Cary Radio Patches

05/13/06 20 W - **+** 25 **-** 17

What's the story on why the radio patches from Cary to Wake County always sound so strange?

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the bigger question is why in the heck does everybody in wake and durham county have mutual aid 1-15 in their radios (including dispatch centers) but they still insist on patching a wake county tac channel to a mutual aid channel…. or how about when Raleigh Central patched Fire Ops 1 to Mutual Aid 1…. patched two channels on the same freakin system…. what is the point of even having mutual aid channels when they are patching stuff? The reason it sounds like crap is because there is a delay in the system and it absolutely causes havoc if you are standing near somebody who is say on Mutaul Aid 11, and you are on Tac 14 and they are patched… The patches need to be abolished and the mutual aid channels used as they are intended to, everybody on ONE channel with seamless communications. There have already been instances where transmissions have been missed and/or lost… and it's a matter of time before it causes somebody to get hurt or worse. It is a very serious issue in alot of people's minds… but it doesn't seem to matter as the great Locutuion cannot assign a mutual aid channel when she dispatches… even though it's listed in the narrative. Heaven forbid the dispatchers do their jobs… /rant

CFP 7021 - 05/13/06 - 23:35

One reason to patch two channels on the same system is when units are already operating, say on Ops 1, and then get some mutual aid that is not on the Wake system, assign the mutual aid to Mutual Aid 1 and patch the two talkgroups together. That allows all the responders to communicate but does not require units that are in the middle of an operation to change talkgroups.

guest - 05/14/06 - 03:12

unless it is a working incident I would much rather switch channels to ensure seamless communications without the delay and loss of sound quality, as it is I already switch to the mutual aid channel even if locution assigns a tac channel if the other units are operating on the mutual aid channel. it is crazy to patch unless the sound quality is identical and there is no delay. we can put a damn man on the moon and send satellites to the outer reaches of the galaxy, but can't get a freakin patch on a multi million dollar radio system that's worth a crap. and as for your point above, if the mutual aid units are not on the wake county system then they should be on a non-wake county system mutual aid channel. otherwise we should all be on the same channel. the case that I was talking about is when a given dept was on an ops channel and EMS was requested and they put EMS on Mutual aid 1 and patched it with Ops 1. It was for a simple call, reassign it to a PS TAC and leave the dang patches to cover the holes in your jeans….

CFP 7021 - 05/14/06 - 03:55

Maybe a better solution would for the "Great Carpital County" to have one unified Emergency Opertions Center to handle and dispatch all emergency dispatches in the county. One problem is that with multiple dispatch centers (and systems) sometime the right hand doesnt know what the left hand is doing, thus you wind up with multiple units responding to a call or in some cases no units responding because "we thought they had it". For example, Ten-Ten road is in the City limits of Cary, however at any given moment Cary can get a call and dispatch units, RW911 can get the same call and dispatch Fairview and then, yes, Apex wants in on the action and sends some folks. Guess what, everybody is on a different channel.

fireone - 05/19/06 - 02:27

I never really have understood all of Cary's thinking, and the radio system is no different. It's just one of the many things that frustrate us. Like, why drive through one fire department's district to get to parts of your own district? What ever happened to "closest unit response?" Personally, I don't care what fire district the call is in, if there is a unit closer they need to be there. Then again, those aren't my decisions to make.

guest - 05/19/06 - 02:54

well quite frankly it is nice to have your own dispatch center, esp. with RW911 being so understaffed and still not having this whole 800 thing worked out yet. I think one CAD system would be the best option for areas wanting their own dispatch centers. Tricomm is a great thing, but have you ever listened to it? It is utterly crazy the amount of back and forth that goes on between RW911, Apex and Cary. EMS is the worst, there are units on the go constantly as the west side of the county is understaffed for EMS. As for the closest district stuff, it'll always be a mess in this county until annexations are not longer an issue, after all you have no legal obligation to respond "closest district", you only have

to respond to your district or within the city limits, I think we've been down that road of discussion on this site before. I don't know what the plans are, but I do know that Cary is looking to spend a good sum of money in the next few years for communications upgrades, as I've heard before they prefer to be on a system that they own, maintain and have control over, versus a system that belongs to the state and requires what seems to be an act of congress to get changes done to. A perfect world if we had to start from scratch, one dispatch center, with adequate staffing to control all of EMS, Fire and Law Enforcement for the whole county, with dedicated consoles for say Raleigh Fire, Cary Fire, regional couunty fire and EMS, etc… but since we've already had 3 or more dispatch centers the best we can hope for is more integration and better communications.

CFP 7021 - 05/19/06 - 16:20

To answer the first question, the sound quality issues are due to bridging analog and digital talkgroups. As for their purpose in the first place, the system is designed to ensure that no one operating on an incident has to change from their originally assigned talkgroup – not the most appealing act in gloves looking through smoke. With tens of thousands of dispatches annually through the RW911 center, standardizing processes requires keeping them simple. Therefore, the interoperability solution was created to "bridge" the Cary and Wake County radio systems – this also allows units to maintain home system features (system IDs at consoles, emergency buttons, etc.), while having interoperability with surrounding agencies. Once all of the adjacent systems are digital (up to 10 years at last report), the patches will be virtually invisible. To go with 7021s suggestion and assign the Mutual Aid TGs up front, there would have to be significant revisions within CAD – due to talkgroups are assigned as units by the system based on call class.

[jaolson] ([Email](mailto:)) - 05/20/06 - 07:15

"there would have to be significant revisions within CAD"

once again my point, taking the human out of the dispatch isn't always the best thing… I love it when the call is dispatched on "tac 14" and then in the comments it says "mutual aid 11". While locution is great, it has a long way to go… I cannot believe that a system that cost as much as this one did has as many problems as it does… not recognizing out of county addresses, calls being "refer to pager for.. incident type, address, units, etc" not to mention the times that going mutual aid to a call and it pages out the address of the fire station and you have to read the narrative on a pager or rip and run to figure out what's going on. Quirks yes, fixable? hopefully… annoying yes…

CFP 7021 - 05/20/06 - 13:39

couple more ideas and thoughts…

"As for their purpose in the first place, the system is designed to ensure that no one operating on an incident has to change from their originally assigned talkgroup – not the most appealing act in gloves looking through smoke"

I'm more referring to the calls that are interagency from the start, than the ones that escilate to a multi-agency.

if the whole sound quality item is due to digital/analog… simple fix… assign mutual aid channels (ie if raleigh/county is going with cary) assign the raleigh/county unit to mutual aid 1-5, then patch that to mutual aid 11-15. now we're analog to analog, everybody is on their own system. but as has been stated the CAD system doesn't even recognize channels that are in the radios… this is crazy.

The biggest thing that a patch does in my mind is create confusion, you have units calling one dispatch center on "mutual aid 11" and others calling another on "tac 14". can you imagine how confusing it is to be on a call and hear somebody talking and saying "engine 2 to central on tac 14" and you know that you're engine 2 and you're on mutual aid 11? not to mention when you hear the wrong central answer (usually cary answering, we know how well raleigh listens).

crazy

CFP 7021 - 05/20/06 - 13:50

Regarding CAD curiosities, "refer to pager" is an intentional feature for at least one reason: when a call taker is still talking to the person with an emergency, they can enter enough information to generate a dispatch 30/60/90/120 seconds ahead of dispatching when they conclude the call. I believe I was also told that it helps speed up dispatches when multiple calls are queued. Also also, I'm guessing that the system has not been programmed with the spoken sound of every possible unit in a fire department's fleet. For example, I don't believe I have ever heard Locution say "mini" or "mini pumper" for RFD dispatches. "Refer to pager" instead.

Legeros - 05/20/06 - 14:01

Ahh hogwash, the address is on the screen but the computer for whatever reason can't say the address, due to poor programming or whatever the reason. I can't count the amount of times that RW911 has asked for an address to input the call into the system, typically from calls that

originate from departments themselves calling in incidents… from the way it sounds they must have an address to input the call. I also have heard mini-pumper dispatched when they have sent Durham Highway's mini pumper, and quite frankly that is a poor excuse for a system that cost as much as it did to have issues like "it wasn't programmed to do that" to me that's somebody not doing the job that the taxpayers paid for them to do. I know the system is a vast improvment over what we used to have, but it seems like there was not enough planning or execution before the system went live. You would have to figure that the company(ies) that put it together have done it before and would be aware of what problems could arise and be able to make sure it wasn't happening for us.
CFP 7021 - 05/20/06 - 15:54

As far as programming CAD goes, can you imagine the programmer's face when someone finally set them down and said:

"OK, here's what you need to know to program the CAD system for Wake County: (you may want to write this down). Some departments go only by name. There's thirteen Engine 1's in this county, you need to put that in there. Might be important. One is in Raleigh, one is in Cary, some are in the county. Those in the county have to have the department's name attached. Now not all departments have an Engine one, 'naw, that would be stupid. Some use a different numbering system depending on where you are in the county, and whether this Chief gets along with that Chief. Can you progam "like" in the system? Maybe that should just be "refer to pager for feelings."

"Now when you start programming the CAD for aerials, some are called Ladders, some are called Trucks. But not all Trucks are aerials. Raleigh has a Truck 11 and it's an aerial, Eastern Wake has a Truck 11 but's it's a Rescue. But they call it Truck 11. This isn't going to be a problem, is it? Good."

"Now as far as EMS goes, when you start programming that, there's EMS units in the county that are called EMS 1, EMS 2, etc. But when you get to Cary, they are called Medics, like Medic 1, Medic 21, etc. But some of the units in the county are based on the fire departmet numbering system that we don't use, like Garner is 8, (but they don't know that, so don't tell 'em), so their EMS unit is 871, 872, etc."

"Now, once you have that figured out, there's Eastern Wake EMS, who decided to do their own thing, because….. we'll we don't know why and we didn't stop them. So their units are Eastern Wake Medic 71, Medic 72, and so on. Confused yet?"

"We'll leave you here in this rubber room in the basement to try and figure it out. Call us when you do. Oh, yeah, we have SRs, FRs, Squads, Rescues and other things, and they are all different. See how it works? Did anyone go over what a "Car" means in this county? They didn't? OK, write this down……."
harkey ([Email]) ([Web Site]) - 05/20/06 - 19:14

they did actually eliminate alot of references and made some depts rename their trucks, like no more SR for Fairview and Garner, or FR for EWFR, but I (as you already know) are in total agreement that there needs to be a comprehensive numbering system in this county. But the way that CAD was programmed they didn't care what the truck was called, as each piece of equipment was matched to what that specific piece had on it, ie extrication, aerial, brush capable, drop tank, first responder, etc… so really the CAD doesn't care if it's a truck, ladder, aerial, engine, brush, tanker, tender, helicopter or anything else, once it's assigned a name then it is designated where it is stationed and what attributes it has. IE why WWFR had (past tense) a structural pumper and a tanker dispatched to brush fires, because the CAD was programmed that the pumper was "brush capable" so when it looked in the system for a "brush capable" unit it found the pumper and dispatched it… even though WWFR had a brush truck it was (past tense) never dispatched. Like I said you can call it whatever you want, the system doesn't care, all it's looking for is its attributes, IE for a wreck if the given dept said it wanted one extrication capable truck and one engine, the system just looks for the closest units meeting that description… it's really a good system if all the trucks in the county were staffed… but as with volunteer departments it doesn't work that well all of the time because if you take the only pumper out of service at a given station, but have a pumper/tanker that isn't defined in the system as a pumper it will skip over it and dispatch the next closest pumper. That's why you're not seeing depts marking alot of trucks out of service, because they have found a way to make it work, and just call swap, versus being skipped over entirely.
CFP 7021 - 05/20/06 - 23:34

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