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**Thomas P. DiNapoli  
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**OFFICE OF THE  
NEW YORK STATE COMPTROLLER**

**DIVISION OF STATE  
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

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**OFFICE FOR TECHNOLOGY**

**STATEWIDE WIRELESS  
NETWORK**

**OUTREACH AND TRAINING  
ACTIVITIES**

**Report 2006-R-5**

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## AUDIT OBJECTIVE

We audited outreach and training activities relating to the development and implementation of the Statewide Wireless Network (Network). The Network is currently being implemented by M/A-COM, Inc., in accordance with its contract, C000102 (subsequently changed to CM00841), with the New York State Office for Technology (OFT). The objective of our audit was to answer the following questions:

- Has OFT implemented a comprehensive outreach program to maximize Network participation?
- Have OFT and M/A-COM developed a comprehensive plan for providing Network user training?

## AUDIT RESULTS - SUMMARY

We found the OFT has developed a comprehensive outreach program and is conducting activities across the State to promote participation in the Network. To date, this outreach has resulted in 27 agreements whereby local governments plan to participate in the Network at one of three levels of partnership.

We also found the OFT and M/A-COM have developed a draft plan to train intended Network users and are working to refine the plan before it is submitted for final acceptance by both parties. Since the training plan is a draft, we offer no conclusion on whether it is sufficiently comprehensive.

This report, dated August 29, 2007, is available on our website at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us>.

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## BACKGROUND

On September 19, 2005, the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) approved a \$2.005-billion, 20-year contract between the New York State Office for Technology and M/A-COM, Inc., to develop and operate a Statewide Wireless Network for emergency communications. The Network, when completed, will cover nearly the entire geographic area of the State and will provide infrastructure for communications between public safety agencies on the State, local, and federal levels. Communication infrastructure items include communication towers, transmission sites and equipment, and antenna support structures.

To assist in the development and implementation of the Network, the Legislature established the Statewide Wireless Network Advisory Council. The 27-member council comprises agency heads, legislative representatives, first-responder representatives, and experts in the field of radio engineering.

The M/A-COM contract identifies that the Network will be constructed across the State in 12 defined geographic regions. The contract calls for construction to take place in a series of 6 “build-outs” with each build-out covering 2 of the 12 geographic regions. Further, the contract is segmented into three Phases. Phase One, also known as the primary build-out, is currently underway and includes a geographic region covering Erie and Chautauqua Counties. (Phase One also includes an upgrade to an existing emergency communications system in New York City.)

According to the contract, within 22 months of contract approval (i.e., July 2007), Phase One is to be completed, tested, and approved for use. The estimated completion of Phase Two, which includes the five remaining build-

outs, is scheduled for calendar year 2010. Once construction of the Network is complete, the contractor is responsible for Phase Three, which includes ongoing system maintenance and technology updates.

Currently, State agencies such as the State Police, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Corrections, will be required to use the Network. Local government and public safety agencies are not required to use it but may opt to do so. OFT has provided these potential users with three alternatives, referred to as levels of partnership, to meet their individual needs.

The level 1 Network partnership allows users to share infrastructure such as towers or shelters. Level 1 users can not access the Network or have interoperability with it, but they benefit by avoiding start-up costs and sharing infrastructure. The level 2 Network partnership is known as a “gateway” partnership. Gateway partners can communicate with the Network via existing legacy networks while maintaining control over their existing communication systems. Level 2 users benefit through interoperability with the Network. A level 3 Network partnership is known as a “full system” partnership. A level 3 partner is always connected to the Network and has the benefit of sharing Network frequencies, sharing files with other Network users, and maintaining control over talk groups. Although the contract does not specifically require OFT or M/A-COM to perform formal outreach activities, OFT was delegated this responsibility by the Advisory Council in recognition of the importance of such outreach to encourage users to become Network partners.

In addition, effective end-user training is critical to sustaining support for the Network. Under the contract, M/A-COM and OFT are

required to develop and implement a training plan for Network users. The training plan must be signed off in writing by both parties before the plan can be implemented.

This audit is the first in a series of audits that will track and assess Network progress until all build-outs are complete and operational.

## **AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### *Outreach Activities*

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As acknowledged by OFT officials, a comprehensive outreach program not only enlightens the public about the Network's purpose and capabilities, but if designed properly will encourage local government and local public safety agency participation, and thus enhance the intended benefits of the system. As such, OFT has developed a comprehensive statewide outreach and communication plan to maximize Network participation. The outreach and communication plan identifies target audiences and outlines activities OFT will participate in to promote the Network and encourage participation by counties and local public safety agencies.

Pursuant to the plan, OFT maintains a website to provide specific information about the Network, and its staff has participated in numerous outreach meetings with county officials across the State. The meetings provide county officials with a forum to hear about the benefits of Network participation, and to ask questions about participation at the various partnership levels. OFT staff has also participated in conferences with statewide first responder organizations, such as the New York State Sheriff's Association, to promote

the Network. To date, outreach efforts have resulted in 27 agreements with counties and other local government entities. Current partners include but are not limited to New York City, as well as Erie, Chautauqua, Niagara, Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Genesee Counties.

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### *Training Activities*

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During our field work, OFT and M/A-COM had developed a draft training plan setting out the curriculum each category of Network user (e.g., end users, maintenance personnel, Network operators, Network administrators, etc.) would be required to complete. For example, Network operators are required to attend 22 days of training and must pass a written test and a hands-on performance test to become certified in Network operation.

Certain types of high-level overview training, like the "Open Sky System" has already taken place. The course provides an overview to key agency personnel (e.g., State Police, etc.) of the technical aspects of the Network including its architecture, operation, and features. While these general trainings are ongoing, there are no specific dates currently scheduled for more detailed user training. The Network is to be built-out over five years and the objective is to provide user training just before each build-out is completed. According to OFT officials, this approach is designed to provide maximum benefit to users and reduce the need for refresher courses. Since the training plan is a draft, we offer no conclusion on whether it is sufficiently comprehensive.

## Recommendations

1. Continue outreach efforts to develop partnership agreements with local entities targeted as potential Network users.
2. Finalize the required training plan and implement it in a timely manner.

## AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

We audited OFT and M/A-COM outreach and training activities for the period September 19, 2005 through November 30, 2006. The objective of our audit was to answer the following questions:

- Has OFT implemented a comprehensive outreach program to maximize Network participation?
- Have OFT and M/A-COM developed a comprehensive plan for providing Network user training?

To accomplish our objective, we reviewed relevant sections of the contract and met with OFT and M/A-COM officials, representatives from OSC's Bureaus of Contracts and State Expenditures, and a representative from a participating county. We also reviewed OFT's outreach plan and other available outreach-related materials such as a promotional DVD, brochures, and pamphlets documenting plan activities. In addition, we reviewed the draft training plan developed by OFT and M/A-COM, and existing partnership agreements.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Such standards require that we plan and perform our audit to adequately assess OFT and M/A-COM operations within our audit scope. Further, these standards

require that we understand the OFT's and M/A-COM's internal control structure and compliance with those laws, rules and regulations that are relevant to the operations included in our audit scope. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting transactions recorded in the accounting and operating records and applying such other auditing procedures as we consider necessary in the circumstances. An audit also includes assessing the estimates, judgments and decisions made by management. We believe our audit provides a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions and recommendations.

In addition to being the State Auditor, the Comptroller performs certain other duties as the chief fiscal officer of New York State that have been mandated by statute and the State Constitution. These include operating the State's accounting system; preparing the State's financial statements; and the approving State contracts, refunds, and other payments. In addition, the Comptroller appoints members to certain boards, commissions and public authorities, some of whom have minority voting rights. These duties may be considered management functions for purposes of evaluating organizational independence under generally accepted government auditing standards. In our opinion, these functions do not affect our ability to conduct independent audits of program performance.

## AUTHORITY

The audit was performed according to the State Comptroller's authority under Article V, Section 1, of the State Constitution; and Article II, Section 8, of the State Finance Law.

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## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

We provided OFT officials with a draft copy of this report for their review and comment. OFT officials indicated additional efforts underway regarding outreach and training. Their comments have been considered in preparing this draft report, and are included as Appendix A.

Within 90 days of the final release of this report, as required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, the OFT Director shall report to the Governor, the State Comptroller, and

the leaders of the Legislature and fiscal committees, advising what steps were taken to implement the recommendations contained herein, and if not implemented, the reasons therefor.

## **CONTRIBUTORS TO THE REPORT**

Major contributors to this report were William Challice, Frank Patone, Stu Dolgon, Brian Krawiecki, Thierry Demoly, Mark Breunig, Sunny Jeong, and Paul Bachman.

## APPENDIX A - AUDITEE RESPONSE



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Governor

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July 25, 2007

Mr. William P. Challice  
Audit Director  
Office of the State Comptroller  
Division of State Government Accountability  
123 William Street – 21<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mr. Challice:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft audit report *Office for Technology, Statewide Wireless Network, Outreach and Training Activities* (2006-R-5).

The audit findings and recommendations contained in the report accurately represented the status of the Statewide Wireless Network (SWN) Project in 2006. As you should expect, we have moved forward since that time. We would like to use this opportunity to inform you of our progress since the audit was conducted.

As of July 2007, 34 local governments have fully-executed partnership agreements with another 24 local governments expressing interest in partnering at some level with the SWN Project. The Outreach staff is working diligently to finalize the pending partnership agreements and add even more entities onto the SWN.

In addition, the SWN Project Office recognizes the importance that training will play in the success of the network. Two full-time staff have been working since early 2007 to coordinate with the Prime Contractor, M/A-COM, to implement a comprehensive, useful, and timely training program. The Project Plan containing the needs analyses, planning, scheduling and coordination of training SWN end-users is completed for the Primary Region and Metro-21 (New York City). Training has been on-going and will continue according to the Project Plan.

The Office for Technology appreciates the high level of professionalism displayed by your staff during the audit. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Cordially,

  
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