



# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2024

## EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS MICROWAVE PROJECT REGIONAL CAPITAL REQUEST - \$4 MILLION



### BACKGROUND

Benton and Franklin County first responders rely on an over-the-air microwave transport system as the backbone for emergency radio communications. The microwave transport system is a line-of-sight wireless communication technology utilizing high frequency beams of radio waves to provide high-speed wireless connections that deliver vital data and communications connectivity between mountaintop tower sites. Each county has a network ring that is interconnected at two different mountaintop sites, which creates a combined system that blankets Benton and Franklin counties. This interconnected network is the foundation for the Public Safety Radio Systems used in both counties supporting all first responders and other municipal partners.

### ISSUE

The current network is on the brink of failure and is based on antiquated technology. The total cost of the system replacement exceeds \$6 million dollars. \$2 million dollars has been obtained for equipment purchases through federal appropriation. The existing microwave systems are obsolete, in continual need of repair, and are becoming exceptionally difficult to source parts to maintain operation. If a significant failure were to occur in either data ring, it would cripple the Public Safety Radio System, prevent communication with and directly impact the safety of First Responders, and above all else, impede emergency service delivery to the Tri-Cities MSA. Furthermore, licensed microwave spectrum is very scarce in both counties, so securing and licensing available additional spectrum is a must to ensure the success of this project. Given the spectrum limitations and the possibility of imminent system failure, time and support for this project is of the essence.

### SOLUTION

Replace the existing system with a modernized ethernet microwave solution to meet the current and future needs for Public Safety and the expectations of our citizens. Benton and Franklin counties have partnered with Motorola to develop a solution that does just that, by replacing the existing end-of-life TDM-based microwave network with an ethernet-based microwave network that not only utilizes current technology, but also provides a relevant and sustainable platform for many years to come. Benton and Franklin Counties, and the region's Cities have partnered for this combined capital request, as a leading legislative priority.

### BENEFIT

The Motorola-developed solution will meet industry best practices and will migrate both counties to a modernized microwave transport for radio and data traffic, with minimal interruption to operations during system installation. This will ensure optimal performance of the radio systems and the data that public safety relies on to deliver service to the citizens of Benton and Franklin counties. This partnership and project will also ensure that the microwave system is situated to be continually updated and maintained for at least 20 years without another major overhaul.