

# Neighbor Newspapers

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## Coweta climbs on board with new radio communications system

By:CHRISTY WHEELAND, News Editor

**COWETA - Oklahoma Lt. Governor Jari Askins spoke to first responders in Coweta today, acknowledging their participation in the recent expansion of the statewide 800 MHz communications system into the area.**

The expansion, spear-headed by the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security (OKOHS) is part of the final phase of the "I-44 Corridor" project making communication possible among public safety agencies located along Interstate 44 from Texas to Missouri.

Lt. Gov. Askins was joined by Oklahoma Homeland Security Director Kerry Pettingill.

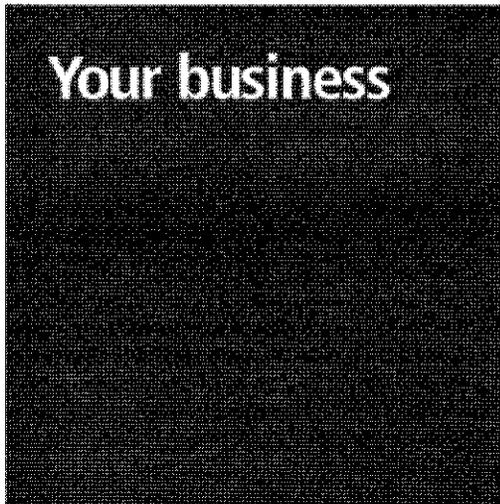
"This new capability will enable seamless communications between Oklahoma's public safety agencies, which is ultimately in the best interest of our citizens," Pettingill said. "It's imperative to the safety of Oklahomans that communications statewide reach an optimal level of interoperability. We're extremely proud that Coweta has joined us in our effort to do so."

Pettingill said Coweta Police Lieutenant Donnie Krumsiek indicated many years ago the Coweta Police Department's desire to go to an 800 MHz system. Once federal government dollars became available for the Corridor project, Coweta was identified as a prime location for a transmitter tower.



*Lt. Governor Jari Askins demonstrates the new 800 MHz communication system by making radio contact with officials along the I-44 corridor from Miami to I from the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security's mobile command post in Coweta.*

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"Putting this tower here is like the final spike in the railroad linking the county (to provide rail service)," Lt. Gov. Askins said.

The state official referred to the April 1995 bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City as an example of why an 800 MHz communication system with seamless communication is imperative for agencies to communicate with one another in real time.

"This kind of system will give local, regional, tribal, state and federal agencies the opportunity to communicate in real time," Lt. Gov. Askins said. "You're to be congratulated on a job well done!"

To date, the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security has dedicated over \$40 million in Department of Homeland Security grant funds to the state system. This funding has been used to purchase radios for over 100 police and fire departments, ambulances, hospitals and infrastructure equipment for 21 tower sites from Lawton to Joplin.

"It is our vision that the system continue to expand into areas outside of the I-44 corridor and that all of Oklahoma's public safety agencies that are currently using antiquated technology are able to purchase the equipment necessary to communicate with each other in day-to-day operations."

case of a major emergency," Pettingill said.

Following Wednesday's press conference Lt. Gov. Askins demonstrated the new radio communications capabilities by commur with agencies from one corner of the state to another.



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