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Department of Justice Awards Alamo Area Council of Governments \$4.5 Million

Grant to fund interoperable communications equipment and technology in Alamo Area.

San Antonio, TX – The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), announced the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) was selected as a recipient of the COPS Technology and Equipment Program award in the amount of \$4,500,000.00.

The grant request, sponsored by Congressman Tony Gonzales (R-Texas), will improve first responder interoperable communications by accelerating the buildout of the Alamo Area Radio Interoperability Network (AARIN). The AARIN is a strategic partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation. Grant funds will assist with the purchase of improved technology, radio sites, and updated equipment in multiple counties. The award will allow AACOG to migrate to WAVE PTX, a cloud-based, push-to-talk service powered by Critical Connect from Motorola that will allow for connectivity across devices, networks and locations. AARIN-connected dispatch consoles will be installed at the Bexar Metropolitan 911 Regional Operations Center at Quarry Run to support backup and continuity operations for Comal County, the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, and AACOG's Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

Multiband dispatch consolettes will also be installed at the Atascosa County and Frio County PSAPs to replace outdated, single-band versions. Grant funds will enable the establishment of interconnections between the Bexar County/San Antonio, Kerr County, and Medina County radio systems to AARIN. Multiband portable radios will also replace outdated, single-band models at the Dilley Police Department, Pearsall Police Department, Frio County Sheriff's Office, McMullen County Sheriff's Office, and Lytle Police Department.

The ability to communicate between multiple agencies and first responders, known as radio interoperability, is critical when responding to mass casualty events or natural disasters. Without radio interoperability, first responders are hampered in providing a timely and efficient response during an emergency. Multi-band radios allow all first responders to link up on a dedicated radio channel so that a coordinated deployment of resources is promptly achieved.

AACOG is only one of three councils of governments within Texas who received the award. Eligibility was by invitation-only. A COPS representative confirmed that only 311 agencies across the nation were invited to submit proposals.

“We are honored and pleased that COPS saw the value of this important project and awarded this essential funding. We wish to thank Congressman Gonzales and his staff for his support and advocacy on behalf of the project and our region’s needs. The award will help us identify and diminish gaps in communication to achieve superb rapid response when an emergency arises,” said AACOG Executive Director, Cliff Herberg.

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About Alamo Area Council of Governments: Defined as a political subdivision of the State of Texas, the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) was established in 1967 under Chapter 391 of the Local Government Code as a voluntary association of local governments and organizations that serves its members through planning, information, and coordination activities. Comprising the area planning region are Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Frio, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, McMullen, Medina, and Wilson counties.