

# Park County Sheriff Issues Safety Radios to Schools

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/EINPresswire.com/ Public Safety Radio Network to Include All Schools

FAIRPLAY, CO -- Sheriff Fred Wegener has issued special first responder radios that were activated today by RE-2 School Superintendent Becky Minnis to prepare all district schools to communicate directly with the Sheriff's Office during an emergency.

"We've gone to the heart of the national school safety debate with a solution everybody can agree on, a public safety radio network that includes all schools," said Wegener at the school district's Crisis Communications Summit held February 27.

"If someone hurts their leg on the playground, you no longer send a 'runner' for help; instead, you instantly communicate by radio," he explained. At the summit, he showed how two-way radio enables schools to use the Department of Homeland Security's Incident Command System (ICS) to handle a broad range of school emergencies.

In 2008, Wegener was the first sheriff in the nation to promote state legislation requiring schools to adopt ICS. Realizing that communications was crucial to ICS, he also became the first sheriff to open a dedicated emergency communications channel for schools.

Platte Canyon School District in Park County then tested a system that bridged school radios with public safety radios. The resulting communications network is currently used every day.

Using the system involved new technology, new training, and new best practices among county response agencies and schools. The Sheriff's Office plans to use grant funding to expand the school safety network across the county.

According to Wegener, for serious incidents, an enhanced public safety radio network would enable school radios everywhere in the county to be linked to radios carried by law enforcement officers and other community first responders. This would allow schools to update responders about an emergency before they arrive, and synchronize actions taken by the school's safety team with those of the professional first responders.

The Crisis Communications Summit was attended by Sheriff Wegener's command staff, all district principals, and heads of school security, maintenance, and transportation.

Two-way radio training was led by Patrick Hobby, president of SchoolSAFE Communications, a state-recognized community partner. Hobby is the inventor of the first and only radio designed specifically for ICS in schools.

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