E-Comm 9-1-1

2009 Annual Report

ecomm911.ca

E-Comm 9-1-1

Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

2009: Celebration, innovation, preparation, transition

When E-Comm began operations ten years ago, we committed to building an emergency communications system that would help save lives and protect property. Today, through the collaboration of many within the public safety community, our region's emergency communications network is recognized as one of the best multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency systems in North America.

Building on that success, a number of significant milestones were achieved in 2009:

- Our staff answered more than one million 9-1-1 calls and dispatched for hundreds of thousands of police and fire events.

- We were the first 9-1-1 centre in B.C. to receive location coordinates from cellular phones.

- We enhanced our back-up capabilities by establishing a fully functional off-site back-up location.

- We concluded our third collective agreement with CUPE 873-02, marking eight years without labour disruption.

- We prepared 1,700 additional radios, finalized operational plans and deployed new technology to support the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

- Our 9-1-1 public education efforts were recognized nationally.

However, 2009 wasn't just a year of celebration, innovation, and preparation; it was also a year of transition. We introduced a new business model to stimulate growth and provide cost savings for our valued customers during challenging economic times. We achieved considerable cost savings by simplifying businesses processes, restructuring the organization, and adjusting one of our costing models. Our staff has risen to the challenges that these changes have presented and our customers—both current and future—will benefit from the savings they generate and the high-quality service we continue to provide.

As we turn our attention to the next decade, we know there are many challenges in front of us, but that will not take away from our strategic focus of growing our business, maintaining operational excellence, and providing public safety leadership. We are dedicated to continually improving our services, contributing to safer communities, and making good on our commitment to help save lives and protect property.

Daphne Corbett
Chair

Ken Shymanski
President & CEO

Corporate Activities

Ten years;
11 million emergency calls

In June, surrounded by our customers and shareholders, we celebrated ten years of service. It was an opportunity to reflect on our beginnings— that infamous 1994 Stanley Cup riot—and to celebrate the many achievements the emergency services community has realized since then: a region-wide radio network that allows seamless communication between police, fire and ambulance; a dispatch service that has grown from just one agency to 24, and technology development that has had a powerful impact on emergency services throughout the region.

Reducing our
environmental footprint

E-Comm introduced specific strategies in 2009 for reducing energy consumption levels. These included several new recycling programs and upgrades of our technical systems to reduce electric, heat and water use.

E-Comm staff give back

We're very proud of the generosity and spirit our staff showed in 2009.

- Raising more than $5,000 in support of cancer treatment

- Preparing holiday hampers for families in our service area

- Donating jackets and blankets to a community shelter

2009
Financial Results

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND DEFICIT

	2009	2008
Revenues	49,113,379	47,527,215
Direct operating expenses	32,213,309	29,959,309
	16,900,070	17,567,906
Other expenses (income)		
Accretion and amortization	12,981,771	12,984,340
Interest expense	4,762,019	4,960,823
Other	104,183	(685,136)
	17,847,973	17,260,027
Excess of revenue over expenses	(947,903)	307,879
Deficit, beginning of year	(15,294,438)	(15,602,317)
Deficit, end of year	(16,242,341)	(15,294,438)

*E-Comm's financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit entities. To obtain full copies of E-Comm's 2009 Audited Financial Results including the Auditor's Report to the Shareholders and Notes to the Financial Statements please visit **ecomm911.ca**.*

2009 was a challenging year as governments and organizations around the world grappled with a declining economy. At E-Comm, we undertook a series of strategic measures that resulted in cost savings for our dispatch customers in 2010 and will maintain our positive financial picture into the future. As in previous years, most radio member agencies received rebates of an average of 3.4% on the shared infrastructure portion of their levy in 2009. The company's revenues were higher this year than in the previous years and covered all operating expenses. Although E-Comm results for the year-ended December 31, 2009 show an overall deficit of $948k, this is principally the result of user equipment timing differences and amortization, as well as accounting reclassifications related to some assets no longer in use. E-Comm ended the year on a positive financial note at an operating level and remains on track with its overall Strategic Financial Plan for ongoing deficit reduction.

Operational Overview

Each year E-Comm provides a progress report focused on what we're doing to help create safer communities throughout southwest B.C. Our goal is to provide more than just a financial overview; we want to provide our shareholders, customers and the people who rely on our service with an inside look into how public safety is supported through the region's emergency communication systems.

9-1-1 SERVICE

	Number of calls	Service level
January	76,888	98%
February	70,937	96%
March	78,559	96%
April	79,814	95%
May	87,659	94%
June	91,303	93%
July	94,160	96%
August	96,298	96%
September	89,720	96%
October	90,784	96%
November	84,678	97%
December	83,337	96%
Total	**1,024,137**	**96%**

E-Comm is required to answer 95% of incoming 9-1-1 calls in 5 seconds or less.

One million calls for help

Our staff answered more than one million 9-1-1 calls and managed hundreds of thousands of police and fire events, including a plane crash in the middle of a local business area. Of the 1,024,137 emergency calls placed to 9-1-1, 96% were answered in five seconds or less. This is an exceptional result.

Back-up systems in full swing

Anyone who works with technology knows it can never be 100% fail-safe at all times. That's why it's important to have back-up systems and plans in place. In 2009, we spent considerable effort broadening our back-up capabilities from both technological and operational perspectives. These efforts culminated with the completion of an off-site, stand-alone back-up location to ensure continued service.

Location, location, location

One of the most significant advancements for 9-1-1 in the past decade was the implementation of the technology that provides general location information from cell phones to 9-1-1. After announcing that E-Comm would host Canada's first multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency trial of "Wireless Phase II" in June, we worked with cellular phone providers to plan, test and launch the technology. Longitude and latitude coordinates from cell phones are now available to 9-1-1 centres and are plotted on a computerized map to generate a general location of approximately 300 metres or less.

Cellular phone technology provides a general search area but cannot pinpoint exact locations. Callers remain our best source of information: Know your location at all times.
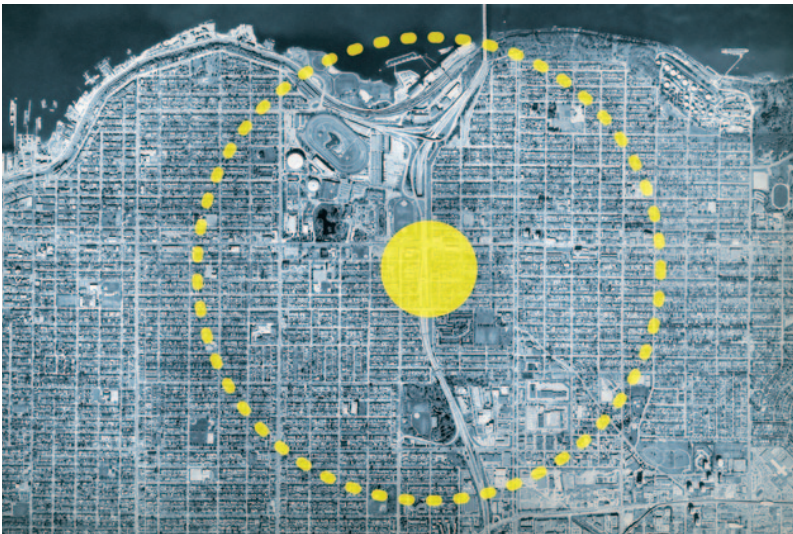
Wireless Phase II technology has the potential to shrink massive search areas (dotted line) to 300 metres or less (inside dot) but cannot pinpoint locations.

WIRELESS SERVICE

We made numerous enhancements to our radio system in 2009 and continued to surpass our performance goals for reliability and availability, even when lightning struck one of our sites in March.

System air time (in seconds)	384,941,053
System transmissions*	101,670,548
Number of radios used in region	7,904
Traffic grade of service**	0.0392%
Wide Area Radio System availability	99.9904%

*   *number of times responders spoke on the 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.*

"Radios are a lifeline for police. If I had to give up my gun or my radio, I'd give up my gun. Communication is just too important to both officer and public safety."

Abbotsford Police Chief Constable Bob Rich

Abbotsford police to join E-Comm Radio System

In November, E-Comm's Board of Directors approved the expansion of the E-Comm Radio System to include Abbotsford, paving the way for that community's police board to become a Class A shareholder. This is very exciting news because when Abbotsford transitions its police department to the radio system in 2011, it will be the first agency outside of Metro Vancouver to join. The Abbotsford police department wants to replace its aging system to provide for better coverage and safety for its members and allow direct communication with other police agencies within the Lower Mainland.

Radio fleet increased to support Olympic Games

In preparation for the 2010 Games, we readied 1,700 new radios—each individually programmed by our wireless technicians. These multi-band, multi-mode radios were supplied to the Integrated Security Unit (ISU) in advance of the Games to support seamless communication among all ISU personnel and local responders. After the Games, the radios will be deployed to agencies on the E-Comm network, a significant Olympic legacy for the region.

DISPATCH SERVICE

Poised for dispatch growth

E-Comm now provides call-taking and dispatch service for 24 police and fire departments, which represents 55% of the region's 9-1-1 call volume for these two services.

Growing our dispatch service—one of E-Comm's core business functions—remains a key strategic focus for the organization. In 2009, a number of changes were introduced that will help support this objective, including streamlining business processes and restructuring our costing model. This resulted in significant cost savings for our current customers in 2010 and provides increased incentive for new ones to join us.

Egmont Fire Department welcomed to E-Comm dispatch family

E-Comm's fire protection and service for the Sunshine Coast was completed when the Egmont and District Fire Department went live with E-Comm's integrated call-taking and fire dispatch in 2009. In its first year of operation Egmont will run tandem with Pender Harbour Fire Department: training together, using the same radio frequency and attending each other's events.

Non-emergency calls top 376,000

In addition to the one million 9-1-1 calls placed to E-Comm, our staff also managed an additional 376,508 non-emergency calls for police in Vancouver, Richmond, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, the Sunshine Coast, Whistler and Squamish. Non-emergency calls are those events that do not require immediate action from police. Our goal is to answer 80% of these police calls in three minutes or less and in 2009 we bettered our target (85%).

Games preparation golden

Matching call volumes with staffing levels was a critical part of our pre-Olympic planning in anticipation of the more than 250,000 visitors who would be coming to Vancouver and Whistler in February 2010. Because previous Games host regions were not able to provide any historical call volume data to us, we developed our own forecasting model. This proved critical for ensuring we had the appropriate number of staff on duty to handle increased call loads. Our model proved to be very accurate and will be a legacy we can provide to the next host region.

Exercise GOLD was the last in a series of operational exercises designed to prepare agencies across Canada for potential emergencies during the Olympic Games. Our dispatch and call-taking staff participated in the event, along with more than 3,000 people representing 200 agencies. This made it the largest multi-agency exercise ever held in North America. Prior to Exercise GOLD, dispatch changes planned for the Olympics were successfully field tested during the annual Celebration of Light fireworks in Vancouver.

Fire fighters attend to civilians during a simulated Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Explosive (CBRNE) incident in Richmond as part of Exercise Gold.

E-Comm emergency technology provides big picture

E-Comm's award-winning technology, *Emergency Event Map Viewer*, got an Olympic-sized workout in October, when it was used by the Victoria police as the Olympic flame began its 45,000-kilometre trek across Canada. Known as E^2MV, the technology allows all emergency services to share incident data to increase situational awareness. In other words, responders receive a full real-time picture of all emergency events underway in their service areas when they use E^2MV.

> **"E^2MV was a key operational tool for our Emergency Operation Centre and Incident Command Centre during the first day of the Olympic torch relay."**
>
> *Victoria Police Department*

Sharing our technology expertise

After months of preparation, Coquitlam Fire & Rescue and the Saanich Fire Department began using Computer-Aided Dispatch technology accessed remotely through E-Comm. The technology requires fewer actions by a dispatcher to create a dispatched call and provides valuable information to dispatchers and firefighters such as detailed street maps, images of building floor plans, and indications of hazards at the event. The system also provides an automated fire-hall alerting system, mobile workstations for fire apparatus, and a full electronic interface with the British Columbia Ambulance Service to provide simultaneous dispatch of ambulance and fire first responder units.

Steal a car, go to jail

New bait car technology was unveiled in April. The audio-video technology will greatly enhance officer safety and help make our streets safer because it allows an E-Comm dispatcher to watch and listen to everything going on inside a bait car as its being stolen. As the provincial monitoring station for the Bait Car program, our dispatchers are able to relay that information instantly to the responding police unit.

E-Comm police dispatcher Jennifer Philip demonstrates the capability of Bait Car technology to former solicitor-general John van Dongen.

2009 Highlights

FEBRUARY
CRTC announces location information from cell phones to be implemented by Feb. 1, 2010; E-Comm participates in Exercise Silver (2010 Games preparation)

MARCH
Lightning strikes radio tower; no impact to radio system

APRIL
Bait Car "Live" launched

MAY
Egmont & Dist. Volunteer Fire Hall signs on to E-Comm's integrated call-taking and fire dispatch; Collective Agreement completed

JUNE
E-Comm's tenth anniversary and media announcement of Wireless Phase II

JULY
Celebration of Light

AUGUST
Wireless Phase II testing (location information from cell phones) begins

SEPTEMBER
Cops for Cancer fundraiser

OCTOBER
Pandemic prevention strategies launched

NOVEMBER
Coquitlam Fire & Rescue Services transitions onto remote FireCAD application; E-Comm participates in Exercise Gold (2010 Games preparation)

DECEMBER
Wireless Phase II fully implemented

ecomm911.ca

2009 – 2010 Board of Directors

- Daphne Corbett, *Chair*
- Mary-Wade Anderson
- Kevin Begg
- Helen Blackburn
- Ernie Daykin
- Len Garis
- Pamela Goldsmith-Jones
- Cindy Grauer
- Jocelyn Kelley

- Barrie Lynch
- Ernie Malone
- Bill McNulty
- Karl Preuss
- Michael Sanderson
- John Schouten
- Wes Shoemaker
- Sheldon Stoilen
- Joe Trasolini

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