certain areas of the county that were a concern with the analog system,” Evans said. “It also will provide a much clearer signal, reducing the need to repeat information that may have been difficult to hear due to static or other issues.”