

New radio system debuts

•Radio technology called 'ICIS' allows agencies from other cities to stay in close communication.

By Robert S. Hong

GLENDALE — From locations across Los Angeles County, several public officials talked back and forth to each other on a single radio channel Monday to demonstrate the range and clarity of the new Interagency Communications Interoperability System (ICIS).

The system — partially spearheaded by the city of Glendale — is currently being used by law enforcement and public officials in several cities throughout the county. Congressional representatives Adam Schiff, Diane Watson and Grace Napolitano were among participants in the demonstration.

"One of the important issues in the 9-11 Commission was that we have interoperable communication equipment, so we aren't reliant on cellphones during an emergency," said Schiff, whose district covers Burbank and Glendale.

The system allows officials in a city to speak with one another within their own city radio channels, and since they are under a common network, they can also communicate with officials from other cities participating in the ICIS system by switching to their respective ICIS channels.

"I was really struck today by the clarity of the signal, it's phenomenal, Schiff said. "A lot of cities and counties are looking at what we're doing."

Along with Schiff, Glendale Police Chief Randy Adams, Glendale Fire Battalion Chief Don Wright, Burbank Councilwoman Marsha Ramos and Burbank Water and Power representative Lianne McGinley were gathered in the Congressman's office to speak over the radio.

They talked with officials from Burbank, Beverly Hills, Culver City, Montebello and Pomona, among others.

"With this demonstration, anyone can see a system exists for truly seamless interoperability throughout the county," Wright said.

He and Adams said the system is especially important for police officers and fire officials who are traveling out of their own cities.

The system was also recently awarded a Helen Putnam Award of Excellence from the California League of Cities.

"We found this [system] very important," Ramos said. "It's important to have better communication across our region."