

Publicsafety

Emergency system gets funds

Congress passes bill that provides money for multi-agency communication operation in area.

By Chris Wiebe

GLENDALE — Congress gave a boost to a Glendale-led, multi-agency emergency response system Wednesday, passing a bill that will give the city more than \$650,000 for upgrades.

The Interagency Communications Interoperability System enables police and fire agencies of the six participating cities — Glendale, Burbank, Beverly Hills, Culver City, Montebello and Pomona — to communicate across jurisdictional lines.

That type of seamless interaction is vital during emergency or disaster situations that affect the entire region.

The funding, which is part of a consolidated appropriations bill that also doles out money to the city of Los Angeles to combat gang violence, will provide benefits to the system as it modernizes, said Rep. Adam Schiff, who represents Glendale and parts of Burbank.

“Glendale has really led the way in the entire county in developing inter-operable communications; it put the concept together, and it has

helped create the hub,” he said.

“And, as a result, our community is safer because our law enforcement can talk to each other. But there’s still a need to build out the system further and modernize it — improve the platform it operates with and make sure that it can also be connected to an L.A. County system if and when the Sheriff’s Department moves to one.”

Conflict arose earlier this year as it became apparent that Glendale and the other five participating cities were competing against Los Angeles County for federal funding.

County officials are in the planning stages of their own network — called the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System — and are vying for federal help to fund their program.

That bred uncertainty among legislators in Washington, D.C., as county and local officials seemed to be pursuing similar technologies with similar goals in the same area.

The situation spawned a trip to the capital by a contingent of local system participants, who traveled with Los Angeles County Fire Chief Paul Michael Freeman to better define the city and county’s shared perspective.

That trip was also in direct support of the funding request that was passed Wednesday by Congress, said Glendale Fire Department Battalion Chief Don Wright, executive director of the Interagency Communications Interoperability System board.

“We were able to show that we’re not in competition with one another; we’re, in essence, complementing one another with our different initiatives,” Wright said. “So I think by being in that position and showing that we were able to advocate — not just to meet with . Congressman Schiff, but everybody we . and that money back there — that we are moving forward together . invested in these types of projects is not money wasted.”

The funding will help system administrators migrate the network toward Project 25 compliance, which would enable it to connect with a county system once it is put in place, Wright said.

Glendale’s system was recently expanded to bring the fire departments of Pasadena, South Pasadena, Arcadia, Monrovia, Sierra Madre, Monterey Park, Alhambra and San Gabriel online, he said.