

JOSEPH A. GERACE
SHERIFF



CHARLES J. HOLDER
UNDERSHERIFF

April 25, 2008

**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY**

Peter R. Kehoe
Counsel and Executive Director
NYSSA
27 Elk Street
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Peter:

I am writing to give you an update on our progress with the Statewide Radio Network (SWN) radio system. Criticism seems to travel much faster than accolades do.

As a preface to my comments, you should know that we currently operate on high VHF (156.210 mhz) on a radio system that was designed during the MRD program in the late 70's and early 80's. We have 5 tower sites with voting receivers, no repeater. We have 1069 square miles of terrain which is very diverse. This has been a frustrating system with gaps in our service areas and no interoperability with fire or EMS. Field units must rely on dispatch to relay information as cars cannot talk directly to one another unless they are close enough for the radios to reach directly. We were in the process of designing and building a new system when the SWN project was announced. As a result of the announcement, our project came to a screeching halt. After considerable research and discussion, we decided to become full partners in the SWN project. In fact, we lobbied hard to be the Primary Region Build-out (PRB). We had 10 800 MHz licenses which we signed over to OFT and gained the support of every city, town and village in the County to pass resolutions in support. As you know, Chautauqua and Erie Counties make up the PRB. The infrastructure for SWN is complete in Chautauqua County and we are currently in our second round of testing here. SWN has 19 sites: some are high profile and some are what they call "Cell Sites".

Those of you who know me can appreciate that I love technology and I am somewhat versed in it, but I am not easily impressed.

For the last two weeks, I have been personally operating on the SWN network from my car, portable and through a V/Tac which is similar to a repeater system. The SWN system has exceeded my expectations for coverage and voice quality. We have portable coverage in areas that I did not expect coverage. This is without the use of the V/Tac. We can talk countywide for the first time in the 30 years I have been in law enforcement. I was planning on equipping all of our vehicles with mobile radios; now I will deploy only portables to my investigators. They will use a charger/antenna system in their vehicles. Yesterday we were talking from way out here in Chautauqua County to Albany via portable. WOW!!!

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I am very impressed with the system! With some minor issues we experienced with the V/Tac, it has been a very successful second test. M/A-COM will correct the V/Tac issue that was identified and I look forward to the system being approved by the State early this summer. As soon as OFT gives the green light, we will begin utilizing the system within our agency. I have the funding in place to replace our radio system and I am anxious to make the transition.

To all the naysayers...I invite them to come out here and see the system in action. Other vendors probably don't want you to hear this, but the SWN system is awesome. I don't hold stock in M/A-COM; I didn't even get a tee shirt or let them buy me a cup of coffee. I am an end-user law enforcement professional who wants a rock solid public safety communication system for our County and State. It is here!!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. Gerace". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph A. Gerace
Sheriff