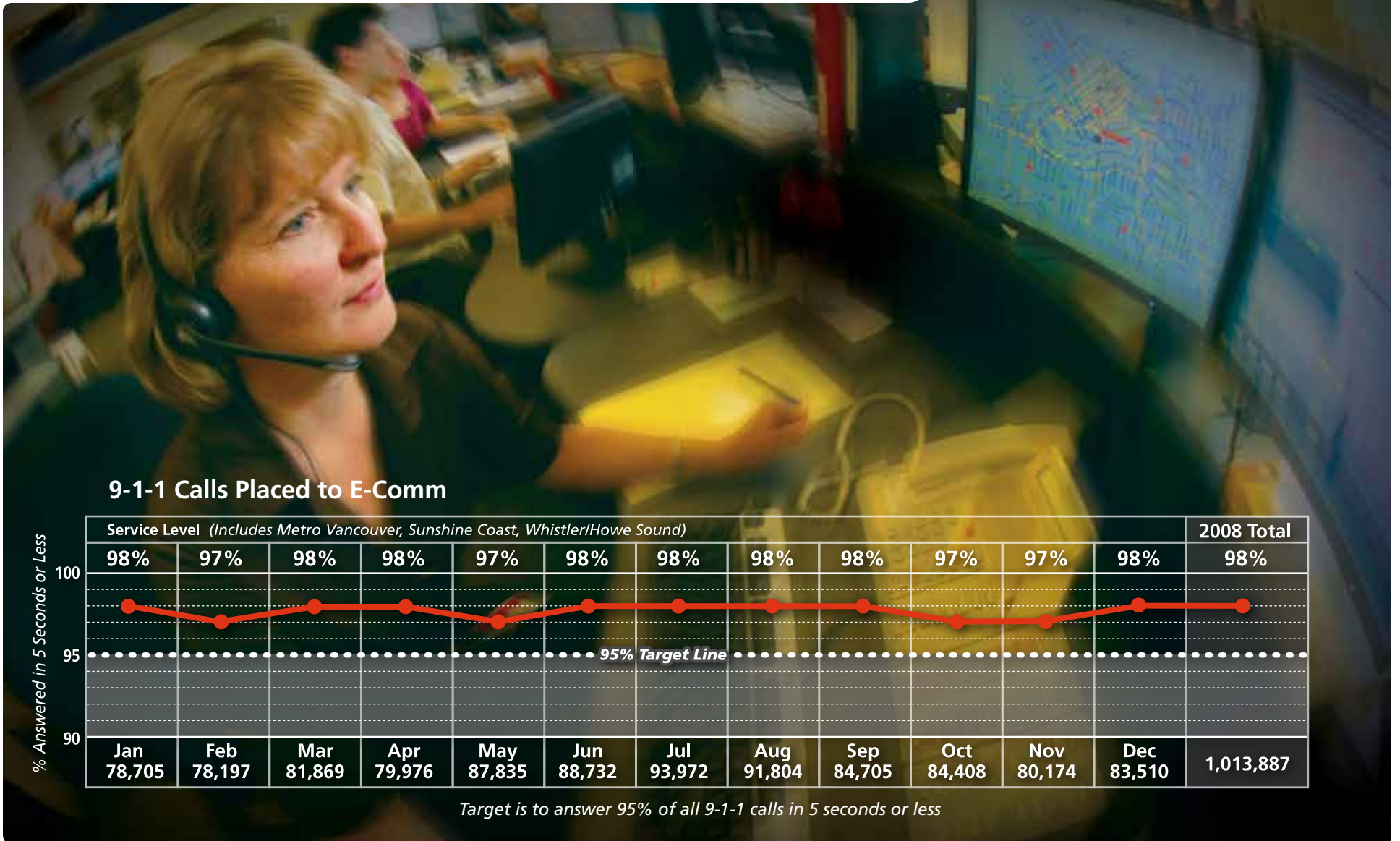


E-Comm 2008 Annual Report

E-Comm 9-1-1
Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property



E-Comm Answers More Than One Million 9-1-1 Calls in 2008

In southwest British Columbia we enjoy many attributes that make our region a great place to live, work and play. Chief among those attributes is a dedication to the safety of our people, our emergency responders and the communications systems that support them both.

Since 1999, E-Comm has taken a leadership role in ensuring that the services and systems we provide to the region are robust, effective and safeguarded. As our tenth anniversary approaches, we are well positioned to advance our current services and systems in the interest of public safety and public service.

One of the most critical components of E-Comm's long-term success is operational excellence, which includes meeting our rigorous performance metrics. We are pleased to report that in 2008 we once again exceeded one of our key performance indicators—how quickly we answer 9-1-1 calls. Our staff answered 98% of the more than one million 9-1-1 calls they received in five seconds or less. This is an exceptional result.

Our Operations division also focused on how quickly we answered 9-1-1 calls that were transferred to the police and fire departments for which we dispatch. Service level results for 2008 indicate that our customers received fast and efficient call answer service, despite high call-volumes and fluctuating staffing levels throughout the year.

Recruitment was a prime focus for the organization in 2008 and we ended the year with stabilized staffing levels and no vacant positions. We implemented a new organizational structure within Operations that more fully supports frontline functions, which we believe will have a positive impact on both public and responder safety.

Our Operations staff managed communications for numerous major events in 2008, ranging from the worst fire in New Westminster's history to a horrific holiday office party shooting that resulted in a coordinated response of more than 100 Vancouver police officers.

For their efforts in responding to a tragic plane crash in Richmond in late 2007, our Operations division received the City's 2008 Community Partner Safety Award.

We continued our planning for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games by defining the communication paths required for police, fire and ambulance to communicate within Olympic venues and within the urban environment. We have forecasted call volume and begun internal planning to maintain staffing levels during the Games period. We also participated in the Games' first coordinated security exercise (known as "Bronze"), which provided valuable insight into operational activity during the Games.

A new radio partner, Coquitlam Fire & Rescue, joined the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio System in 2008 to enhance responder and public safety. Coquitlam is the ninth Metro Vancouver municipality to have all three of its emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) on the E-Comm radio system. We also undertook the re-programming of the E-Comm radio system fleet—6,300 police, fire and ambulance radios—to increase user capacity, upgrade radio codes and to make changes to talk groups. Work continued on the Next Generation Radio Feasibility Study, part of our plan to replace the current mobile radio system, which reaches its end-of-life cycle between 2010 and 2015. The feasibility study also addresses the viability of expanding the E-Comm radio service coverage area and membership.

On the technology front, we completed a major transition of our fire agencies to a new computer-aided dispatch system that has had a dramatic impact on emergency response times. And our Geographic Information System (GIS) team won a regional award for developing a new information-sharing application that will be ready for trial in summer 2009.

We were gratified to learn through our public opinion survey that public confidence in the 9-1-1 system reached 80% in 2008, with almost half of those respondents describing themselves as "extremely confident." We will continue with our public education

9-1-1 Service Levels for 2008

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Total 9-1-1 Calls | 1,013,887 |
| 9-1-1 Service Level | 98% |
| Average Speed of Answer for 9-1-1: | 3 seconds |
| Average Speed of Answer by Agencies Dispatched by E-Comm*: | 6.29 seconds |
| Total Non-Emergency Calls** | 403,203 |

* When a caller dials 9-1-1, their call is directed to E-Comm by the telephone provider. Once connected, our call-taker asks "do you need police, fire or ambulance" and for which community. The caller is then transferred to the agency the caller requests. Some of those agencies are located at E-Comm and others are not (e.g. BC Ambulance Service).

** VPD and RCMP agencies dispatched by E-Comm.

outreach, highlighting issues of significant importance to 9-1-1 centres and public safety: caller location awareness; accidental 9-1-1 calls; and interpretation services for non-English speaking residents. In 2008, we received both provincial and national awards for our public education efforts.

In 2009, we will be celebrating our tenth anniversary and are excited about our strategic direction and the future of public safety communications. Moving forward, we will continue our commitment to business growth, operational excellence and public safety and people leadership — the cornerstones of our mission to provide exceptional communication services that help save lives and protect property.



Daphne Corbett
Chair, E-Comm Board
of Directors



Ken Shymanski
President and CEO

“Brainstorm” Idea Nets Regional Award

They were sitting in a brainstorming session when it came to them: “What if we could increase information sharing among agencies through Geographic Information System (GIS) technology?” That simple statement by some of E-Comm’s GIS specialists led to the development of a new application known as the Emergency Event Map Viewer (E²MV), which facilitates information sharing across multiple dispatch centres so they can manage and respond to incidents more effectively.

E²MV allows emergency response personnel to see current unit and incident data from a range of computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems using a single interface. This multifunctional tool will also serve as a back-up address verifier for 9-1-1 call takers. E-Comm is working with a number of external agencies to develop interfaces and web

map service feeds to municipal and provincial command centres, including Emergency Management BC.

The application will also serve as an effective back-up tool that can be used to locate incidents and available units should a main CAD system not function. In a major incident, it can also operate as a stand-alone application in smaller emergency operation centres. This impressive functionality has garnered interest from many public safety agencies, including the BC Ambulance Service, RCMP, fire agencies, the transit authority and others.

David Hamilton, E-Comm’s manager of Public Safety and Geographic Information Systems, says E²MV will have a direct impact on public and first responder safety. “The ability to share accurate information in real time is critical to effective emergency response. Call-takers, dispatchers and responders will have more data at their fingertips and that will help them carry out response functions more collaboratively and in general, more effectively.”

As a result of the E-Comm GIS team’s efforts, ESRI Canada (a worldwide GIS supplier and distributor) recognized E-Comm’s GIS team with an Award of Excellence.

The new system is expected to be ready for trial in the summer of 2009.

“E-Comm took the initiative to develop a web application that will significantly streamline emergency response across the Lower Mainland of B.C., which will likely serve as a model for other provincial and large municipal agencies.”

Myron Doherty, ESRI Canada



From left to right, Robert Darts, Daphne Corbett (Board Chair), Dave Hamilton, Glen Miller, Mircea Ungurean and Ken Shymanski (President & CEO). Missing: Tammy Gorse and Robert Warren.

Firefighter Safety Gets Boost From Radio System

There is no question that communication is a vital link in just about everything we do. Communication can make or break a business project, a relationship or mean the difference between winning and losing a championship game.

In emergency services, communication can mean the difference between life and death. That’s why E-Comm is committed to providing communication systems that are robust and reliable. It’s what responders are counting on us for, to ensure their own safety and for the safety of the public they serve.

In 2008, the City of Coquitlam took its communication systems to the next level when its fire department joined the E-Comm radio system in February. This made Coquitlam the ninth municipality within Metro Vancouver to have all of its emergency services on the E-Comm radio system – a significant public safety advantage.

A key benefit of this transition for Coquitlam Fire & Rescue is the ability to communicate with other emergency agencies, both within Coquitlam and in neighbouring jurisdictions. Coquitlam RCMP and the BC Ambulance Service have been on the radio system since 2000, so communication between these agencies when responding to joint events was greatly enhanced with the addition of Coquitlam Fire & Rescue.

“The interoperability feature is a primary reason for us to move to E-Comm’s Wide-Area Radio System,” Assistant Chief Kelly Barber of Coquitlam Fire & Rescue said about the transition. “Emergency agencies using this system in and around our area [Port Moody and New Westminister] can now share vital information with us — enhancing safety and response for our community.”

“Better radio reception and having an emergency alert button on the radios has also made a substantial improvement to our own firefighter safety. Effective and reliable communications is our lifeline at an emergency incident.”

Assistant Chief Kelly Barber,
Coquitlam Fire & Rescue

Coquitlam Fire & Rescue was outfitted with 35 mobile vehicle units, 55 portable radios for firefighters and two dispatch consoles.

In addition to providing the ability to communicate with other fire departments, ambulance and police agencies, the E-Comm radio system offers enhanced safety features: better in-building coverage (extremely important to firefighting safety); increased clarity and reliability; and higher peak-traffic capacity than Coquitlam’s previous system.

In total, 14 police agencies, the BC Ambulance Service and nine fire departments throughout southwest British Columbia operate with E-Comm’s radio system, using more than 6,300 wide-area radios. The E-Comm network processes approximately 10 million radio transmissions each month.

Fire Response Faster When Seconds Matter Most



John Wilson, communications trainer for Vancouver firefighters, uses the new i/CAD mobile workstation. Laptops provide firefighters with a GPS location system, direct access to a record management system and real-time updates of events in progress.

Everyone knows fires spread quickly, but did you know they actually double in size every thirty seconds? With that piece of information in mind, it’s easy to understand why dispatching events to fire halls quickly is so critical. When it comes to fire response, every second really does count.

In 2008, E-Comm undertook the largest technology transition in its history, one that will have a dramatically positive impact on fire response times. The 12 fire departments E-Comm dispatches for are now part of a new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) platform that will help speed up emergency response times and provide more information to dispatchers when assisting firefighters. The new system requires fewer actions by the dispatcher to create a dispatch event, reducing the time taken to dispatch. The new CAD platform also provides detailed street maps, municipal-specific information, images of floor plans, hazards and chemical storage data and shows geo-referenced locations of fire hydrants (indicating their water pressure), and the GPS locations of fire apparatus. This is all invaluable information for dispatchers and firefighters (available via mobile work stations located on fire apparatus).

As part of the transition, E-Comm also implemented a new firehall alerting system in our five Metro Vancouver fire agencies (Vancouver, Richmond, Port Moody, New Westminister and Delta). The system provides the ability to dispatch calls to multiple or single agencies with virtually no delay. Dispatchers no longer have to queue dispatches if more than one has to be delivered at the same time and no longer have to wait for a break in radio traffic. This reduces emergency response time, as dispatchers can now simultaneously dispatch to all firehalls with no delay in dispatching. The process now takes roughly two seconds, from the time the dispatcher commits the call until the firefighters start to receive the announcement.

Firefighters on the Sunshine Coast and in Whistler and Squamish will also benefit from the transition to the new CAD platform. They will now receive a “rip & run” (printed dispatch information) in the fire hall when they are dispatched. This represents the first time that printed information will be available in these communities to help firefighters respond to emergencies.



Massive Fire Destroys Piece of Local History

It was all hands on deck Wednesday, July 9 shortly after 1200 hours, when E-Comm Operations staff received an influx of 9-1-1 calls about a large fire in New Westminster. The historic Woodlands building (built in 1878) was ablaze, resulting in a full third-alarm assignment for fire. The building was vacant, awaiting redevelopment, and the fire spread quickly. "In terms of size and destruction, the Woodlands fire was the largest that we've had in the past 30 years," said Jim Cook, former deputy chief, New Westminster Fire & Rescue.

E-Comm received 22 calls about the fire within a 90-second period and immediately began dispatching fire crews. The first crew was dispatched 76 seconds from the time the first 9-1-1 call was received (better than the National Fire Prevention standard of 90 seconds). The first apparatus was on scene in 3 minutes, 25 seconds from the first 9-1-1 call, with more units following close behind. Although the response was extremely quick from both E-Comm and New Westminster Fire &

Rescue, the fire was so large it required additional support from neighbouring fire departments.

"The problems presented by the large amount of smoke and fire were significant due to the close proximity of high-density residential buildings and two major transportation routes nearby. E-Comm's dispatchers are well trained and they provided critical support to ensure that firefighter and public safety were well managed," added Cook. E-Comm also coordinated the dispatching of several fire units from Burnaby and then began callouts to city services who are normally alerted to this type of event (BC Hydro, Translink, Social Services, etc.). The fire forced the evacuation of neighbouring apartments, caused closures to transportation links and used an inordinately large amount of the city's water supply. More than 40 firefighters were on scene for the initial fire and several crews remained on site well into the night to ensure the fire was extinguished and did not spread. No one was hurt in the incident.

You Don't Need To Speak English To Get Help From 9-1-1



In March of 2008, E-Comm reached out to non-English speaking residents and those with limited English in its first major non-English public information campaign designed to raise awareness of the interpretation service available to 9-1-1 callers. The campaign's central theme was "you don't need to speak English to get help from 9-1-1" and also focused on the purpose of 9-1-1 and important tips to speed up the process of getting an interpreter on the line.

"E-Comm is providing a wonderful service with this campaign, and we are very proud to be supporting their efforts," said Tung Chan, CEO of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (an organization that assists immigrants to Canada). "We have thousands of people from different countries that are accustomed to using different numbers to reach emergency services or have English as a second language. People from Hong Kong, for example, dial

9-9-9 if they need to reach police, fire or ambulance. It is critical to their safety that they learn about 9-1-1 and the interpretation service available."

To help convey this message, radio ads in the three most common languages spoken after English in Metro Vancouver (Cantonese, Mandarin, and Punjabi) aired on local ethnic radio. The issue garnered significant media coverage in both South Asian and Asian markets (radio, television, newspaper) and in English newspapers. On a community level, posters and handouts were distributed to multicultural organizations for display, such as the new arrivals program at YVR. Corporate Communications staff also attended the BC Multicultural Health Fair in late February, speaking with more than 1,000 people about the interpretation service and providing information packages.

National Team Studies Country's Biggest Events

A national project team of communications and first response experts from across Canada, including E-Comm, participated in a 2008 study to review how major event emergency communications are handled across the country.

The project surfaced as E-Comm was researching approaches to enhance major event communications planning and operations for the upcoming 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

"It has been very interesting to see how differently or more surprisingly, how similarly the various services across Canada meet the challenges of handling major events," says Eric Janus, shift manager of the Ottawa Police. The team observed major event communications during the Saint Jean Baptiste Day celebrations in Montreal, Canada Day celebrations in Ottawa, Caribana (a summer Caribbean carnival) in Toronto and the Celebration of Light in Vancouver.

"By observing how other communications centres operate in major events, we gathered some great strategies that helped us make operational improvements to how we managed the 2008 Celebration of Light," says Cindy Defazio, E-Comm Operations Manager.

9-1-1 Calls During 2008 Celebration of Light*

| Date | No. of Calls | % Answered in 5 Seconds or Less |
|----------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| July 23 | 1,093 | 98% |
| July 26 | 1,581 | 99% |
| July 30 | 1,048 | 100% |
| August 2 | 1,498 | 100% |

* Between 1900 hrs – 0630 hrs the following day

Plane Crash Tests Communication Abilities

The Richmond Chamber of Commerce acknowledged E-Comm's response to a unique incident at their 2008 9-1-1 Awards. On October 19, 2007 at approximately 1600 hours, E-Comm's 9-1-1 lines were inundated with calls about a plane that had crashed into an apartment building in Richmond.

The response to this incident was a testament to the skill of Richmond's first responders, E-Comm's dispatchers and call-takers and the partnerships established between the different agencies based at E-Comm. The first call came in to 9-1-1 at 1604 hours and Richmond RCMP members were immediately dispatched. Within the RCMP work group at E-Comm, an incident command structure was set-up. Because of the consolidated nature of dispatch at E-Comm, the on-duty managers were able to shift resources from other areas to provide additional call-taking support for Richmond.

Police and Ambulance established a combined talk group on E-Comm's Wide-Area Radio system to coordinate responses to the incident. E-Comm continued to answer 9-1-1 calls and manage emergency calls for the other 11 fire departments and 10 police agencies that it dispatched for during the crash incident. One hundred and nineteen calls came to 9-1-1 within the first 20 minutes of the plane crash.

Strategic Directions

- Vision:** Safer Communities through outstanding service—every call, every time
- Mission:** To serve emergency personnel and the public by providing exceptional emergency communications services that help save lives and protect property
- Values:** Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service, Collaboration

What We Are Working Toward

Business Growth

E-Comm is committed to providing superior 9-1-1, radio and dispatch services to all targeted emergency response agencies within southwest BC. Our goals also include increasing our core service offerings to agencies within our region and, where there are benefits for our shareholders, to agencies outside of our region. E-Comm wants to differentiate itself by providing the most reliable, efficient and cost-effective service available. Our goal is to be highly valued by our current customers and sought by potential customers. We are focused on growing our business to the benefit of our shareholders, customers and the public.

Operational Excellence

Our goal is to be operationally effective in every aspect of our business, both on a day-to-day basis and during extraordinary events. We will continue to ensure our radio system offers complete interoperability, reliability, superior coverage and is safeguarded. We will focus on providing our dispatch customers with exceptional service through a highly skilled workforce and through the achievement of rigorous performance metrics. E-Comm will continue to maintain robust technology that supports effective emergency response and will maintain our focus evolving that technology in a responsible, future-focused manner.

Public Safety and People Leadership

We want to be recognized by our employees, shareholders, customers and the public as a centre of excellence in emergency communications. Our goal is to be recognized as an industry leader that provides the best service available and as an organization that is well managed, cost effective, financially and socially accountable. We are leaders in advocating for improvements to emergency communications technologies, processes and policies at a local, provincial and national level. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that our shareholders and customers regard us as an excellent investment that attracts and retains the best talent because E-Comm is a great place to work.

2008-2009

Board of Directors

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those directors who departed our board in 2008—Gary Briggs and Kiichi Kumagai—for their hard work and dedication to the Corporation over the years.

I would also like to welcome our newest directors—Bill McNulty, Ernie Malone and Helen Blackburn—and to acknowledge the efforts of our entire Board of Directors who play an instrumental role in the strategic business and financial direction of E-Comm.

Daphne Corbett, Chair

2008-2009 Board of Directors:

- Mary-Wade Anderson
- Helen Blackburn
- Kevin Begg
- Daphne Corbett
- Calvin Donnelly
- Len Garis
- Pamela Goldsmith-Jones
- Cindy Grauer
- Jocelyn Kelley
- Don MacLean
- Ernie Malone
- Bill McNulty
- Karl Preuss
- Michael Sanderson
- John Schouten
- Wes Shoemaker
- David Sutcliffe
- Joe Trasolini

E-Comm Leadership Team

- Ken Shymanski, President and CEO
- Peter Gauthier, Director of Wireless Services
- Glen Miller, Director of Information Technology
- Beatrix Nicolato, CGA, Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer
- Erin Ramsay, Director of Human Resources
- Jody Robertson, Director of Corporate Communications and Corporate Secretary
- Doug Watson, Vice-President of Operations

2008 Year-End Financial Results Highlights

| | 2008 | 2007* |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenues | 47,527,215 | 48,144,282 |
| Direct operating expenses | 29,959,309 | 26,036,240 |
| Other expenses (income) | | |
| Accretion of asset retirement obligation | 59,716 | 54,966 |
| Amortization | 12,924,624 | 12,487,499 |
| Interest expense | 4,960,823 | 5,508,242 |
| Loss on equipment writedown | 207,074 | 132,087 |
| Gain on conversion of asset to long-term receivable | (892,210) | - |
| | 17,260,027 | 18,182,794 |
| Excess of revenue over expenses | 307,879 | 3,925,248 |
| Deficit, beginning of year | (15,602,317) | (19,527,565) |
| Deficit, end of year | (15,294,438) | (15,602,317) |

*2007 restated to not-for-profit model

To obtain full copies of E-Comm 2008 Audited Financial Results, including the Auditor's Report to the Shareholders and notes to financial statements, visit the homepage of the E-Comm Web site ecomm911.ca

Technology Performance Metrics

Wireless Data for 2008

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| System Air Time (in seconds) | 413,152,794 |
| System Transmissions* | 107,802,071 |
| Total Number Of Radios | 6,383 |
| Traffic Grade of Service** | 0.04% |
| Wide-Area Radio System Availability | 99.51% |

* Number of times a repeater transmitted in response to a responder talking on a radio

** Grade of Service represents the ability of the radio system to handle radio traffic volume. Industry Canada sets the standard for the public safety community, which is 3%. This means at the radio system's busiest times there cannot be more than 3% queuing (responders waiting to speak). The E-Comm radio system is well within this standard.

Technology Uptime

| Quarter | 9-1-1 (Telephony) | | | AltarisCAD used for Fire Dispatch from January 1, 2008 – November 26, 2008 |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|---|
| | Fire CAD | 911 CAD | | |
| 1 | 100% | - | 99.98% | Intergraph CAD for Fire Dispatch from November 26, 2008 – December 31, 2008 |
| 2 | 100% | - | 100% | |
| 3 | 100% | - | 99.99% | |
| 4 | 100% | 100% | 99.99% | AltarisCAD used for 9-1-1 Call-Answer from January – December 2008 |
| 2008 Average | 100% | 100% | 99.99% | |

9-1-1 Service Levels for 2008

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Total 9-1-1 Calls | 1,013,887 | 2008 Service Level | 98%* |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|

*Target is to answer 95% of all 9-1-1 calls in 5 seconds or less

Helping To Save Lives and Protect Property



E-Comm 9-1-1
Emergency Communications for Southwest British Columbia Incorporated

ecomm911.ca