

County OKs move to acquire mobile emergency unit

(Taken from Daily Press & Argus article on September 8, 2004. Permission granted to reprint.)

The Livingston County Board of Commissioners approved acceptance of a federal grant for a new mobile command center that could be used in emergencies such as the July fire at a Howell Township plastics recycling plant.

Richard Winsett, director of Central Dispatch, said the vehicle currently used to coordinate emergency responses is old, and on loan from the General Motors Proving Grounds, which wants it back.

He predicted the county won't actually get the new vehicle until next year because of the time it takes to research what is available and send out bids to vendors; but the new unit will be an improvement, he said.

"It will go to any major disaster event as a place for people to congregate and plan," he said. "Every system we have would be in that vehicle . . . the vehicle we have now is really too small."

The purchase will have to be approved by the state, which is administering the federal grant, Winsett said. The grant should pay the entire cost of the vehicle, he added.

The vehicle – technically known as a Mobile Medical Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive Support Unit – would carry \$27,000 worth of medical equipment, as well as communication equipment.

The county board voted to accept two federal grants to pay for the mobile unit and other equipment totaling \$826,828. The vote was unanimous.

The mobile command center would be available to all areas of the state in the case of a terrorist attack or other emergency involving chemical, biological or nuclear material.

"Southeast Michigan has a lot of high-potential targets. It could also be used as a backup 911 center."

*Richard Winsett
Emergency Management Director*

He said it was probably the last big chunk of homeland security money the county would receive.

MOBILE COMMAND UPDATE

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Central Dispatch Newsletter

At the end of November Livingston County officials were notified by Congressman Mike Rogers' office of a special grant award of \$240,000 towards the purchase of a mobile command vehicle. Efforts to replace the current command vehicle, which is on loan from the General Motors Proving Grounds, have been afoot for approximately the last year.

Before receiving Congressman Rogers' welcome assistance, local officials had planned to scrape together funding from several sources to purchase and equip a vehicle large enough to accommodate a medium-scale event managed by a unified command team. The funds obtained by the Congressman will now allow the county to purchase and equip a vehicle capable of fulfilling the needs of Livingston County public safety for the next two decades.