

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New, Emergency Response Communications System Demonstrating Vast Improvements for Jackson Public Safety

*Jackson Township's \$5.9 Million Upgrade to 700-Megahertz Communications System
Providing Consistent, Thorough Coverage for Police, Fire and First Responders*

JACKSON TOWNSHIP, N.J., Sept. 28th – More than a year after a \$5.9 million upgrade to the township's emergency response communications system went live, Jackson's police, fire and first responders are reporting vast improvements in the critical technology system that connects residents with emergency services and first responders.

"Effective public safety begins with effective technology and communications systems," said Jackson Township Mayor Michael Reina. "An investment in this type of technology is an investment in the public's safety. That's the bottom line. Now, after a full year of hands-on experience with this new system, I'm happy to report that our police, fire and EMT officials are reporting better overall communications coverage of Jackson's 100-plus square miles, fewer calls lost or interrupted due to old technology and, very importantly, seamless radio connections with county and local government agencies."

The new, Motorola 700-megahertz (MHz) system modernizes the entire emergency response communications system from the previously used 500-MHz network – a move being undertaken by public safety agencies across the country, as required by the Federal Communications Commission.

The township's upgrades include new police department radio hardware and software, dispatch center equipment, police handheld- and car-based radio equipment, as well as new handhelds radios for the township's department of public works and code enforcement. As part of the system upgrade, the township installed two new radio towers, both exclusively as part of this project. The Larsen Road tower and the Patterson Road tower were completed throughout 2020. Each tower stands at 180 feet tall. As part of the overall initiative, the township's fire and EMS squads purchased their own communications equipment, but both use the township's radio towers to access all local and county emergency channels.

Meetings to begin the planning process to upgrade Jackson's emergency response system began in 2019. While the pandemic caused some delays in the project, the system became fully operational in the middle of 2021.

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“Whether in the face of crime, fire, road accidents or medical emergencies, we – that is, our police, fire and EMTs – have you and your families covered,” Mayor Reina said. “Improving and strengthening the quality of life here in Jackson begins with keeping our residents safe. That’s one of the reasons why Jackson Township was named the safest municipality in the state with a population of more than 50,000. That doesn’t happen by accident. You have to invest in public safety and we do so because public safety must come first.”

The upgrades to Jackson’s emergency response communications system build on the township’s on-going investments in public safety. As fully endorsed and supported by the mayor and the governing body, those investments have included the following:

- **Adding more police officers:** In recent years, the Jackson Township Police Department has been adding additional officers steadily with a goal to bring the full force up to 114. Six additional officers are expected to be hired in the near future.
- **Investing in essential equipment:** The township has invested in additional essential police equipment in recent years, including new body armor, Taser equipment, vehicles and license plate readers.
- **Securing professional accreditation:** In August 2021, the Jackson Police Department achieved accreditation through the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, a significant professional achievement which acknowledges the implementation of policies and procedures that are conceptually sound and operationally effective.

According to a report published by Safewise, Jackson Township was ranked 31st in a report about the safest municipalities in New Jersey, and was rated first among local governments with 50,000 or more residents. There are more than 20 municipalities in the state with a population of 50,000 or more residents.

In April 2015, Ocean County contracted Motorola to implement a 700-MHz public safety communications network, upgrading from the previously used 500-MHz network. Ocean County police, fire and emergency responders had been experiencing significant disruptions with the previous system, due to digital/satellite TV signal interference. Prior to the county’s action, the Federal Communications Commission had required public safety agencies to begin migrating out of the 500-MHz network and into the 700 MHz band.

About Jackson Township

Jackson Township is a growing, suburban community that offers an ideal environment for families and businesses to grow and prosper. Covering over 100 square miles, Jackson Township is the fourth largest municipality, as measured by area, in the state of New Jersey, and is home to just 60,000 residents. The township boasts an excellent public school system and first-rate recreational facilities, including newly renovated parks and athletic fields. Situated in beautiful Ocean County, N.J., Jackson is located within a short drive from the Jersey Shore and about an hour’s drive to New York City or Philadelphia. The township was incorporated in 1844. Visit Jackson Township’s website at www.jacksontwpnj.net for more information.