

## **Statement from Roger Finch, president of the Dane County Deputy Sheriff's Association delivered to the 9-1-1 Hearing in Fitchburg 05/19/2008**

I represent over 400 women and men of the Dane County Deputy Sheriff's Association and we too, are troubled over the situation in the 9-1-1 center; however we are disheartened over the fact that a large focus of the issue has been placed on a highly qualified, competent and dedicated dispatcher whose judgment has been called into question. Our Association strongly supports those who perform front line duties in the communications center to the best of their abilities while recognizing the possibility of human oversight, especially in the stressful environment in which they work each day.

From an Association standpoint, we continue to experience difficulties that have reported to those who run the Communications Center over the past decade but have not been addressed. These difficulties directly impact public safety and the safety of the deputies and the level of service that we are expected to provide.

- Poor or no radio and MDC (Mobile Data Computers) reception/transmissions in areas of the county also known as "dead spots". The Northwest and Southwest areas of Dane County are very bad.
- For years, we have cited a need for a common radio frequency that can be used by all county law enforcement. The stopgap solution has been a radio patch, which is often difficult to understand and requires a dispatcher to join frequencies such as UHF and VHF radio bands. At present the Dane Co. Sheriff's Office (DCSO) operates on VHF and Madison Police Dept. (MPD) on UHF.

Our position regarding yet another study into the Communications Center operation is seen as a delay in fixing the problem, not to mention the cost impact on the taxpayer. If we are to believe that the quality of management in the Center is as high as purported, then why does the County Executive have to rely on an outside fix that will of course, take months if not years to implement?

What we find so incredible and frustrating about this instance is one we have consistently experienced with county government is the amount of time it

takes to effect change. We believe that the issues plaguing the Communications Center have been identified. Whatever monies would be dedicated to another study should be made available to implement remedies immediately.

No more excuses, no more outside studies, no more delays in what is the obvious course to our Association and the public.